

A STUDY OF PRESIDENTIAL SUCCESSION IN A CANADIAN UNIVERSITY CONTEXT: PERCEPTIONS OF KEY STAKEHOLDERS

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ABSTRACT

One of the most significant events in the life of a university is a change in its leadership (Bornstein, 2010; Hargreaves, 2005; Paul, 2015; Trachtenberg, Kauvar, & Bogue, 2013; Turpin, 2014). The role of the university president has evolved dramatically in recent years, although the recruitment pool and selection process has experienced little change since the 1960s (Paul, 2014). The purpose of the study was to explore the perceptions of selected stakeholders in one university regarding presidential succession from an organizational culture perspective and to examine its implications for succession planning and leadership sustainability.

In this study, I used a theoretical framework based on an organizational culture perspective, with emphasis on the work of Edgar Schein (2010). This framework provided additional grounding for exploration of leadership succession in a university context, related succession planning initiatives, and their implications for leadership sustainability. The study utilized an interpretivist construction (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003; Guba & Lincoln, 2005) of the phenomenon (experience) of effective succession in the context of presidency change at one Canadian university, utilizing a qualitative case study approach. The primary source of data consisted of semi-structured interviews with ten participants including current and past administrators, members of senior committees and faculty and student representatives.

From the data, several key qualities of effective presidential succession were highlighted, including emphasis on a thorough environmental scan; clear expectations for the role; the use of a clear transition process; a clear role for the search committee and its relationship to the role of the Board; and careful attention to distinguishing search committee and transition committee roles. The most important outcomes of the succession process for participants included: improved attention to first impressions and buy-in; changes in personnel

and senior administration; shifting the university in a new direction; and improvements to the succession process and succession planning.

Among the major impacts of presidential succession on the organizational culture, participants highlighted: the shifting of university culture in a new direction; impacts on campus morale and productivity; impacts on relationships with stakeholders; and the opportunity to renew (or weaken) relationships.

Implications of the findings for practice highlighted the need within the university for learning from past mistakes; ongoing review of the university's communication strategy; ensuring meaningful community voice and involvement; continually enhancing and regulating the transition process; and developing continuing succession planning processes. Policy implications of the study profiled the importance of building the University's capacity for leadership sustainability, ongoing leadership training within the institution; a supportive environment for cultivating leadership sustainability; and having the Board's full support and transparency regarding the current university situation. Implications for research identified the need for further exploration of succession planning processes, leadership development, transition processes, organizational culture change, and organizational learning across university contexts.

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CHAPTER ONE

The Nature of the Study

Today's universities are complex social institutions with lengthy mission statements, numerous stakeholders, and expanded societal expectations given the changing nature of the society they serve. Universities are vital to the future of their countries and require strong leadership, particularly during a time of great change, challenge, and potential opportunity (MacKinnon, 2014; Paul, 2015; Strom, 2014; Trachtenberg, Kauvar, & Bogue, 2013). Strom (2014) pointed out that in times of uncertainty, or times when specific improvements are required, people need effective leadership that will draw upon and build on attributes such as influence, character, promise, and grace. Experienced, responsible, and enlightened leadership, governance, and management are all important to the success of educational institutions (Gardner, 1993).

According to Trachtenberg et al., (2013), an unsuccessful presidency can undermine an institution's image, destroy campus morale, and be very costly. The necessity of ensuring a successful and sustainable presidency at today's universities is crucial, and therefore requires further investigation; not only are current presidential search and transition processes in need of improvement, but there is also a need to develop an effective succession planning process, the importance of which cannot be understated (Paul, 2015). A successful and strong process can significantly improve effective leadership transition, adding to and maintaining an institution's momentum. It can also ensure constituent support for the individual who understands the institution's strengths and vulnerabilities and who can then develop a collective vision that reflects the history and aspirations of the institution (Trachtenberg et al., 2013) and that falls in line with the succession plan. What are the elements of effective presidential succession and the

context that influences that process? What are the roles of participants? This study is of one university and its experiences.

In this chapter, I will introduce the phenomenon of succession in the context of presidency change at one Canadian university. I start with looking at the background, purpose, and significance of the study, then I articulate the assumptions, delimitations, and limitations underlying the study, and define the terms that are significant to understanding the discussion.

Background to the Study

In the life cycle of every university there are changes in leadership. Some institutions have time to prepare; others have to manage sudden departures. The circumstances of leadership transition may vary, but institutions face similar challenges in the steps that must be taken to identify a new leader, adapt to a new leadership style, and continue the forward momentum of the institution (Bolman & Gallos, 2010).

Universities constitute a unique type of organization. As such, their complex mission, dynamics, personnel structures, and values require a distinct set of understandings and skills to lead and to manage them effectively (Bolman & Gallos, 2010). The role of the university president as leader is extensive, including articulating the mission and vision of the university, being the public face of the university, setting the tone for the academic plan, and ensuring a positive campus climate exists (Paul, 2015). MacKinnon (2014), in reflection on his own tenure as president, pointed out that the most important task of a university president is to manage the big picture, and to develop and communicate a mission, vision, and long-term objectives for the institution. More than anyone else in the organization, the president as chief executive officer (CEO) is expected to be preoccupied with the long term, to look at the strengths and weaknesses,

the opportunities and threats facing the institution, and to forge an action plan that realizes the vision that emerges from the whole exercise (Paul, 2015).

Universities invest considerable amounts of both time and money in presidential searches, but according to Trachtenberg et al., (2013), the effort devoted to supporting and facilitating the appointees in their new leadership contexts is lacking. He argued that often, boards of governors celebrate the appointment of their next institutional leader and then sit back and let him or her get on with the job with the assumption that the appointee knows both what to do and how to do it. As Watkins (2013) asserted, transitions are critical times for leaders. While transitions provide an opportunity to introduce changes in an organization, the leader needs to tread carefully. A leader's success can be jeopardized by critical mistakes made during the critical first months in the position. A successful succession plan can provide a measure of assistance in the alleviation of these issues.

The periodic appointment of a president represents some of the most important moments in a university's life. An institution's history is often divided into presidential eras. Participation in the selection process asserts the status of faculty, students, and alumni. The hiring and firing of presidents are the two major responsibilities of the governing board. With these privileges comes the obligation to actively support, assist, and assess the president (Trachtenberg et al., 2013).

When it comes to selecting a new president, universities follow a distinctive and, to an outsider, somewhat perplexing process. Current search practices are arduous and lengthy, often involving a global search for potential candidates (Bornstein, 2010). At times, new presidents are chosen from within the university's own ranks, but more often they come from another institution (Tamburri, 2008).

It is crucial to keep in mind that every university has a certain culture, a culture that is slowly changing, and that change seems to be often dependent on the actions of the leadership and the direction it is taking. According to Schein (2010), culture is broadly accepted as a socially constructed attribute; culture provides a foundation or forms the social glue that fundamentally holds an organization together. Organizational culture refers to the taken-for-granted values, underlying assumptions, and expectations which characterize organizations; culture influences how members of the organization think, work, and behave (Schein, 2010). According to Schein (2010), the organization's structure can be modified through assessing and changing the organization's culture.

Therefore, understanding culture of an organization is a key element in a successful transition (Schein, 2010). Bolman and Deal (2003) stressed the importance for leaders to view organizations from a perspective that acknowledges their complexity. This perspective includes an acceptance of the inherent conflict, power and structural issues that are intrinsically woven into the fabric of organizational settings. Along with this, it is necessary to recognize that groups or work teams operate out of needs, goals, and desires that may be counter to the larger organizational goals. To ignore the human dynamics, which are in constant interplay with organizational goals, is to deny the reality of the power of relationship.

For campus members who are interested in becoming a university president, the journey is not well-laid out; the process may not be transparent and leadership development opportunities are slim by comparison to other leadership positions. But as Canadian universities begin to experience a remarkably high turnover in their top ranks, some argue that it may be time to take a second look at succession planning (Trachtenberg et al., 2013). Trachtenberg et al., (2013), through a series of case studies, identified a flawed presidential search process as a significant

problem for ensuring success of new presidents. The search and transition processes are both in need of improvement but there is also a definite need to develop and periodically update the succession plan employed for the process of president selection and appointment.

Paul (2015) pointed out that there is a considerable difference between failed presidencies in the United States (US) and Canada. Almost all Canadian university presidential dismissals involved some combination of incumbent and board shortcomings, bad communication, and poor institutional fit. In the US on the other hand, failed presidencies have been generally due to ethical lapses. Paul (2015) argued that it is the responsibility of the boards and their chairs to continue their efforts, after the appointment is made, in ensuring the new president is well supported and that there are a number of post-appointment initiatives put in place to ensure leadership sustainability.

The combination of fiscal and demographic pressures, student concerns about the quality of teaching and learning, and rapid technological advancements are the realities of a new era of unprecedented change in Canadian post-secondary education (Fullan & Scott, 2009). There has never been a more pressing need for strong, sustainable leadership at Canadian universities (Paul, 2015). There has been little quantitative research done in the area of university presidency and leadership (Fullan & Scott, 2009; MacKinnon, 2014; Paul, 2015; Trachtenberg et al., 2013). The literature exploring the phenomenon of succession, leadership change, and succession sustainability is mainly focused on the business and private sectors (Finkelstein, 2003; Gardner, 1993; Watkins, 2013). Leadership studies are central to the management of a private sector organization, and there needs to be more effort made to apply these lessons to universities ensuring that the goals of a university and who should be responsible for their realization are clear (Paul, 2015). The selection process for a university president varies greatly from the

process used in business to select a CEO, which depends heavily on succession planning and spends considerable time grooming, nurturing and training its future leaders (Bornstein, 2010).

Study Purpose and Research Question

The purpose of the study was to explore the perceptions of selected stakeholders in one university regarding presidential succession and to examine related implications for succession planning, organizational culture, and leadership sustainability. Consistent with the purpose of the study, the overarching research question was, how do stakeholders in one university perceive the presidential succession process and what are the related implications for succession planning, organizational culture, and leadership sustainability? The following research sub-questions guided the investigation.

1. How do stakeholders perceive the importance of context in succession processes?
2. What are the perceptions of stakeholders regarding effective succession processes?
3. What are the perceptions of stakeholders regarding the desired outcomes of succession processes?
4. What are the perceptions of stakeholders regarding the implications of succession processes for organizational culture?
5. What are the perceptions of stakeholders regarding the implications of succession processes for future succession planning?
6. What are the perceptions of stakeholders regarding the implications of succession processes for leadership sustainability?

Significance of the Study

In a time when the economic environment continues to suffer, and government priorities are shifting, it is crucial for post-secondary institutions to develop effective succession practices to ensure they will be well positioned for the future and changing world. This study explored CEO change in a university setting and examined its implications for succession planning and leadership sustainability. Post-secondary institutions need to formulate strategies for attracting, developing and retaining a leadership pool that will ensure the institution's sustainability (Bornstein, 2010). The culture and governance structure present in post-secondary institutions is quite different from that of private businesses and hence there is a need for a unique succession planning strategy rather than simply being adopted from the business model. The presence of shared governance and collegial cultures requires academic institutions to think differently about succession planning (Trachtenberg et al., 2013). This study took a closer look at how the succession process unfolded in a Canadian university setting, the outcomes of succession process, and the corresponding implications for succession planning and leadership sustainability.

According to Paul (2015), the job of a Canadian university president today is more challenging than ever, and consequently, increases the number of issues related to the recruitment and longevity of presidents. He presented evidence that there is a dramatic increase in the number of presidents who have departed after less than three years in the office. These early departures caused significant disruption within the universities and raised questions about the causes for the departures (Turpin, 2014). Also, MacKinnon (2014) pointed out the current reality of university presidents, noting that, “never has Canadian university presidential leadership been under greater scrutiny than it is today” (p. 132). Based on the above comments

and findings, it is evident that there is a need for further research around succession processes in universities that will support leadership sustainability.

This study contributes to the academic literature describing the theories surrounding presidential change in the post-secondary landscape. My case study explored the perceptions of effective succession in the context of presidency change at a university and examined its implications for leadership sustainability. Utilizing the ideas found in Hargreaves and Fink (2011), various frameworks of sustainable leadership and how they apply to a presidency in the post-secondary context were studied. Research questions identified factors which influence the succession processes, its outcomes and suggested implications for succession planning and leadership sustainability. My study investigated the elements that lead to the transfer of power, and the implications it has for leadership sustainability.

I used a case study research design to explore the perceptions of effective succession in the context of presidency change and examined its implications for succession planning and leadership sustainability. The case study research method was a good fit for deriving a close and in-depth understanding of what happened at the university that was being studied. What can be learned from the succession process as it unfolded. My aim was to produce an invaluable and insightful appreciation of succession processes by examining the context and all of the complex conditions related to them. I looked at perceptions of stakeholders regarding what happens when there is a leadership change, and what that change means for institutions and their contexts. How does such change affect the vision, mission and values of the university?

My study has relevance for the policies that guide a successful succession along with effective strategies to ensure a successful presidency. It also adds to theories and strategies and provides insights into effective practices in achieving a successful leadership change and

ensuring sustainable leadership within a university setting. This case study contributes a unique piece of research to the higher educational literature and provides recommendations to improve succession processes in universities that will support leadership sustainability.

Parameters of the Study

This section describes the parameters used to frame the study. As with any research, it is necessary to outline the assumptions, delimitations, and limitations in order to be transparent as to the limits of the research approach undertaken and the context in which the study is conducted. The position of the researcher must also be conveyed. The following sections define these delimitations, limitations, and assumptions and my positionality as the researcher. I also define key terms; the definitions provided are the ones central to the context and the purposes of this study.

Assumptions

This study was conducted employing qualitative case study research using interpretive design to explore stakeholders' perceptions in one university regarding presidential succession from an organizational culture perspective and to examine its implications for succession planning and leadership sustainability. I assumed that this methodology would best address the questions I used to frame the study. I also assumed that data collection procedures and analysis of meaning would not introduce a bias to the research such that erroneous results were reported. However, another researcher using the same data might interpret the data from a different perspective.

I assumed that questions asked of participants would be sufficiently comprehensive, reliable and valid for respondents to describe accurately their perceptions of the phenomenon of

succession in the context of presidency change. Several other assumptions guided the design of the study. It was assumed that a succession strategy has a significant influence on the outcomes of the process and on governance during the presidency.

Delimitations

The study was focused on one university to explore perceptions of effective succession in the context of presidency change and to examine its implications for leadership sustainability. To conduct my study, I used a qualitative constructivist case study research design, which achieved a greater depth of research.

The study was concentrated on one source of data: interviews. The interviews were semi-structured in-depth interviews. I interviewed ten participants, current and past senior administrators and members of senior committees including faculty and student representatives, with each interview being approximately one hour long. Criteria for interviewee selection included willingness to participate in an interview and having experience with the succession process at some or all stages.

Limitations

Participants may not have been truthful, honest and sincere in their responses to questions and issues related to the study. Some key participants may have been inadvertently omitted in the interviewing process, which could be central to this study. Additionally, some participants may not have responded fully or may have been unwilling to participate for their own reasons. To offset the possibility of omitting valuable stakeholders, I used multiple informants from administrative units across the organization.

Also, in light of my position at the university, every attempt was made to bracket the bias. Following Merriam's (2009) advice, I strived to set biases aside and look at the evidence

with a fresh eye. Another limitation is the research methodology used. Each participant had a different perspective of various issues thus resulting in different outlooks for the same problem and different solutions. Therefore, the various perceptions gathered from the key stakeholders naturally presented a challenge to the integration of common themes and may have been limited by the researcher's ability to coherently integrate these perspectives.

The time frame during which data collection occurred might also have limited the access to and participation of all key participants. The time at which the research was carried out may have influenced participants' responses. Because it was specific to the context of one university, the study's findings cannot necessarily be generalized beyond this study.

Definitions

A number of terms are used to convey concepts that are fundamental to this study. In this section, these key concepts are defined in terms of the context of the study. The definitions provide clarity and promote shared understandings of the meanings of these terms as they appear throughout this document.

Succession. Succession is the ascension to power by a new leader after the resignation, or removal from office of another, following in a clearly defined order or sequence. Hart (1993) identified succession as planned or unplanned change of the formal leader of a group or organization.

Succession planning. Succession planning is the creation of a strategy to facilitate the transfer of official power from one individual to another. Such a strategy might include the identification of past priorities and an alignment with future goals, and establishing identifiable criteria or traits, which a successor must possess.

Leadership sustainability. “Sustainability does not simply mean whether something can last. It addresses how particular initiatives can be developed without compromising the development of others in the surrounding environment, now and in the future” (Hargreaves & Fink, 2000, p. 32). “Sustainable leadership matters, spreads and lasts. It is a shared responsibility that does not unduly deplete human or financial resources, and that cares for and avoids exerting negative damage on the surrounding educational and community environment” (Hargreaves & Fink, 2004, p. 2).

Governance. “The structures, relationships and processes through which policies for an educational organization are developed, implemented, and reviewed. Governance comprises a complex web including the legislative framework, the characteristics of institutions and how they relate to the whole system, how money is allocated to the institutions and how they are accountable for the way it is spent” (Vidovich & Currie, 2010, p.28). Additionally, “Governance is the means by which order is created in the academy to achieve the goals of educating, researching, and providing services to multiple publics” (Austin & Jones, 2016, p. 2).

Collegial governance. Collegial governance is defined in terms of the degree of autonomy, the set of principles and practices through which faculty and staff members participate in the important decisions regarding the operation of the university. Collegial governance is a system based on the idea that authority and responsibility are shared among colleagues, some of whom are primarily faculty members and some of whom are primarily administrators.

President. For the purposes of my study a president is the administrative and academic leader of the university. President is defined as a person who presides over an organization and is

appointed to manage its proceedings and to represent it in the broader community (MacKinnon, 2014).

Senior administration. The experienced members of the administration of the university who are in positions with a degree of power are referred to as senior administration. This includes leaders of colleges and schools and the leaders of central administrative departments and units.

Faculty. Faculty are the academic staff of a university, members of the campus community who are familiar with universities as academic communities and who help in the administration of the institution by participating in its decision-making processes (MacKinnon, 2014).

Organizational culture. The underlying/unseen/unconscious beliefs that shape, guide, and constrain the behaviour of members within the organization. A set of shared norms, behavioural regularities, espoused values, habits of thinking that set the pattern of performance and style of conduct for the organization (Schein, 2010).

Internal stakeholders. People within the institution who have a vested interest in the institutional well-being. People who ought to be consulted throughout the decision-making processes of the institution on issues of fundamental importance as well as routine functions. For example, internal stakeholders at a university would include professors, students, and employees of the institution (Buchholtz & Carroll, 2015).

Search committee. For the purposes of this study a search committee refers to a presidential search committee, which is typically made up of a number of people representing numerous stakeholders across campus as well as external groups. The membership of such a

committee is previously defined. The mandate of the search committee is to select a successful candidate for a president.

Transition committee. Committee made up of a number of various experts across campus and beyond, being familiar with different aspects of the University and its priorities. The role of the transition committee is to ensure that the selected new president is well supported by providing appropriate information, and advice that assists in building, retaining and enhancing appropriate relationships; and facilitating appropriate activities during the transition and first year in office.

The Researcher

In order for readers to understand what has shaped my perspective and the reasons why succession, presidency change and leadership sustainability are important to me, I describe my relevant background. I was an international student who first started at a Canadian University as an ESL student then moved on to undergraduate education and later to graduate studies. While being a student, I held various positions at the university that provided me with a better understanding of units within the institution and the privilege of meeting many great people who are part of the university community. In my current position within a senior administrative office, I can see the larger picture of the university's administration, day-to-day operations and the overall leadership decisions it faces.

Recently, while working at the university, I observed the institution going through a series of changes, which was followed by significant reduction to its revenue. There were numerous strategies implemented and decisions made with various effects and outcomes. During that time, I became very interested in what happened at the university, the context under which the

succession process unfolded, the implications of the succession planning, and how it affected leadership sustainability.

The purpose of my study was in a lot of ways sense-making in relation to the series of events that happened on campus and how these events unfolded. I examined how important leadership is, including not only the president but also the leadership team that supports and guides the vision, values and mission of the university.

With these experiences, I entered a Ph.D. program with the desire to study succession and what effects it has on governance strategies, succession planning, and overall leadership sustainability within university setting. My goal was to contribute a unique piece of research to the higher educational literature. I hope that my study contributes to the policies that guide a successful succession along with effective strategies to ensure a successful presidency. I also hope to have added to theories and strategies and provide insights into effective practices in achieving a successful leadership change and ensuring sustainable leadership within a university setting. But most importantly, I endeavored to gain in-depth knowledge of this phenomenon and simply learn more about leadership within university context through the process of my study.

Organization of the Dissertation

In this chapter, I outlined the background, purpose and significance of the study. Chapter One also provided key definitions for terminology used in the study along with assumptions, delimitations and limitations underlying the study. The literature review in Chapter Two explores effective leadership, leadership succession and leadership sustainability within the university environment. In Chapter Three, I describe the research methodology employed in the study. I present the case used in my study and the methods for data collection.

In Chapter Four, I present the data and the full findings of the research, the key findings, analyzed by research question, discussed, and supported by related research. In Chapter Five conclusions are drawn by discussing the practical and theoretical contributions to the research of succession planning and presidential change in university contexts. The conclusion also identifies the implications and limitations of the study and provides suggestions for future research in this area.

CHAPTER TWO

Review of the Related Literature

The purpose of the study was to explore the perceptions of selected stakeholders in one university regarding presidential succession and to examine related implications for succession planning, organizational culture, and leadership sustainability. In this chapter, I review the literature pertaining to the phenomenon of succession in the context of presidency change and its implications for leadership sustainability. I begin by setting out the context in which Canadian universities are currently situated. Facing unprecedented fiscal challenges while simultaneously shouldering increased societal and economic importance, universities are entering uncharted territory. As part of this context, I look then to the pivot in direction that universities have taken away from the collegial governance model employed previously towards a more efficient corporate-model of governance. I then move on to the leadership qualities that a university president must encompass in order to be successful in the ever-changing post-secondary landscape. Following this, I talk about the need for a leadership succession strategy and the importance of sustainable leadership in ensuring the continued success of a university.

General Context of Higher Education

Increasing amounts of attention are being devoted to issues of higher education. Today's universities are complex social institutions with lengthy mission statements, numerous stakeholders and a profoundly changing society they serve. According to Lawless (1982), major Canadian universities employ a staff of three to five thousand people or more; they enrol upwards of twenty to thirty thousand students, and they have operating budgets of hundreds of millions of dollars (Auld & Kitchen, 2006; Lawless). Cameron (2002) pointed out the multiple

functions of universities, which include the education and training of every type of society's professional members, as well as the fostering of development, innovation, and creation of information and scientific contributions. According to Paul (2015), they are one of the more complex human organizations. Moreover, universities are among the most enduring institutions in society. They serve as educators, generators of new ideas, and engines of social, cultural and economic prosperity (MacKinnon, 2014).

Trachtenberg et al. (2013) argued that universities are vital to the future of the countries in which they operate. As such, they are in need of strong leadership, particularly during times of great change, challenge, and potential opportunity. Strom (2014) pointed out that universities would benefit from wise leadership that draws and builds on positive leadership attributes such as influence, character, promise and grace. This type of leadership is especially important in times of uncertainty or at times when specific circumstances require improvement. These circumstances describe the situation that universities are currently facing. Due to the complex nature of the governance and management structure of a university, the governance, management, and the leadership of a university must be carried out in a way that is guided by experienced, and responsible leadership, and enlightened vision in order to ensure the success of the educational institution (Gardner, 1993).

Current Context of Canadian Universities

The Canadian system of higher education is highly decentralized. Responsibility for higher education is delegated to the provincial level of government under the Canadian constitutional federation. As such, Canadian provincial governments preside over university issues such as tuition rates, student enrolment numbers, the structure of provincial post-

secondary education systems, the institutional governance and the labour relations within these post-secondary systems (Auld & Kitchen, 2006). While funding for post-secondary institutions falls primarily to provincial governments, the federal government still supports the development of post-secondary education. This support is primarily achieved through the provision of funding for research conducted through colleges and universities, through the establishment of financial assistance programs for students and through indirect funding via fiscal transfer arrangements to the provinces (Snowdon, 2005). Notably, there has been a significant change in federal funding since the 1990s with cuts to transfers and increased funding for research initiatives (Snowden, 2005). In Canada, national post-secondary education policy reflects common interests incorporated within provincial post-secondary education policies (Chan & Richardson, 2012).

MacKinnon (2014) argued that universities have also become more central in the modern Canadian knowledge-based society. Universities no longer focus only on grooming the elite for future leadership, but increasingly seek to provide equal opportunity for all, although, according to Austin and Jones (2016), there is an apparent tension between accessibility to higher education and social justice. Tuition costs keep increasing and not every Canadian is able to afford a university education without going into considerable debt (Schuetze & Archer, 2019). Riddell (2006) pointed out that this change in focus is largely due to the increased societal recognition of the importance of higher overall levels of educational attainment and the value of research and scholarship that will drive our future economic and social development. Paul (2015) believed that one consequence of the increasingly important position of a university has been a greater interest in the position of university president. This increased interest has been accompanied by a greater sense of the importance of this position, not just to our universities, but also to Canadian society as a whole (Paul, 2015).

Tupper (2013) argued that, amidst the changing nature of post-secondary institutions, the need to ensure that all Canadians are able to participate and contribute provincially, nationally as well as internationally has never been more pressing. Ensuring that all citizens are able to benefit from post-secondary institutions represents a role that universities are increasingly expected to fill. Education is the most powerful route to improving the prosperity and well-being of the public. As well, it is the means by which Canadians are able to participate and contribute economically and socially (Tupper, 2013). Regardless of the increasing importance of universities, however, most institutions are looking for ways of reducing expenditure while simultaneously turning towards new sources of revenue, due to a proportional reduction in government funding to universities (Paul, 2015).

Based on his decade of service as president of one of Canada's major research universities, MacKinnon (2014) argued that Canadian universities face a complicated and uncertain future when it comes to funding, governance, and fostering innovation. Their leaders face an equally complicated future, having to accomplish the task of balancing the needs and desires of students, faculty, and governments, amidst the backdrop of an uncertain economy. MacKinnon (2014) also argued that Canadian universities, and thus university presidents, must embrace competitiveness and be open to facilitating change within this type of environment.

Chan and Richardson (2012), in their exploratory study examining the current state of board governance in Canadian universities argued that, in response to increasing fiscal pressure, Canadian universities have turned towards managerialism as a solution. The change is characterized by a shift towards using tools of business in the public sector organizations and is driven by the underlying neoliberal agenda. The open intellectual culture is displaced by a culture focused on performance measurement, and economic outputs (Olssen & Peters, 2005).

Management has a businesslike approach, with a focus on clients and market-like competition, and an emphasis on efficiency and effectiveness (Asking & Stensaker, 2002; Austin & Jones, 2016; Chan & Richardson, 2012; Christensen & Lægreid, 1999; Deem, 1998; Leisyte, & Kizniene, 2006; Olssen & Peters, 2005; Shattock, 2013). Shattock (2013) further expounded on core elements of this managerial model, often referred to as New Public Management (NPM). Within this model, the organization focuses on “creating markets, stimulating competition, introducing quality measures such as key performance indicators and student satisfaction surveys—combined to impose new levels of bureaucracy on the university system” (Shattock, 2013, p. 17). With a proliferation of accountability structures, audits, competitive processes, and fiscal pressures, the traditional academic model has been significantly transformed (Olssen & Peters, 2005).

This approach has spread globally. Christensen and Lægreid (1999) identified that NPM is seen as a “general structural prescription, spreading from OECD or Anglo-American countries as an instrumental ‘super-standard’ or collection of structural standards for coping with problems common to public organizations” (p. 171). The adoption of the principles of NPM may be expressed slightly differently depending on the organization and the context of the country, but the influence of the model is evident across the world (Christensen & Lægreid, 1999). Within this model, there is a marked reduction in state or government funding of post-secondary education, and campuses are forced to explore means of revenue generation and increased tuition to make up the shortfall (Austin & Jones, 2016; Shattock, 2013). Furthermore, budgets focused on austerity measures influence resource allocation and decision making across campuses (Austin & Jones, 2016; Shattock, 2013)

There are many implications for the adoption of this model. For example, according to Giroux (2014), within this context of marketization, “academic knowledge has been stripped of its value as a social good. To be relevant, and therefore adequately funded, knowledge has to justify itself in market terms or simply perish” (p. 69). Where an increase in performance management is evident, there is an argued decrease in the academic autonomy of the faculty (Woodhouse, 2009). Austin and Jones (2016) agreed that the academics’ freedom of control over their work and research is reduced by the focus on competitiveness, and matching their work to government and funding agency priorities. Deem (1998) noted that “control and regulation of academic labour seem to have replaced collegiality, trust and professional discretion” (p. 52). Each level of the hierarchy has performance outcomes for which they are accountable; this pressure flows through this “top-down” approach, and results in the development of a compliance culture (Deem, 1998). Additionally, there is evidence of a changing academic labour force with an increase in contract faculty or sessional lecturers and a decrease in tenured faculty positions, as a way to be more cost-effective in a financially competitive environment (Woodhouse, 2009). Furthermore, universities are encouraged to develop strong partnerships with more businesses and industries, with the resulting influence on the universities’ agendas, strategic planning, and priorities (Austin & Jones, 2016; Leisyte, & Kizniene, 2006).

This underlying focus on New Public Management (NPM) principles has had a profound influence on leaders within public sector organizations, including higher education institutions (Austin & Jones, 2016; Deem, 1998; Giroux, 2014). Accountabilities for each level of the organization are well-articulated, and the focus is on efficiency and effectiveness. This culture, according to Deem (1998), can result in a redefinition of roles. For example, in Deem’s (1998) case study of one higher education institution, she noted that “the role of the faculty deans has

been explicitly made into a line-management one, with responsibilities as resource budget holder” (p. 64). Furthermore, the committee structure was slimmed down, and the decision-making powers of the governance structures of the university were further redefined and clarified, in order to streamline decision making processes (Deem, 1998). Giroux (2014) posited that “university presidents are now viewed as CEOs, faculty as entrepreneurs, and students as consumers” (p. 59). Senior leaders need to explore revenue generation ideas, and expend considerable energy in fund-raising efforts (Deem, 1998). Additionally, there has been a rise of professional administrators within the academy to help construct the market-like context and to monitor progress against well-articulated goals (Chan & Richardson, 2012). Asking and Stensaker (2002) contended that within this model of NPM, leaders need to be able to exercise discretion in their management of the organization; this management style runs counter to the purported collegial governance processes in most post-secondary institutions.

Although not always acknowledged as NPM, the underlying principles of this approach have been adopted globally including within Canadian higher education, according to Austin and Jones (2016). The result has been a marked shift away from a collegial model of shared governance towards a corporate model of governance (Austin & Jones, 2016; Chan & Richardson, 2012). The following section provides more insight into the nature of governance within Canadian post-secondary institutions.

Nature of Governance in Canadian Universities

Since 1867, as provinces joined Confederation, they agreed to a basic principle articulated in Section 93 of the British North America Act that the provinces shall exclusively make laws in relation to education, establishing the principle that education in Canada would be

a provincial rather than a federal, responsibility (*The British North America Act, 1867*). Jones (2002) argued that Canada may be the only nation in the developed world that has never had a national university or higher education act, or even a federal government minister assigned responsibility for higher education. This decentralization has led to a complex and varying arrangement of provincial and territorial higher education systems. The federal government plays an important role in higher education policy; however, as Barker (1998) has pointed out, it is a role that ebbs and flows, and has evolved through the dance of federal-provincial relations to the frequently conflicting tune of Canada's constitutional debate. Auld and Kitchen (2006) believed that the role that the federal government does play, however, is largely limited to providing funding, which has increasingly come earmarked for particular areas. This approach to funding is somewhat problematic when it is fit into the reality that Canadian higher education has developed a common model of university governance, wherein universities are regarded as autonomous institutions.

Chan and Richardson (2012) noted that the majority of Canadian universities have a bicameral governance structure involving a corporate board of governors with responsibility for administrative and fiscal matters, and the responsibility for academic matters is assigned to a senate. The composition and authority of each body are specified in the institutional charter. The bicameral model of university governance is based on the notion that authority within the institution should be divided between a corporate board and an academic senate (Jones, Shanahan & Goyan, 2001). The university in my study is rather unique when comes to its governance structure; it has a tricameral form of university governance. Alexandria University is composed of the Board of Governors, the Senate providing an additional platform for public voice, and the University Council responsible for all academic matters. Jones (2002) pointed out

that Canadian universities are created by university-specific provincial legislation that establishes them as private non-profit corporations, which gives them comparatively high levels of autonomy with decisions on institutional leadership, curriculum, admissions, and financial allocations being largely made at the level of the individual university.

Chan and Richardson (2012) found that the Board of Governors is typically responsible for the overall governance of the university, including all financial matters and matters related to property. About one-third of Board members are internal to the university including faculty, administrators and students, and two-thirds are external such as corporate executives. At many universities, the Board of Governors is self-perpetuating and can elect new members as existing members depart (Jones, 2002). Generally speaking, Boards of Governors devote their attention to seemingly non-academic matters (Jones & Skolnik, 1997).

As the chief executive officer of the university, the president is hired by the board of governors to, among other responsibilities: help the institution to define its mission, mandate, and priorities; ensure the effective management of the institution, its programs, and services; ensure the institution's fiscal health; ensure the quality of its academic endeavors including programs, teaching, research and scholarship, along with ensuring a climate of academic freedom and support for the pursuit of knowledge and truth (Turpin, 2014). The task of presiding over a contemporary university is far from simple. Declining government funding and, at best, flat enrolments imposes a requirement that new resources must be found. Canadian universities often have no choice but to resort to signing exclusivity contracts with beverage companies and electing wealthy land developers to university Boards of Governors as a survival strategy and not an ideological choice (Gray, 2004). According to Austin and Jones (2015), this reliance on

outside influences as a means of supporting the financial needs of the university is weakening the collegial model of governance that has long set universities apart from other societal institutions.

Demands of Change

It is important to keep in mind that there are constant challenges to the leaders' abilities to do their work well. According to Watkins (2013), everything changes, change brings challenge, and regardless of how good a leader is, he or she cannot stop all crises from happening. It is the manner in which a leader responds to those challenges that will define him or her as a leader and this will have a great deal to do with how effective they can be. There are a number of reasons for challenging circumstances to arise. For instance, it could be due to internal problems that present obstacles to reaching a goal, or from external factors that cannot be controlled which force a change of course. The key to strong leadership is learning to approach challenges and come up with appropriate solutions (Watkins, 2013). According to Strom (2014), it is also important that leaders are able to adapt to change and fit to new circumstances to their best ability.

Duderstadt (2001) pointed out that the most difficult decisions for senior leadership are those concerning institutional transformation, where long-lived programs and services no longer work and need serious alteration or, in the worst-case scenario, a complete elimination. The questions are: how does a large, complex, and tradition-bound institution such as a university transform itself to better serve a changing world? How does the university administration and leadership make these difficult decisions in tough times? This challenge is particularly true when taking into consideration that major changes in higher education are typically driven by forces from outside the academy, which by their very nature can rarely be foreseen or anticipated

(Duderstadt, 2001). The process of institutional change for universities is increasingly complex and hazardous for university leadership. It must be approached strategically rather than reactively, with a deep understanding of the role and character of institutions, their important traditions and values from the past, and a clear and compelling vision for their future (Duderstadt, 2001).

Cameron (2002) noted that Canadian universities were first forced to change when they were faced with the immediate crisis of numbers in the postwar years, brought on by a rising participation rate and the postwar Baby Boom. The response, led initially by the federal government, was to enlarge the university system, and later the entire postsecondary sector, very rapidly through the 1950s and 1960s.

In the mid 1960s, the federal government made a fundamental change to its policies regarding the funding of post-secondary education in Canada (Barker, 1998).

It accomplished this by replacing the per-capita grant transfers to universities with unconditional grants to provincial governments. This shift in funding translated into the provinces receiving a block transfer from the federal government consisting of cash and tax points, which represented approximately fifty percent of the operating grants of the post-secondary institutions. There was an implied expectation that the provinces would pay for the remaining fifty percent. This arrangement was known as a cost-sharing or 50/50 arrangement (Barker, 1998).

In the process of rapid growth, the make-up of universities changed dramatically, becoming much more democratic and laissez-faire in their management (Cameron, 2002). That was followed by a prolonged period of restraint, as provincial governments regained a measure of control over universities, and the public became skeptical of the benefits accruing from rapidly rising post-secondary expenditures in the face of tight fiscal circumstances and

competing demands (Barker, 1998). Consequently, universities became much more rigid organizations, resistant to government-managed change, and focused on the self-interest of unionized faculty members (Cameron, 2002).

Lawless (1982) suggested that higher education is a bit slow to change, given its traditional and academic nature. Lawless pointed out that crises were helpful in promoting change:

There is nothing like a recession to instill a greater sense of urgency. Rather than complain about the cuts let's look at the flip side: What can we do to make ourselves stronger? We need to seek, and seek very actively, the silver lining in this economic downturn (p. 6)

Canadian universities are considered by some in the public and private sectors to be inefficient organizations, largely because of their inability to make swift decisions related to cost effectiveness (Lawless, 1982). For institutions of higher education, the challenge is in the ability to define what makes the institution the way it is, and to sustain those things while identifying the opportunities to evolve or reprioritize. The advice for university leadership is to sit down and focus on the mission of the institution (Lawless, 1982).

Effective University Leadership

Today's effective leaders must possess a sophisticated understanding of their multifaceted organizations. This knowledge includes having an understanding of the organization from several perspectives. These perspectives include an understanding regarding the impact of human dynamics and human interactions, of the underlying culture of the organization, and of the

importance of using organizational structures in the promotion of the organization's vision and mission (Bolman & Gallos, 2010).

Unfortunately, there is no “one size fits all” manual that could be used to attain successful leadership skills. Instead, there are a wide variety of leadership styles and suggested behaviours laid out in literature and countless leadership improvement guides (Strom, 2014). Strom (2014) argued that leadership is a complicated notion that is full of mystery. There are a number of tools that can guide leaders through tough times and the decision making process, but it is ultimately dependent on the individual leader as to how they will adapt to certain situations and if they are able to “lead thoughtfully and humanely in situations where no textbook can give the answers” (Strom, 2014 p. 27). Strom believed that wisdom, personality, having a vision and the ability to decode the on-going situation and act accordingly are some of the key attributes possessed by a successful leader.

Changes that are taking place within universities have a direct impact on the roles and responsibilities of their leaders, particularly the university president (Goodall, 2006). Buller (2014) highlighted the importance of the university president to rise above the complexity in order to inspire, direct and guide transformation. In the changing times that universities face, a better understanding of presidential leadership is invaluable (Ekman, 2010). There is a substantial body of literature on strategic leadership, notably for the private sector (Finkelstein, 2003; Gardner, 1993; Watkins, 2013). On the other hand, the academic leader is the least studied and most misunderstood management position. This is true despite the incredible importance of these leadership positions (Paul, 2015). Demands for accountability, and the complexities associated with being in a position of higher education leadership are increasing. Institutions

need proven methods to shape leaders at all levels, including the department chair, dean, and executive levels of all functions and responsibilities (Gmelch & Buller, 2015).

Leadership demands

Michael, Schwartz and Balraj (2001) described the university president as “the most visible embodiment of institutional mission, vision and culture” (p. 332). Paul (2015) saw the most important role of a university president as managing the big picture: the institution’s mission, vision and long-term goals. The role of university president as a leader is extensive. Gray (2004) underlined vital aspects such as: university management and budgeting; articulating the mission and vision of the university; being the public face of the university; setting the tone for the academic plan and ensuring a positive campus climate. With so many competing priorities related to one’s role, the complexity of the role of a university president becomes an important element to fully understand. This understanding is particularly imperative in a time when the university itself is undergoing significant change. In addition to making ongoing academic and administrative decisions fundamental to the operation of the university, the president must respond to an array of unforeseen events, challenges or opportunities that require immediate attention and rapid decision making (Gray, 2004).

A carefully developed strategy is necessary for handling such crises, both to prevent universities from lapsing into a reactive mode, as well as to take advantage of the occasional possibility of transforming a crisis into an opportunity (Paul, 2015). There is no plan that ensures control, but a reference to a plan in a time of uncertainty can minimize the turmoil and reduce the risk of damage by forces outside of the leadership’s control. Leaders need to keep in mind that planning is easier in theory than in practice. Pursuing a planning process in tough times can be

problematic, as the number of barriers and limitations often seem to outnumber opportunities and resources (Fullan, 2005).

Tough times provide motivation for reorganization. Some reorganizations are more for appearances, others have a negative impact, and the vast majority are shortsighted and therefore are short-lived (Duderstadt, 2001). Only a very few result in lasting change and have a positive impact on the unit's mission and the unit's financial sustainability (Duderstadt, 2001).

No discussion of presidential leadership among public universities will last long without addressing the matter of the financial realities the institutions must face. In terms of time investment, no issue is more preoccupying for a president both in terms of ensuring the revenues maintain a steady flow, and carefully managing the expenditures (Axelrod, Wellen, Shanahan & Trilokekar, 2013). On the revenue side, the president's challenge begins with having to persuade governments and taxpayers of the vital importance of investing in universities for the future economic and social health of the province and of the country. On the expenditure side, it means tight fiscal management and doing everything possible to make optimum use of the resources available (Paul, 2015). Uncertain times encourage caution and create a tendency to 'tread water' until the situation clears up and predictable patterns emerge or return. However, failure to plan during tough times contributes to a self-defeating, reactive mindset (Gardner, 1993).

Understanding Organizational Culture

According to Schein (2010), the strength of a leader is directly related to the success of the organization. He described how different organizations begin to create cultures through the actions of strong leaders. Schein argued that leaders need to understand the natural processes by which culture evolves and changes as organizations grow and age to be able to steer them. The

way in which culture can and does change depends on the stage at which the organization finds itself from early growth, midlife to maturity and decline. Schein saw leadership as the source of the beliefs and values and he believed that it was critical for leaders to understand the deeper levels of a culture. Schein described organizational level as comprised of three levels. The first level is exemplified through artefacts, which include all the phenomena evident to people coming into that culture. The next deeper level is espoused beliefs and values, the ideals the organization claims is reflected in its mandate and its work. The deepest level is the basic underlying assumptions; these assumptions are “unconscious, taken-for-granted beliefs and values” (Schein, 2010, p. 24). These values are deeply embedded and are difficult to change. With change and when prior held assumptions are challenged, people become anxious.

Today’s leaders are confronted with many complex issues and their success will depend, to a great extent, upon understanding organizational culture. Schein argued that many of the problems faced by leaders are caused by their inability to analyze and evaluate their own organization’s culture. Furthermore, if a leader tries to develop a new strategic plan or a new vision, he or she needs to ensure that it is consistent with the organization’s culture, or else the plan or vision will not succeed. Schein (2010) noted from his research that attempts at organizational transformation would fail when an organization’s existing culture is not taken into account.

In his research, Schein (2010) identified a number of primary and secondary elements, qualities and conditions that are critical for effective culture change. The primary mechanisms are the main ways by which leaders affect cultural change through their visible actions. He pointed his readers to the importance of attention, reaction to crisis, role modeling and reward

allocation within organizational culture. The values, beliefs, and priorities of the leader are reflective of where he or she places their attention and what is most important to them.

According to Schein (2010), followers look at what the leader is looking at and to what is he paying close attention. When a leader is emotionally invested in something, then followers will understand that that particular topic is important. Another crucial element for effective organizational culture change that Schein (2010) pointed out is reactions to crises. A leader's response in a time of crisis uncovers their deeper values and demonstrates the leader's commitment to the organization and to the followers. Especially in emotionally charged situations, the leader's actions more likely will be remembered and will be perceived as the leader's true self. Schein (2010) also emphasized the importance of role modeling as one of the primary mechanisms necessary for effective culture change. He argued that followers pay close attention to what the leaders say and do. When there is a conflict between actions and words, followers will believe the leader's actions before their words. People assume that how leaders behave is how their followers will tend to behave.

Allocation of rewards is yet another element that Schein (2010) found important in changing organizational culture effectively. He argued that rewards, from praise to promotion, will highlight what is the desired behaviour and desired outcomes expected by the organization. According to Schein (2010), "Changes in the reward and punishment system are also one of the quickest and easiest ways to being to change behavior and, thereby, begin to change some elements of the culture" (p. 108).

According to Schein (2010), another important element that has a significant influence on effective culture change is the design of systems and procedures within organizations. These systems and procedures include budgeting, information systems, performance reviews and

management development. They significantly impact the day to day work of the people within the organization. Deliberate design of these systems can promote a stronger alignment with desired cultural development. Any time an organization releases its budget, it is fairly transparent what their priorities are, what is the main focus and direction in which they are moving.

The last but not least element that according to Schein (2010) contributes to an effective culture change is the design of facilities. The built environment often reflects subconsciously the organization's values. The office space, furnishings, and even location of the space can indicate hierarchical order within an organization and indicate the perceived value of the organizational members. All of these elements, considered together, help to shape the organizational culture.

Leadership Succession in University Contexts

Watkins (2013) argued that transitions in leadership are periods of opportunity, a chance to start fresh and to make changes that are needed in an organization. However, they can also be periods of acute vulnerability, due to a lack of established working relationships and an inadequate understanding of the new role (Watkins, 2013). Outside leaders are not as familiar with the organization's structure and the existence of informal networks of information and communication. Similarly, an external leader would not necessarily be familiar with the organizational culture and therefore have greater difficulty adapting if any challenging circumstances arise (Klein & Salk, 2013). The external leader is also unknown to the organization and therefore does not have the same credibility as someone who is appointed from within. The effects that a new leader can have when joining an existing team depends on the actions taken to prepare and adapt the new leader to the new team, the new organization and vice versa (Bornstein, 2010).

Paul (2015), in his recent book based on leadership theory, conducted interviews with eleven of Canada's most successful presidents, who collectively had thirty-five years of personal experience. These presidents discussed the complexity and importance of leading a university in the Canadian context. Paul noted that while the role of the university president has evolved dramatically in recent years, the recruitment pool and selection process has experienced little change since the 1960s. Organizational culture and institutional fit are crucial for leaders confronting critical academic issues such as academic leadership and accountability, student success and support, university funding and fund-raising, strategic planning, government and community relations, and internationalism. Paul (2015) argued that changes to some long-standing practices are necessary, particularly in a time when the quality of universities has never been more critical to the economic, social, and political success of the country.

Trachtenberg et al., (2013) posited that in recent years, university presidents have become as expendable as football coaches; one bad 'season', scandal, or political or financial misstep and they are sent 'packing'. These high-profile appointments are faced with increased scrutiny from students, faculty, administrators, alumni, and the media, and problems that perhaps should remain internal are discussed all too publicly (Cafley, 2015). Turpin (2014) noted that a combination of constrained resources and a new trend toward hiring from outside of academia results in tensions between governing boards and presidents that can erupt quickly into an outright conflict. Sometimes presidents are dismissed for performance, financial, or institutional fit reasons, but there are nearly always political reasons as well.

According to Trachtenberg et al. (2013) presidents do not often fall from grace quietly; they typically come crashing down in a large, very public affair. In addition, the media speculate loudly but rarely understand all of the underlying nuances of the situation, including how

significant failure can be to an institution. Trachtenberg et al. (2013), in a series of case studies, illuminated the types of behavior exhibited by presidents and boards that led to termination within the period of the first contract. These cases were followed with advice for aspiring presidents and boards about improving the processes of search, transition, and assessment.

Leadership Succession Planning

According to Hargreaves (2005), one of the most significant events in the life of a university is a change in its leadership. Bornstein (2010) noted that the end of a university presidency is an event about which institutions understandably avoid thinking and talking. Due mainly to tradition and culture, succession planning in higher education is not a formalized process (Klein & Salk, 2013). Few institutions have a protocol in place that describes the processes of what will happen once a president steps down. Yet, orderly transition requires careful planning for several years before a change is anticipated. Planning for a transition when change is not imminent simplifies the process of developing procedures that earn the trust of the stakeholders (Hart, 1993). Succession planning in higher education focuses on the preparation of individuals to take on key leadership roles when other leaders retire, transfer, or find new opportunities outside of an institution or higher education (Hargreaves, 2005).

Failure to care for leadership succession is sometimes a result of manipulation or self-centeredness, but more often it is due to oversight, neglect, or the pressures of crisis management (Hargreaves, 2005). This rationale for why the culture of higher education has not developed succession planning models is sometimes supported by the institution's desire to go in a different direction and disregard the logical internal successors such as the provost, vice presidents, and deans. The lack of consideration for succession planning in academia is also due to the limited time devoted to an internal operational focus on leadership (Buller, 2014), along with the belief

that only a national search can address concerns regarding a fair and comprehensive selection process (Bornstein, 2010).

Almost every book concerning the challenges of being a university president recognizes the delicate balance that a successful incumbent must find between understanding and respecting the academic culture that defines a university and working through and around it to initiate change that is deemed to be in the long-term interests of the institution (Paul, 2015). Paul (2015) pointed out that while such leadership should be easier for an internal appointee to the presidency, given that he or she knows the key players and understands how things work in the particular institution, this advantage is often offset by the much shorter honeymoon period that exists for an insider.

Leadership Sustainability

Increasing attention has been devoted to research on the need for, and nature of, leadership sustainability in educational organizations. Hargreaves and Fink (2004) argued that sustainable leadership is leadership that “matters, spreads and lasts. It is a shared responsibility, that does not unduly deplete human or financial resources; and that cares for, and avoids exerting negative damage on, the surrounding educational and community environment” (p. 2). Hargreaves and Fink advocated for seven fundamental principles, which should guide leaders through the varying factors involved in creating a high-quality learning environment that will sustain itself for many years, and over the tenure of many leaders. The authors drew comparisons to environmental sustainability and sustainable business practices, with practices that are prevalent in education, and utilized these comparisons to discuss the direction that leadership should take in order to create lasting, positive change in leadership practices. Sustainable

leadership actively engages with the forces that affect and shape an organizationally diverse educational environment, which promotes the cross-fertilization of valuable ideas and successful practices within communities of shared learning and development (Hargreaves & Fink, 2004).

The challenges of sustainability impact all aspects of universities including teaching and learning, research, operations and community relations. Across North America, institutions are exploring new management models and creating advisory councils, task forces and steering committees to take an institutional approach to sustainability (Bornstein, 2010). This practice is beneficial, as those taking an institutional approach are likely to find themselves with a competitive advantage in the future. Fullan and Scott (2009) argued that sustainability is no longer only about operational practices; it is about the interests of faculty members, staff and students learning and working together to shape a sustainable future for their institution. It creates challenges for administrators and academics alike, making leadership at the institutional level essential to its success.

According to Schein (2010), the strength of a leader is directly related to the success of the organization. Leaders need to have a long-term solution in mind; they must strike a balance between what people want in the short term and what is in the long-term best interest of the institution they are sworn to serve. Transparency and collaborative approaches are also important in earning people's trust, and these elements are perhaps especially true during time of change and transition (Strom, 2014). Sustainable leadership embodies these aspects, as it seeks to ensure that whatever success has been achieved is not undone through unsuccessful transfer of power. Sustainable leadership is attained not only by means of the actions of a single individual, but also on the development and implementation of a carefully prepared succession plan (Bornstein, 2010).

Bolman and Deal (2003) believed that “leaders fail when they take too narrow a view” (p. 433). Leaders by the virtue of their role have an obligation to learn to view the world through a prism. This prism allows them to see what is seemingly right in front of them, and at the same time view the many facets of that which they otherwise fail to take into account. The challenge is to examine these various views with flexibility. Leaders need to see their organizations through new frames of perspective. “Success requires artistry, skill, and the ability to see organizations as organic forms in which needs, roles, power, and symbols must be integrated to provide direction and shape behavior” (Bolman & Deal, 2003, p. 433). This is not an easy task but one that is necessary in order to be a successful leader.

Chapter Summary

In this Chapter, I examined literature that provided additional perspectives on the phenomena central to this investigation, namely: the context of higher education and its implications for the emerging role of universities in a knowledge-based society; the nature of governance in Canadian universities; and the nature of change and its impacts on priorities and emerging demands for university leadership and governance.

Literature pertaining to university governance and the university presidency, particularly that which addresses succession and issues of context and leadership sustainability, has not been extensive. However, the work of Chan and Richardson (2012) and Jones and Skolnik (1997), on the nature of university governance and the roles of boards of governors in Canadian universities, the insights of Paul (2015), Turpin (2014), Watkins (2013), and Hargreaves (2005) into presidential roles and transition/succession in the Canadian university contexts, and the conceptualizations provided by Hargreaves and Fink (2012) on leadership sustainability, provided rich perspectives for my investigation.

The theoretical framework for this study was based on an organizational culture perspective, and I devoted significant space in this review to organizational culture phenomena, with emphasis on the work of Edgar Schein (2010). This framework provided additional grounding for my exploration of leadership succession in a university context, related succession planning initiatives, and their implications for leadership sustainability.

CHAPTER THREE

Research Design

The purpose of the study was to explore the perceptions of selected stakeholders in one university regarding presidential succession and to examine related implications for succession planning, organizational culture, and leadership sustainability. Consistent with the purpose of the study, the overarching research question was, how do stakeholders in one university perceive the presidential succession process and what are the related implications for succession planning, organizational culture, and leadership sustainability? The following research sub-questions guided the investigation.

1. How do stakeholders perceive the importance of context in succession processes?
2. What are the perceptions of stakeholders regarding effective succession processes?
3. What are the perceptions of stakeholders regarding the desired outcomes of succession processes?
4. What are the perceptions of stakeholders regarding the implications of succession processes for organizational culture?
5. What are the perceptions of stakeholders regarding the implications of succession processes for future succession planning?
6. What are the perceptions of stakeholders regarding the implications of succession processes for leadership sustainability?

In this chapter, I outline the conceptual framework that I employed in my research study. I describe the research method and the specific methodology that were used in my research. I also explain the rationale for making these choices supported by appropriate literature in the field. In

this chapter, I also discuss the elements and application of the case study approach including data collection and data analysis.

Considerations in Research Design

I believe that social, political, and historical contexts shape reality and my ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions are reflective of a qualitative research paradigm. Qualitative research is exploratory in nature, where researchers seek insights regarding reasons, opinions or motivations in order to understand a problem or a hypothesis (Creswell, 2007; Merriam, 1998). The qualitative research data and the accompanying analysis are often an outcome of open-ended questioning. Further, the research is holistic; the complex system must be examined across multiple perspectives. The researcher builds upon their own insights and utilizes personal contact to engage participation and build trust with the participants (Guba & Lincoln, 2005; Merriam, 1998). Unlike quantitative research, the findings are not generalizable because the research is context-sensitive, rather the complete context as described by the researcher allows the reader to understand how the study's context aligns with their own. (Patton, 1990). (Patton, 1990). Lincoln and Guba (2000) referred to the qualitative approach as naturalistic inquiry. Peshkin (2000) noted that interpretation is inherent in all parts of qualitative research, from the moment the research focus is determined to the final writing stages of the report. These characterizations of qualitative research resonate with my approach to conducting research.

My study is an interpretivist construction (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003; Guba & Lincoln, 2005) of the experience of succession in the context of presidency change at one Canadian university. In my role as a researcher conducting a qualitative research study, I assemble and

interpret the findings of the study. According to Merriam (1998) the epistemology that should orient qualitative case study is constructivism since, “the key philosophical assumption upon which all types of qualitative research are based is the view that reality is constructed by individuals interacting with their social worlds” (p. 6). In the same vein “reality is not an objective entity; rather, there are multiple interpretations of reality” (Merriam, 1998, p. 22).

In attempting to make sense of the social world, constructionists view knowledge as something that is constructed as opposed to created. Social constructionism embraces the idea that ‘truth’ is elusive, while objectivity and value neutrality simply weaken the ability to investigate and critically analyze things from a multiplicity of perspectives (Sayer, 2000). I position myself as closely subscribed to the constructivist paradigm since I conceive knowledge as being socially constructed and emerging from peoples’ social practices. Therefore, I conceptualize social reality as being generated and constructed by people and existing largely within people’s minds. This perspective makes a qualitative research design the appropriate approach for my study of succession in the context of presidency change at one Canadian university. Based on my research questions and the need to comprehend the how and why of presidential succession and leadership sustainability, I decided to use qualitative research to explore stakeholders' perceptions in one university regarding presidential succession from an organizational culture perspective and to examine related implications for succession planning and leadership sustainability. The perspectives of the key actors in the succession process is important, as I believe that reality is subjective and multiple (Creswell, 2007).

Case Study Approach

Qualitative research includes a number of approaches, and the field of qualitative

research continues to evolve (Creswell, 2007). From the variety of approaches, I determined that the key features of the case study approach seemed to fit my study best. Case study research is an increasingly popular approach among qualitative researchers (Thomas, 2011). Several prominent authors have contributed to methodological developments, which have increased the popularity of case study approaches across disciplines (Creswell, 2013; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Merriam, 2009; Ragin & Becker, 1992; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2009). Merriam (1998) defined qualitative case study as “an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a bounded phenomenon such as a program, an institution, a person, a process, or a social unit” (p. xiii). The scope of the case study is bounded and the findings can rarely be generalized, but the case study can provide rich and significant insights into events and behaviors. It can “contribute uniquely to our knowledge of individual, organizational, social, and political phenomena” (Yin, 2009, p. 14).

There are three central principles that underlie case study methodology, which include: a wish to describe a phenomenon of interest in detail; a desire to capture the participant’s voice and perspective; and a means for addressing questions of how or why (Creswell, 2002; Yin 2009). The research methodology used in my study of the phenomenon of succession places strong emphasis on the individuals’ recollections of their experiences, within their particular context. The relation and common patterns drawn between each of the data sources is also of importance. Case study research enables a nuanced perspective of reality of human behaviour and interaction, both as an individual and within a group, or, in this case, the university community (Yin, 2009).

According to Merriam (1998) the most important characteristic of case study research “lies in delimiting the object of study: the case” (p. 27). The case is a unit, entity, or phenomenon with defined boundaries that the researcher can define or confine, and therefore, can also allow

the researcher to determine what will not be studied. It may be the limit on the number of people to be interviewed, a finite time frame for observations, or the instance of some issue, concern, or hypothesis (Merriam, 1998). The researcher is challenged to fully understand and articulate the unit under study. In my research, I examined the specific bounded system of one university, including examining activity patterns that supported the leadership and succession in a university. Within this examination, I considered the context, issues, and dynamics of the phenomenon of succession, its implications for succession planning and leadership sustainability.

The interpretive element of qualitative research centres on the way in which human beings make sense of their subjective reality and attach meaning to it. Social scientists approach people not as individual entities who exist in a vacuum but explore their world within the whole of their life context. Researchers with this worldview believe that understanding human experiences is as important as focusing on explanation, prediction and control (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). In qualitative research, the experiences of people are essentially context-bound; they are not free from time and location or the mind of the human participant. Researchers need to understand the socially constructed nature of the world, and also realise that values and interests become part of the research. Complete objectivity and neutrality are impossible to achieve; the values of researchers and participants can become an integral part of the research. This approach requires reflexivity in my role as researcher, I need to take into account my own position in the setting and situation, as the researcher I am the main research tool (Creswell, 2013).

Site and Participant Selection

My intention was to examine and more easily understand implications for succession planning and leadership sustainability. I focused on one Canadian university where the succession process had recently taken place in order to understand the phenomenon of succession in the context of presidency change, and where participants may have a strong notion and experience of the succession process. The change needed to be recent enough so that participants were in a position to accurately discuss the idea of successful leadership succession in university contexts.

I interviewed participants that were current and past senior administrators and members of senior committees including faculty and student representatives. I conducted semi-structured interviews using purposeful sampling, which is a technique widely used in qualitative research for the identification and selection of information rich cases for the most effective use of limited resources (Patton, 2005). This process involves identifying and selecting individuals or groups of individuals who are especially knowledgeable about or experienced with a phenomenon of interest (Creswell, 2013). I made a series of strategic choices when identifying who the major stakeholders were that had been involved in a succession process; interviewing carefully selected participants provided me with valuable information, which added depth to my study. I used general criteria for inclusion of participants: knowledge of the succession process, willingness and ability to participate including legal and ethical constraints.

Data Collection

To reiterate, my study is an interpretive construction of presidential succession at one university. Data focused on perceptions and reflections of people who been involved the process

of presidential succession. Data for this study were collected via interviews with ten of these participants, designed to inform the context within which the succession process played itself out, and to provide in-depth information on the research questions guiding the study. The focus of data collections was on perceptions of participants.

Data Interpretation

In the context of qualitative research crystallization has been accepted as means for combining all sources of data (Ellingson, 2009). In this study, especially at the stage of data interpretation, my position within the senior administrative office had an influence, and my own reflections as an administrator played a role. University context, using my own perspective, conversation with my supervisors were all parts of the sense making process. Crystallization provides an effective approach to richly describing our findings as we “encounter and make sense of data through more than one way of knowing” (Ellingson, 2009, p. 11). Crystallization falls within a social constructionist worldview offering a valuable way of thinking and creative inquiry to produce knowledge, and to create a conceptual analysis of the data (Creswell, 2007). Typically, researchers triangulate data from within a single methodology, whereas crystallization not only uses traditional triangulation, but also embodies additional analytical perspectives to further strengthen, improve, and code the data (Ellingson, 2009).

Interviews

For this research, as previously mentioned, I used the form of semi-structured interviews. Open-ended, semi-structured interviews enable a discussion; as part of the discussion, statements can be clarified. Furthermore, additional information be sought in a deliberate, detailed and thorough manner (Merriam, 2002). Within this process, there is a close collaboration between the researcher and the participant. The participants’ perceptions and recollections describe their

views of reality and help the researcher to understand the participants' actions and reflections within the given context.

I interviewed sufficient participants to develop as comprehensive a picture as possible of stakeholder perceptions regarding presidential succession and its implications for succession planning, organizational culture, and leadership sustainability. I invited participants who could offer a variety of perspectives on different points of time during the succession process. By doing so, I tried to balance the various perspectives of the entire process. I also asked the participants to consider the external and internal contexts, including the governmental priorities, societal changes, and economic conditions.

The number of participants depended on the ability of participants to provide a clear picture of the succession process. I interviewed ten participants, current and past senior administrators and members of senior committees including faculty and student representatives. I wanted participants with knowledge from all the stages of the succession process. In my study, each of the participants was in some way connected to the studied university and all came from academic and administrative backgrounds.

For the semi-structured interviews, I used open-ended questions to provide some structure, but I asked further clarifying questions as necessary throughout the interview process. The interviews were guided by research questions set out in the interview guide following the main research question guiding my study. Through this process, I have a better grasp of their points of view, thus being able to uncover information that leads to a better understanding of their perceptions. McMillan (2008) noted: "Semi-structured questions do not have predetermined, structured choices. Rather the question is open-ended yet specific in intent, allowing individual responses" (p. 177). According to Stake (1995), the most difficult part of

research is designing a good research question, that will be most effective. In addition, “good research questions are infinitely complex and the phenomena are fluid and elusive” (Stake, 1995, p. 33). The semi-structured protocol that guided the interviews is included as Appendix A. All of the interviews were taped using an audio recorder. I also took extensive notes during each of the interviews.

Pilot

To ensure as comprehensive a picture of the nature of presidency change, I also undertook pilot interviews in order to refine my interview questions and build on my interviewing experience and follow up process. According to Merriam (1998) pilot interviews are crucial in gaining practice in interviewing, but also “learning which questions may need rewording, which questions yield useless data, and which questions, suggested by your respondents, you should have thought to include in the first place” to refine the interview protocol (p. 76). The pilot interview helped me in clarifying one of the questions I intended to ask the participants.

I piloted the protocol with two people not connected to the study. The purpose of the pilot was to refine the questions and to develop my own expertise in conducting interviews and responding to participants’ comments.

Data Analysis

“The researcher brings a construction of reality to the research situation, which interacts with other people’s constructions or interpretations of the phenomenon being studied. The final product of this type of study is yet another interpretation

by the researcher of others' views filtered through his or her own". (Merriam, 1998, p. 22)

The process of data analysis can be a challenge in case studies because of the tremendous amounts of data generated from the multiple sources (Merriam, 1998). In my case study, multiple perspectives on the process of succession were gathered through semi-structured interviews with participants who had some connection to the university and its succession processes and procedures.

Coding

According to Merriam (1998), coding identifies "information about the data and interpretive constructs related to analysis" (p. 164). She characterized coding as "nothing more than assigning some sort of short-hand designation to various aspects of your data so that you can easily retrieve specific pieces of the data" (Merriam, 1998, p. 164). As the data were collected, I conducted preliminary data analysis because, as Stake (2005) contended, the process of preliminary data analysis and interpretation occurs simultaneously with data collection. Initial themes are developed and revised. The researcher is faced with many decisions, and those decisions are part of the interpretive nature of qualitative research. Before the data collection begins, the researcher should develop some ideas of how to organize the information, including developing preliminary themes. "Because the critical issues are more likely to be known in advance and to follow disciplinary expectations, such a design can take greater advantage of already-designed instruments and preconceived coding schemes" (Stake, 2005, p. 450).

The works of Yin (2003), Stake (1995), and Merriam (1998) all devoted considerable discussion to the process of categorization and the development of themes. Additionally, Thomas (2006) contended that, in analyzing qualitative data, an inductive analysis approach is

needed in making sense of the data. Using interviews allowed me to describe particular experiences in much detail and to develop a theory based on the learning while taking into account the contextual and particular aspects of each experience. My research was inductive in nature as opposed to deductive and while truths may be suggested, they are not ensured. This approach creates more of a bottom-up process to knowledge construction. In this type of study, each inquiry results in uncovering more questions than answers. The researcher's values, inherent biases, and the context itself influences the research question, theory, method and context (Lincoln & Guba, 2000). Using inductive coding, the researcher can analyze the texts and uncover concepts, themes, and relationships within the raw data. The researcher can discover categories, and interrelationships in the data and organize these themes into a scheme that may extend existing theories, add to current literature, and lead to the development of a conceptual framework (Thomas, 2006). This method facilitates the use of text to provide a window into the human experience (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). The research focused on building a general, more abstract understanding of a single, social phenomenon that interacts and is relationship-based (Singleton & Straits, 2005).

Emergence of themes

In my study, I used crystallization with the intent to interpret the meanings others have about the world (Creswell, 2007) by using semi-structured interviews to generate the data along with data analysis. I also posed follow-up questions, transcribed and reviewed all data, and had frequent debriefed with other researchers (Lincoln & Guba, 2000). I kept notes throughout the process and debrief with my supervisors following each interview using the recommendations of the member check process. I also reviewed the process with fellow graduate student colleagues. My methods focused on process while understanding and interpreting a unique situation

(Rothwell, 2005). Understanding cognitive maps and schema that the participants use, and how these maps can be adapted in response to unexpected events or emergent challenges, provides a deeper understanding personal experiences (Crandall, Klein & Hoffman, 2006). The discovery of nuances is also important, and supports the analysis of a large amount of data in a relatively short time period (Marshall & Rossland, 2006).

To assist me with the emergence of themes I used coding methods developed by Saldana (2013). This process reduces data into themes, which later could be represented in figures, tables or a discussion. As my coding progressed I categorized codes that shared similarities, threading them into groups that logically and intuitively fit together. Working with these themes and groups, I utilized analytic memo writing (Saldana, 2013), and searched for pertinent information that led me toward a deeper understanding of the succession process at the studied university. Throughout this process I had debriefs with my supervisors following each interview to ensure I was focused on process while understanding and interpreting a unique set of data.

Trustworthiness

As a qualitative researcher, I was the primary tool used in my research. Due to this circumstance, my own biases, characteristics, and experiences can potentially threaten the trustworthiness of my research (O'Leary, 2009). Lichtman (2011), among other qualitative researchers, strongly opposed the use of common quality criteria for evaluating qualitative work; they felt that the diversity of qualitative work and different methodological approaches do not allow for tightly defined criteria. Others believed that ensuring a high level of trustworthiness is of great importance in order to evaluate its worth (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008; Guba & Lincoln,

2005). According to Guba and Lincoln (2005) trustworthiness involves establishing: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Credibility

It is crucial to ensure that a research study measures or tests that which was intended. According to Merriam (1998), the qualitative investigator's equivalent concept, *i.e.* credibility, deals with the question: how congruent are the findings with reality? Lincoln and Guba (1985) argued that ensuring credibility is one of most important factors in establishing trustworthiness. In addressing credibility, researchers must try to develop a true picture of the phenomenon under study. Credibility supports the trustworthiness of data through the following attributes: prolonged engagement; persistent observations; triangulation; referential adequacy; peer debriefing; and member checks. Referential adequacy involves identifying a portion of data to be archived, but not analyzed. The researcher analyzes the remaining data and develops preliminary findings. The researcher then returns to this archived data and analyzes it as a way to test the validity of his or her findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The researcher uses member checks by asking participants to review the data collected and the researcher's interpretation of that interview data. Member checks give participants opportunity to correct errors and challenge what are perceived as wrong interpretations, and it also provides the opportunity to volunteer additional information, which may be stimulated by the playing back process (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In my data collection once I transcribed the interview, I asked the participants to review these transcripts to ensure I had captured their answer correctly and it provided them with an opportunity to add additional information.

Transferability

Another important criterion in establishing trustworthiness involves transferability. According to Merriam (2009) external validity “is concerned with the extent to which the findings of one study can be applied to other situations” (p. 253). To allow transferability, researchers need to provide sufficient detail of context of the setting so that the reader can determine if the environment and context of the current study is similar to another situation with which he or she is familiar; the reader decides if the study’s findings can justifiably be applied across settings. Lincoln and Guba (1985) believed that thick description is a way of achieving transferability. Using thick description and sufficient detail, the researcher builds a more complete picture and the reader can evaluate the extent to which the findings of the particular study are transferable to other times, settings, situations, and people. In my study, I ensured to provide an appropriate amount of detail and context to allow the reader to draw potential comparison to succession processes at other institution.

Dependability

Dependability is another essential criterion involved in establishing trustworthiness. Achieving dependability criterion is challenging in qualitative work; it means that the researcher has to demonstrate that, if the study was repeated within the same context, using the same methods and participants, there would be similar results (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Lincoln and Guba (1985) stressed the close relationship between credibility and dependability; they argued that meeting criteria for the former is very helpful in ensuring that the criteria for the latter are met. Data validity can be assessed through the use of external audits; external audits require a researcher not involved in the current study evaluating the process and the results of the particular research study under review. The purpose of this examination is to evaluate the

accuracy and to determine if the findings, interpretations and conclusions are aligned with the data. External audits allow for outside researchers to evaluate the process and findings of a research study, which can provide important feedback that can lead to additional data gathering and the development of stronger and better articulated findings (Creswell, 2007). To ensure that my study met the dependability criterion, I consulted with my supervisors along all the steps of my study. Starting with selecting the key internal stakeholders, developing an interview guide, doing pilot interviews to warrant consistency, and throughout data collection and interpretation, I followed steps to ensure the dependability criterion was met.

Confirmability

Confirmability is the final criterion presented by Guba and Lincoln (2005) involved in achieving trustworthiness. In order to achieve confirmability, researchers must take steps to demonstrate that findings emanate from the participants' perspectives and not from the characteristics and preferences of the researcher (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Miles and Huberman (1994) argued that a key criterion for confirmability is the extent to which the researcher is up front about their own biases and positionality. A researcher's beliefs underpinning the decision-making and methods adopted should be acknowledged within the research report. "A researcher's background and position will affect what they choose to investigate, the angle of investigation, the methods judged most adequate for this purpose, the findings considered most appropriate, and the framing and communication of conclusions" (Malterud, 2001, pp. 483-484).

Another key criterion for confirmability is an audit trail, which allows others to follow the course of the research step-by-step by a description through the decisions made and procedures followed (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). To ensure confirmability it is important to have a clear description of the research path, which includes research design and data collection

decisions and the steps taken to manage, analyze and report data. This description should include information about sampling, clarification of the team members' roles, and a thorough description of different data sources (Malterud, 2001).

Each of the dimensions of trustworthiness is essential to examine when building a qualitative research design; I adopted methods in my research that are consistent with the described above criteria. I left an audit trail by transcribing interviews, identifying the coding used in NVivo, and analyzing my field notes; in addition, I used direct quotations liberally within my thesis. Further, I increased both the credibility and transferability of my research by allowing readers to see the clarity of constructions. I described the situations with a high level of detail and the use of direct quotations to clearly capture the perspectives of the participants (Guba & Lincoln, 2005).

Ethical Considerations

I understand that confidentiality is very important, and the invocation of certain measures ensures the confidentiality of participants and the institution. Participant names were changed to protect their privacy and their personal identities. I used pseudonyms to keep the personalized nature of the relationships discussed, including the relationship between the individuals and the institution, confidential.

Throughout the research, the general ethics procedures outlined by the University of Saskatchewan were followed. These guidelines include the use of participant consent forms, confidentiality procedures, and release of transcribed data forms. Participants were informed that their participation was voluntary, and they were able to withdraw from the study at any time. In addition, they had the opportunity to view the transcripts of their own interviews and to request

changes if necessary, which allowed them to provide feedback on accuracy of the interview. In the final report, pseudonyms for the locations, and the participants were used. However, the participants were made aware, through the consent forms and through discussion, that identifying information may identify the context which may appear within the case study. The Application for Approval of Research Protocol is contained in Appendix B and the sample letters for participation consent are contained in Appendix C.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter I described the epistemological basis and research methods employed for the study. The study was an interpretivist construction (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003; Guba & Lincoln, 2005) of the experience of succession in the context of presidency change at one Canadian university, utilizing a qualitative approach. The selected site was a university that had relatively recently undergone a presidency search, and the participants represented a variety of key university stakeholders that had been involved in the succession process. The major mode of data collection involved semi-structured interviews with participants who had been current and past senior administrators, members of senior committees including faculty and student representatives, and other key stakeholders.

I also discussed the approaches used in the treatment and analysis of the interview data, including approaches to categorizing, coding and theming based largely on the work of Saldana (2013), Yin (2003), Stake (1995), and Merriam (1998). I described the process for piloting the interview format that involved two people not connected to the study. The purpose of the pilot was to refine the questions and to hone my own interviewing approach. With a view to enhancing the trustworthiness of the study's data, I explained my approaches to trustworthiness in this study along the lines of Guba and Lincoln's (2005) categories of credibility,

transferability, dependability and confirmability.

Finally, I provided an overview of the ethical considerations of the study in keeping with University of Saskatchewan guidelines for research with human subjects.

CHAPTER FOUR

Qualitative Data Provided by the Participants

The purpose of this case study was to explore stakeholders' perceptions of effective presidential succession from an organizational culture perspective and to examine their implications for succession planning and leadership sustainability. Qualitative research using an interpretive design was employed to explore stakeholders' perceptions regarding succession. To collect the data, I conducted semi-structured individual interviews of ten participants with each interview being approximately one hour in length. The following six questions, about the succession process and the perceptions of the stakeholders, were structured to elicit in-depth information regarding presidential succession. The following questions guided the interviews. In the context of the presidential succession process in a post-secondary environment:

1. How do stakeholders perceive the importance of context in succession processes?
2. What are the perceptions of stakeholders regarding effective succession processes?
3. What are the perceptions of stakeholders regarding the desired outcomes of succession processes?
4. What are the perceptions of stakeholders regarding the implications of succession processes for organizational culture?
5. What are the perceptions of stakeholders regarding the implications of succession processes for future succession planning?
6. What are the perceptions of stakeholders regarding the implications of succession processes for leadership sustainability?

The purpose of this chapter is to present the data provided by the participants in response to the

open-ended, semi structured interview questions. The data are organized according to the research questions, and are presented thematically based on the topics that emerged from the interviews with the ten participants.

Participants

Throughout the presentation of data and the further discussion, pseudonyms are used for participants, document names, and the university. In the remaining chapters I will refer to the studied university as Alexandria University. With the intention of providing clarity to the presentation of the data, I briefly introduce the interview participants. Throughout this dissertation it is crucial to note that the gender of the pseudonyms does not necessarily match that of the participants. There were ten participants in this case study who were current and past senior administrators, members of senior committees including faculty and student representatives, and other key stakeholders.

Maggie was a senior administrator closely involved in a recent presidential search at Alexandria University. Rick and Tom were both senior faculty members with senior administrative experience. Lisa was relatively new to Alexandria University and was in a senior administrative position. Bob was a senior faculty member who had been part of a presidential search committee. Mary and Glen had been at Alexandria University for an extended time and had occupied various senior administrative roles, as well as being faculty members who had direct experience with presidential searches. I also interviewed student leaders who were involved in Alexandria's governance, who will be referred to as Lori and Andy. The final participant was Jon, who was a senior faculty member and a member of the faculty association executive.

The Conditions Under which the Succession Process can Unfold

Participants were asked to talk about the major external and internal conditions to the university that in their perception can significantly influence the effectiveness of the presidential succession. The participants were also asked to share their perceptions about the major circumstances under which presidents might leave their positions, and what implications that may have on the person who would replace them.

External Conditions Impacting Presidential Succession

A number of external conditions emerged from the interviews, with most participants pointing to the importance of stakeholder relationships, governmental priorities and the reputation of the university and other external conditions.

Relationships with key stakeholders

The majority of the participants (Maggie, Glen, Andy, Rick, Tom, Lori and Mary) talked about the importance of being able to create positive relationships with many different stakeholders as one of the most important external conditions affecting presidential succession. According to Maggie, the ability to have relationships with key stakeholders was definitely something that was looked at by the search committee when selecting the successful candidate.

Rick suggested that "the president's job in a university is to connect with many different stakeholder groups, and therefore acceptance by those stakeholder groups is a critical part of a successful launch of a new president" (p. 2). In Lori's perspective Alexandria University was "not just an island in the middle of the sea with no one around it" (p.2). The university was very engaged and connected with the community. Lori noted that "the external culture of the province and the city had a drastic impact then on how presidents have to come into their roles. The province had a very unique political culture that impacted how things actually operate on

campus” (p.2). The majority of participants agreed that understanding the importance of good relationships with stakeholders was one of the key conditions for a successful presidential succession.

According to these participants, different stakeholder groups not only impact how successful the new president is going to be, but they also influence the early stages of the succession process. Tom noted that there is a lot of community influence on who the next president is going to be. “The search committee itself is made up of an array of people from different backgrounds, on-campus and off-campus, and what they bring to the table influences who they select” (p. 2). The search committee typically represents a number of different interest groups from around campus and the province. Jon noted that from an external perspective, specifically in terms of government:

a new president would need to be able to dialogue with whatever government is in place, and probably be familiar with the provincial government situation in the province. And I think a new president would really have to understand what the relationship is between the university and the people in the province because different universities have different relationships to the outside. And because this university is the major university in the province, your relationship with the people or the province is going to be much different than say a university in Ontario which there are forty. (p. 1)

Jon believed that it would be essential for a new president to have the skills to be able to develop and maintain good relationships with a number of different stakeholders.

Governmental Priorities

Five of the participants (Maggie, Glen, Andy, Bob and Mary) talked about the importance of the role governmental priorities play as an external factor impacting the

presidential succession process. According to Mary, “government always plays a role one way or the other way – directly or indirectly” (p.2) due to their significant representation on the Board of Governors and their representation on the search committee. “The government cannot directly put their nose in the autonomy of our University, our autonomous body”, but at the same time indirectly they want to make sure that a person who is selected for the next president “will be compatible to deal with the government and have external knowledge related to public relations as well as the government” (Mary, p.2). Jon suggested that any “new president would need to be able to dialogue with whatever government is in place, be familiar with the government situation in the province, and also understand the relationship between the university and the people in the province because different universities have different relationships to the outside” (p. 1). A number of participants pointed out the importance of good relations with the government.

Governmental priorities do have an impact, but in Maggie’s experience it was not a large impact; “it was prudent to keep the government advised on the succession process and where the search was at” (p. 2), but there were no priorities provided by the government as to the type of candidate for which the search committee should be looking. Andy stressed the importance of having good relations with the government and being cognizant of any unexpected change in governmental priorities. In Andy’s experience at Alexandria University, the government did change its priorities, which was signaled by “a shift in the way the government was interacting with universities, which ultimately, determines how government is going to interact with senior administration and particularly the president” (p. 2). Andy witnessed a change in the relationship between the government and the university, a relationship that saw the university as not having the level of power that it had in previous

years.

Rick noted that there are some realities that are beyond the control of the president:

I think one of the issues that presidents have in a transition in a university is finding the opportunity to lay out their own direction for an institution, when in fact the president doesn't actually control everything that's going on. So I think when there are externally-driven things that are happening, it can constrain the ability of a president to lay out the direction. In the case of our University I think there were two of those issues at the time of the transition that I was part of. One of them was a decrease in provincial funding, another one was the issues with respect to one of our colleges. And both of those had external dimensions that were beyond the control of a president to change. (p. 1)

It is important for the incoming person to be aware of these realities and acknowledge the limitations that they pose.

Reputation and Success of the University Nationally and Provincially

Other major external conditions impacting presidential succession, which were mentioned by two participants (Maggie and Glen) were the reputation of the institution and attractiveness of the city itself. Maggie suggested that the location of the university and its reputation matters to potential candidates. She explained: "Nowadays many successful candidates have very successful spouses and other people in their families that it makes a big difference to them where they live" (Maggie, p. 2). In other words, if the city is seen as an attractive place with other opportunities, and if the economic times are good then it is more likely to attract good candidates, resulting in a larger pool from which to choose.

The political culture of the province was also seen to have an influence on the success of the successful applicants and the university. Lori noted:

The province has a very unique political culture that impacts how things actually operate on campus. The politics is infused in everything, the provincial government and the kind of relationships that they have with the university. But also the politics of the community; people are used to the university fulfilling a certain role, looking a certain way, and doing certain things. (p. 2)

According to some of the participants, potential candidates will pay attention to all factors before considering applying.

Some of the participants mentioned the importance of the reputation of a university and the constraints that may present for future leaders. Bob noted that:

the great challenge of the senior leader of the university, the chief educational officer, the CEO and whoever that person works with in terms of senior executive, is to have a constancy, ever growing the quality and reputation [of the institution] and at the same time, be on the forefront of change. When you have those kind of oscillating dynamics, you need to both steady the boat, but you also have to disturb the boat. And so it's a very, very interesting kind of position. (p. 2)

As stated by some of the participants, being a successful president of an academic institution is certainly not an easy task.

Glen described how a number of external factors are related and how they impact the overall success of presidential change:

The attractiveness of the position in the first place is dependent upon state of the university broadly speaking; its finances, its reputation, its recent experience with executive leadership. All those things can be very positive. Relations with government and other major stakeholders. All of these can be positive, okay, or damaged in some

fashion. If several of them are too damaged, then not just recruitment but transition – everything becomes more challenging. (p.2).

Also, Lisa noted that “if you are at a publicly-funded institution, all of these external factors are going to have enormous impact on who comes next and how effective they can be” (p.2). Glen and Lisa pointed out that all external factors are crucial and can impact the success and reputation of the president and the university.

Internal Conditions Impacting Leadership of the University

The participants pointed to a number of internal conditions impacting the succession process including university environment and culture, Board of Governance stance along with the impact of the search committee.

University environment and campus community culture

Some of the participants (Maggie, Jon, Lori) suggested that university environment and culture are among the most critical conditions impacting the success of leadership at the university. According to a number of participants, it is important to recognize the prevailing university environment when it is time to select a new leader. From Maggie’s experience it is not “conducive to having an internal person being hired if it is an environment where it is clear that there is a desire to have some new thoughts brought in and change the culture; then there may be a desire to bring someone more external” (p.3). Lori noted that university culture plays a role in the success of the president and might be the reason for the sitting president deciding to leave. A number of participants pointed out that the role of a president has become more political, as a result of how universities have evolved.

Andy pointed out that campus community can significantly impact the leadership of the University:

I saw exactly that playing out where faculty, students and academic support staff and other university staff, not being in favour of the direction that the university was taking, and that having a significant negative impact on the leadership of the university that saw a number of high-ranking university officials actually leave their job. And of course, in my experience that was related to financial issues, to financial pressures which, again goes back to government priorities, government policies, government actions. (p.2)

Also, Jon suggested that there are a lot of significant internal conditions that have influence, but the most important is that:

the president has to understand the, let's call it internal environment or the internal atmosphere; how the university operates, and what the, I guess you can say, what the direction of the university is... I would think that the (key) is understanding how the university operates, and understanding what the sorts of I guess problems are. (p. 2)

Some of the participants noted that understanding the culture or understanding the rules of the current environment at the university is crucial for any president.

Stance of senior administration and Board of Governors

Glen and Rick talked about the importance of the Board of Governors stance and involvement. According to Glen "the Board needs to be involved significantly right from the very beginning" of the presidential succession process (p.3). Rick noted that "the single most important factor for a president to establish themselves in a new role is their relationship with the Board of Governors, that is a president's key connection; that's who the president is accountable to" (p.2). Being supported, having a good relationship with the Board of Governors and working towards common goals were believed by participants to be some of the internal conditions that impact the success of the president.

Impact of the search committee

Tom talked about the impact the search committee and the search firm has on the future leadership of the university. Tom suggested that the makeup of a search committee can significantly impact the leadership of the university. “The committee members bring their biases to determine the backgrounds of the nominees to see who is going to be the right person” (p.2). Tom also believed that the search firm may impact the presidential selection as well; “unconscious bias may exist, as to who the search firm thinks might be the best fit for the university and then selectively bring those people to the attention of the search committee” (p.2). Lisa noted that the Provost plays a critical role around a lot of the internal pieces on behalf of the president.

In many respects it is the external pieces that are much more influential for a president, than some of the internal pieces. The president needs to be outward facing and responsive to all of those external things and be politically sensitive to those things. Internally the president needs to be aware that those things are going on but he or she needs to be managing his or her team to manage those things. The president has to have confidence that their internal leadership team has a handle on those other things. (p. 2)

Maggie suggested that sometimes the influence of the search committee, combined with all the other factors, is unpredictable; sometimes there needs to be the right person at the right time. She suggested that “fortuitous timing makes a difference” (p. 3). Maggie did not think that “any internal issue should scare away a good candidate, because a good candidate should not be afraid of issues” (p. 3). However, there are always certain university priorities, financial issues, and relationships that will attract different types of applicants.

Circumstances Under Which Presidents Might Leave

Participants identified a number of circumstances under which presidents might leave their position and what implications this may have for the next leaders. Most of the participants talked about an incumbent president's retirement, the relationship between the board and the president along with other factors that may force a president's exit. The circumstances under which presidents may leave can be divided into positive and negative scenarios. Lisa noted that:

If somebody were to leave voluntarily, chances are that the person left with a very sound reputation intact and that's something a new coming-in person has to be differential to – that somebody was in the position prior and very successful in what they were doing, and how do you sort of put your own mark on your presidency, while still being differential to someone who was successful that came before you. If they left involuntarily, I think you have to be very sensitive to what are the lessons learned and make sure that you as the new person coming in don't fall into the same pitfalls, right? If it was a controversy, conflict of judgement, do you do enough vetting to really understand what the challenge was so that you don't repeat those same mistakes? (p.2)

Most of the participants described how both voluntary and involuntary circumstances present their own set of challenges for the incoming president.

Voluntary: positive incumbent retirement

Maggie, Glen, Bob, Rick, Lisa, Jon and Mary believed that retirement is one of the most common circumstances under which presidents may leave their position. Lisa pointed out that:

presidents can leave voluntarily for a number of reasons or they can leave involuntarily because of a controversy, stimulated through some either internal or external challenge.

Poor decision making and poor judgment that leads to a controversy that ends up not being good for the optics of the institution so they end up stepping down (p. 2).

Other participants noted that some presidents might feel they are ready to step down due to health issues, and some who are coming to the end of their term might be feeling that they have served long enough.

Involuntary: problematic board-president relationship

Maggie, Glen, Tom and Rick talked about the relationship between the Board of Governors and the president, and how important this relationship is in ensuring that the presidency is successful. Glen suggested that it is very rare to see a president leave voluntarily. It is much more common to have the Board terminate somebody: the termination can be prompted by specific events, but seldom is it just those events that precipitate a presidential departure. He added: “Typically, there’s been a buildup of tension of one kind or another. So one mistake, one problem, is usually not enough to sink a president who was otherwise successful. Mostly it is presidents who have been struggling on other fronts” (Glen, p. 3). From Maggie’s experience there are a number of major circumstances that can cause “parting of the ways between the board and the president” (p. 3). According to Rick “when a president leaves early, it suggests that there was something going on that the Board was not happy with” (p. 2). Participants noted that in universities, as in other organizations, it is fundamentally an issue of lack of confidence of the Board.

Andy and Mary noted that financial pressure might make a president want to leave their position, along with a number of other reasons, such as the job being not what they expected or if there was a lot of political interference. Another reason for presidents leaving, brought up by Maggie, was the issue of changes in expectations for the length of president tenure. She

added that, today, people and organizations are not looking for leaders to be in the role for a long time. According to Maggie, “There’s the new natural turnover when someone gets to the end of their mandate” (p. 3). She suggested that there is a sense that there is so much progression in knowledge, standards and practices that if you are not changing your leadership at least once every ten years, then it is odd that you are not.

The circumstances with the previous president and why the previous president left have major implications for any successive president. In Maggie’s opinion, some presidents are easier to follow than others. She noted, “You do not pick the person you are following. That is sort of handed to you and that is the given. So that is the really difficult piece for a lot of succeeding presidents” (p. 3). According to Glen, the ideal situation is when you have “a president who leaves in a blaze of glory, and the institution is both sad to see that person go but anxious to welcome the next person. That’s not an ordinary kind of succession” (p. 3). Glenn described the implications of alternative succession motivations:

For somebody coming in behind a person who’s been terminated there’s also a sense that, you know it’s easier to follow somebody who has struggled in the job than somebody who has excelled in the job. I mean frankly I think it’s – following somebody who has excelled in the job has its advantages because you’re typically left with a better situation – unless the person is beloved by everybody but is an absolutely lousy manager or leader, which is possible. So yeah circumstances are going to be different. I think you can’t underestimate the impact on the institutional leadership, broadly speaking, of a president who has been terminated. When that happens, everybody’s affected. And sometimes there are people who have been major provocateurs in the whole thing. And they too are caught up in this. And they too can be gone relatively quickly. So it’s not

uncommon to go through a really rough patch and find yourself losing more than just the president. (p. 3).

Depending on reasons why presidents leave, the implications will vary, but it is important to understand and acknowledge these implications in order for the next person to be successful.

Summary

In the first part of the interview, the participants were asked to share their perceptions on the context under which the succession process can unfold. The participants were asked three sub questions in order to identify external and internal conditions that impact presidential succession along with circumstances under which presidents may leave and what may be the implications of their exit for the next leader. The participants pointed out a number of external conditions including the importance of stakeholder relationships, governmental priorities, and the reputation of the university. The identified internal conditions impacting the succession process were Board of Governors' stance along with the impact of the search committee. The participants also noted a number of circumstances under which presidents might leave their position and what implications this may have for the next leaders. Most of the participants talked about an incumbent president's reasons for leaving including retirement, the relationship between the board and the president along with other factors that may force a president's exit.

Effective Presidential Succession Process

Participants were asked to share their perceptions regarding the succession process; they were asked to talk about what makes the presidential succession effective, the role and ideal structure of a search committee, and the Board of Governors' responsibility throughout this

process.

Numerous themes emerged under the question of what makes an effective presidential secession process. The following were identified as the most vital: recognizing the current environment, stating clear expectations for the new president, undertaking and focusing on the importance of the transition process.

Recognizing Current Environment / Environmental Scan

Many participants agreed that before successful on-boarding of a new president to a particular campus culture or campus community can take place, first the university needs to figure out what that environment is. According to Andy, “doing a comprehensive environmental scan, not only of the schools and the colleges and who are the deans of those schools and colleges, but also who are students, who are the usual rabble-rousers and who are people who could potentially become rabble-rousers” (p. 3). Andy stressed the importance of universities needing to understand their own environment and culture, “and come equipped with the resources, the staff and the time and the strategies, quite frankly, to ensure successful presidency” (p. 3). Andy, reflecting upon one of her own prior experiences with presidential succession, was surprised that the senior administration seemed very unpolitical, and lacking in strategy, even though by nature being a university president is a political job.

Stating Clear Expectations

A number of the participants noted that the board needs a clear understanding of what they are looking for in the future president, and that there needs to be a comprehensive consultation “particularly with groups that they might think have the most opposition, or could cause the most opposition to a presidency” (Mary, p. 4). According to Andy,

this is not a time for the university to be too proud or too egotistical, to communicate

with the campus community at large and really dig deep and say, ‘what are you looking for? What are some must-haves?’ And really listen to that; have it not be tokenistic and find a candidate who has those qualifications, *or*, ensure that the candidate is well-prepared in that transition period to make sure that they’re ready to meet those challenges; ready to meet those criticisms, and have a search consultant who can refer them to people who can do this sort of work with them. Again the political nature of the work, the image consultants, the stakeholder relations people – I mean you sort of need politicos in this job - to prepare senior administration for the job that they’re getting themselves into. Because I’m not convinced that the presidents always know what they’re getting themselves into. (p. 3)

According to the participants, it is crucial to complete a relatively wide consultation in terms of expectations and be able to clearly and honestly state what the president’s role is. Bob noted that it is important to know “what it is that you’re inviting somebody into as a president, and what the expectations are and how the system works and what the resources are and what is the uniqueness and the particular identity of the place” (p. 4). According to Jon, when universities are advertising for candidates, they need to know if they want to attract someone who is an academic or someone who is just able to run a complex organization, or who might be able to juggle all of the commitments of that role. They also need to consider if they are willing to hire an internal or an external candidate.

Establishing a Transition Process

The majority of participants agreed that the transition process is a crucial component for the success of the incoming president. Glen was a part of transition team at Alexandria University, and he shared the following experience and observations:

In our case, we benefited I believe from selecting the leadership of the transition team from the search committee itself. Having somebody in that role who was familiar with the senior administration, its culture, its operation, and with the university as a whole, was also important.... Most of the transition work is logistical, it's people and places and connections. So, you've got to have somebody who is making all that happen and there's a lot to organize.... The transition committee met before the President was selected. It was meeting about the same time as the presidential announcement was made, we had to orchestrate the announcement. ... Lots of discussion about how this was going to take place; when it was going to take place; where it was going to take place; who was going to be invited; what time of day; how we were going to manage communications and the press; all of this stuff (p. 3)

For Glen, therefore, several aspects of the selection and induction process were critical: the makeup of the selection committee, the selection of the transition team, the need for member familiarity with the culture of senior administration, and the logistics of the transition team, and its organizational skills in such activities as the presidential announcement. Many participants noted that establishing the transition team, when the current president was hired, was a useful strategy. Lisa noted that "one of the biggest challenges for people leading at the level of a president is that it's a very lonely position", therefore "establishing a group of people to provide unvarnished opinion and advice is incredibly important so that that person knows they are getting good advice" (p. 4). Bob also pointed out that the new president needs people "who can speak truth to power, and the transition team was a way for that to happen to avoid some of those pitfalls and to have eyes wide open in order to make a sound transition" (p. 4). The message from the participants was that the individual is only able to see so much from his or

her perspective; hence having more people involved providing guidance and advice is a helpful tool for the new incumbent.

As part of the transition process and on-boarding of the new president, many participants highlighted the importance of gaining community buy-in and having a proper introduction to all of the stakeholders. Rick pointed out that “a president needs to be introduced to all the stakeholder groups in a university”, which he acknowledged to be a lengthy process that needs to be planned carefully and strategically (p. 4).

The Role of the Search Committee

The participants identified a number of central roles that a search committee plays in the presidential succession process, including selecting the best candidate, working closely with the board throughout the process, as well as making sure that its roles are clearly stated and are not in conflict with the transition process.

Selecting the best candidate

The majority of the participants agreed that the key role of a search committee is to identify the best person possible to be the next president in order to put a recommendation to the board. Mary pointed out that it is crucial for a search committee “to get the best person, most suitable person for that particular university” (p. 4), although, at times determining who that person might be or should be can prove to be challenging.

Andy noted that in order to fulfill its main role it is important for a search committee to “work with the search consultant to clearly state what the university is looking for; to have the search consultants be in those consultation meetings to ensure that they understand who the campus community and campus culture is” (p. 3). According to Bob, during the vetting process “you begin to think, what are the assets that this person brings in, what are the liabilities, where

are the risks, what would be required of the university in terms of their adjustment of their ideals” (p. 4). Jon noted that

if somebody is going to be a successful president, then they should probably have worked their way up the ladder. So, typically, in a university environment, people start at the bottom as faculty. They become a department head and a dean, and then they might go into a more sort of vice-presidential position and finally onto a presidential situation. (p. 4)

Most of the participants agreed that a successful president needs to have substantial experience, they have to be very familiar with the university environment and they need to have experience working in an academic and administrative setting.

Once the successful candidate is identified then a search committee can move on to a “rigorous introduction to the campus community” (Andy, p. 3). According to Andy “the search committee or key members from it, need to be a part of the introduction; need to be a part of the onboarding” (p. 3). The role of a search committee is greater than just finding the right person, but also making sure that the new person is appropriately supported following the announcement.

Working with the board

Some argued that one of the key roles of the search committee is to work closely with the board, particularly the chair of the search committee who is the person responsible for communicating with the board. Glen noted that the chair of a search committee plays an essential role in the process.

It’s that person who is responsible for relations with the Board of Governors. It’s almost always the Chair of the Board or somebody from the Board of Governors who is

chairing the search committee. So that person is responsible for kind of relationships and reassurances to various communities. That person also has to manage the search consultants. That person is also responsible for making sure the entire conduct of the search is going to well. (p. 4)

Also, Maggie emphasized the centrality of the role of the search committee Chair. She pointed out that

the chair needs to work hard at bringing the committee together to be able to be a collaborative committee. There are a lot of different voices that are being represented, made up of people who were not necessarily seen as being on the same side of a number of issues. When that group of people can make a decision on one person, it reflects well that there will be more buy-in from all the distinct different communities that you find in your university. (p.4)

The board makes the final decision; therefore, it makes sense for the search committee to be working with the board throughout the process. Rick argued that “the search committee acts in an advisory capacity to the Board of Governors, and therefore it is ideal, if the Board has more or less a controlling role within the search committee” (p. 4). The two entities need to be in agreement regarding what qualities, and strengths they are looking for in order for the search to be successful.

Distinguishing the search committee and transition committee roles

A number of participants pointed out the need of making a clear distinction between the roles and responsibilities of a search committee versus the transition committee. According to Lisa:

the search committee is trying to find the ideal candidate and do a global search for that

ideal person. Once that person is chosen, vetted appropriately and selected, then it's up to that individual in collaboration with others to select sort of a transition committee that's going to walk them through that next step (p. 4)

On the other hand, Glen argued that "transition is more than simply dealing with the selected candidate, you're thinking about transition as a recruitment process, the role of the search committee is really to participate in the search" (p. 4). These two committees have vital roles to play, but they need to be clear and strategic.

The Ideal Structure of the Search Committee

All of the participants agreed that a search committee plays an important role in the succession process and pointed to a number of components that would contribute to its ideal structure. The participants talked about appropriate representation from major stakeholders on the committee, the size of it and the process that the committee follows.

Representative balance

According to a number of participants, a search committee separate from the Board with some representation from the board and various stakeholders representing diverse interests of campus community is essential to its ideal structure. Maggie pointed out that Alexandria University has a predefined list of who sits on a search committee outlined in search procedure, which allows a positive start to a search process.

Both Mary and Rick argued that the structure of a search committee would differ from place to place and it would depend on its academic environment. According to Rick, "in an academic environment there is a powerful tradition of having large multi-stakeholder search committees" (p. 3). Rick pointed out that it would be very difficult to carry out a presidential search without a committee that involved representation from faculty, students, administration

and other stakeholder groups.

Glen noted that typically there is representation from the board, the faculty and from the deans or the administration. Glen argued that he “would stay away from representation by bargaining units or representation by student union presidents” (p. 4). Jon also questioned the reasons why would there be representation on the search committee from graduate or undergraduate students; “what do they know about recruiting a president? For political reasons you put people on these committees and that may make them ineffective committees” (p. 3). Jon believed that a search committee needs to be representative but with only carefully selected people who can actually help make the decision.

Andy noted that it is important to have the typical representation included on the search committee, but she also argued for the importance of other communities being represented and having a voice in the form of a voting membership on the search committee:

I’m talking about Indigenous communities. I’m talking about international students who pay a huge amount of tuition in universities. I think these are voices that aren’t always captured in university governance structures and processes, but have significantly unique needs and contributions to be made to these high-level decisions. (p. 3)

Tom also believed that not all groups are fairly represented. According to Tom, there should be more representation from deans, who “represent very differing colleges from professional colleges to non-professional colleges, to small colleges, to very large colleges” (p. 3). Tom argued that by having only one dean on the search committee it is difficult to provide a college level perspective in what we are looking for in a president since all colleges vary significantly.

Appropriate size

The majority of participants talked about the importance of having a comprehensive

representation from different stakeholder groups on the search committee, but they also pointed out that the appropriate size of the committee matters and it contributes to its effectiveness. Tom noted that “a committee that is functional, and fully representative” (p. 3) is very difficult to establish. Andy added that a committee of 25 people would not be helpful and would pose challenges to the succession process. Glen suggested that even going over a 15-person committee would become “very unwieldy and very difficult in terms of confidentiality” (p. 5), which is an essential component of a closed search process.

Maggie pointed out that ensuring committee continuity is also crucial. Maggie talked about her experience with a search committee:

Both of our student leaders, because the search process took a while, they were no longer the presidents of the student bodies by the time the decision was made. But they stayed on the committee for the continuity. I think it would be really tough to develop the type of trust and understanding of what you’re looking for and how to work together if your committee’s changing in the middle. (p. 3)

Maggie insisted that once one is a part of a search committee they should stay on that committee until the final decision is made.

The search process: the debate on open or closed process

Based on the responses provided by the participants, there seemed to be opposing views on whether the search process should be transparent or confidential. Some participants were convinced that only a closed process is most effective, where others believed that perhaps an open process would prove to be more successful. Maggie argued that the search process needs to be a closed process because some candidates would simply not apply if they knew their candidacy was not kept confidential and could potentially harm their current appointment. “You

just want to know that every possible great candidate applied” (Maggie, p. 5). Mary and Rick also agreed with Maggie that the process needs to be confidential otherwise many people will not even apply. According to Rick, there is “an enormous premium on confidentiality, almost extreme confidentiality” (p. 3). Potential candidates want to be ensured that their names will be protected by the process. In short, while there was a disagreement among participants around whether the process should be open or closed, the majority of participants supported the closed process that the university was currently following.

The search process: connection to effective succession planning

Jon argued that the traditional way in which presidents are recruited is “fundamentally at odds with the notion of succession planning where what you’re doing is you’re trying to build leadership from within” (p. 3). Also, Lori was in favor of rethinking and finding a better way of recruiting new presidents. She added that:

We should think about diversity, since we’re still left with a bunch of white straight dudes as presidents of our universities. So maybe we need to then think about everything completely again. We want to have a diverse workforce, diverse student body, all these things. (p. 3)

Rick had a similar point of view regarding people’s perceptions of who would make a good president; often these perceptions are filtered by what kind of people were seen in this role before.

Some of the participants suggested that the search committee needs to be supported by a good search firm. Mary pointed out that it is essential that the committee clearly communicates with the search consultant to make sure both parties are on the same page. “I think it’s very important the search committee must talk to the search consultant on a regular

basis and make sure the search committee concerns are relayed” (Herschel, p. 4) to avoid any type of miscommunication. Some of the other participants noted that the majority of search committee members have no experience with a search process and hence should be provided with appropriate training prior to the search process starting. Rick argued that the committee members “are literally amateurs” (p. 4). He added:

They’re extremely well-informed about universities. They should have well-developed perspectives about what they’re looking for, but they’re not experts and they’re not experienced in the process of searches. So I think an ideal search committee would be trained in search processes; would be oriented to their job. (p. 4)

Rick also noted that due to their inexperience the heavy reliance on professional search consultants is an essential part of the process.

Board of Governors’ Responsibility

The majority of the participants talked about the Board being responsible for running, managing and making the final decision during the search process. Also, the importance and the role of the Board Chair was pointed out by some of the participants.

Oversight of the search process

The majority of participants agreed that one of the most important responsibilities of the Board is to provide oversight of the presidential search. Both Lisa and Rick suggested that the Board should look out for the institution’s best interests by having adequate representation in the search process. Rick noted that “in order to put the interests of the whole institution first, the Board members have to rigorously examine their own assumptions, look very carefully at candidates, make a special effort to identify candidates that may be unconventional or may not fit with what their initial assumptions were” (p.3). Tom talked about the Board representation

on the search committee:

There will be Board representatives on the search committee but again, the Board members are representing the Board and so they are representing the best intentions for the highest level of governance for the University. And so, it's imperative I think that the person that they choose, that the search committee chooses, is able to communicate effectively with the Board because if not, and you've got a President and the Board at odds right from day one, that does not bode well for the University. So the individual that is chosen does have to be able to communicate and not side with the Board, not cave in or cow down to the Board but have meaningful conversations with the Board.

(p.4)

Jon agreed that it is important for the Board to stipulate their expectations regarding what kind of president they are looking for; these expectations have to be clearly defined before the search process is underway.

Maggie pointed out that not only does the Board oversee the search process, the Board also makes the final decision based on the recommendation from the search committee. According to Maggie, "the Board really needs to wear the decision; it's the entire Board's responsibility to make sure that the process is going smoothly, and that the strongest candidates have been approached or applied" (p. 4). A number of participants indicated that in order for the search process to be successful, before the search committee even starts its work, they need to feel supported and empowered by the Board.

The Role of the Board Chair

The majority of the participants agreed that the role of the Board's Chair is key in having an effective Board that fulfills its responsibilities when comes to a presidential search.

Glen characterized this role as one of the “biggest jobs on the Board” (p. 5). Glen pointed out that all responsibility of running and managing the search falls on the Chair of the Board.

It’s all on that person, that person can’t substitute everybody’s good judgment for everybody’s bad judgment. And has got to keep everything balanced, has got to hear all voices, got to do all of that. I think it’s also getting the Board – the search committee – educated, by bringing people in and by bringing voices in way before you’re even talking to candidates. The Chair phones the chair of two or three other Boards who have been through searches. Gets their insights as to how, when, what they did right, what they did wrong, all of that. This is just the search. Phones outgoing presidents. Talking to them about what they knew on taking the job, what they didn’t. So already thinking transition, right, without knowing who the candidate’s going to be. (Glen, p. 5)

According to some participants, having the right person in the role of the Board’s chair is crucial, that person can significantly impact the search process by their actions or the lack of them.

Summary

In the second part of the interview, the participants were asked to share their perceptions about effective succession. The participants were asked four sub questions in order to pinpoint key components of an effective succession process along with identifying the ideal search committee structure and taking a closer look at the Board’s responsibility throughout the process. The participants named numerous themes under the question of what makes an effective presidential secession process. Recognizing the current environment, stating clear expectations for the new president, undertaking and focusing on the importance of the transition process were talked about as the most vital. The participants also identified a

number of central roles that a search committee plays in the presidential succession process, including selecting the best candidate, working closely with the board throughout the process, as well as making sure that its roles are clearly stated and are not in conflict with the transition process. When it came to the search committee, all participants pointed to the following components that would contribute to its ideal structure. The participants talked about appropriate representation from major stakeholders on the committee, the size of the committee and the process that the committee follows.

Desired Outcomes of the Process

Participants were asked to share their perceptions regarding the outcomes of the succession process; they were asked to talk about the short-term and long-term impacts of the process, how the results should be communicated to the campus community, and what lessons can be learned through the presidential succession process.

Short-Term Impacts of Presidential Process

Several themes emerged from discussion with participants about short-term impacts of the presidential secession process. The following were identified as the most central: the importance of first impressions and buy-in, along with the implications of changes in personnel and the senior administration team.

First impressions

Maggie, Andy and Bob stressed the significance of first impressions and initial buy-in from campus community. According to Maggie, “in the short-term, it comes down to the value that our culture puts on first impressions. It’s really hard to overcome a bad first impression. Starting out on the right foot, it’s huge” (p. 5). Andy emphasized the importance of having campus community buy-in; she noted that “you need the president to know who the community

is, to be invested in the community, to become one of the community” in order to earn their buy-in (p. 4). The participants recognized that the new president needs assistance in being provided opportunities to make good first impressions among all the stakeholders and campus community.

Bob also noted that the initial period of any new presidency is crucial, with serious implications for the remainder of their tenure.

The person needs to be helped to succeed, to get some quick wins that both affect them and how they see the job. Finding some early successes, some intermediate and some long-term successes, is really critical both for them and for others. You want them to feel fulfilled, and you want them to be fruitful right from the get go, and you want them to be seen as the right fit by everyone. The first six months are a critical, critical period, both for socialization, induction, and for retention. (p.5)

It was clearly pointed out by the participants how important it is for the university to ensure that the new president has positive first impressions and gains the necessary buy-in from the campus community, recognizing that the university needs to be strategic about the first interactions of the newly selected person.

Staffing changes

Glen, Tom, Rick and Mary noted that normally when a new president starts his or her term, personnel changes are to follow. Glen suggested that these changes happen fairly early on and that “the new president is looking around and making sure that she or he has the talent that they need around them. Occasionally you’ll see presidents who want to make structural changes, but those typically come later if at all” (p. 6). Tom talked more about the changes that happen

within the senior administration and their implications for the success of the incoming president.

Tom pointed out that

typically, there is a lot of changes in senior administration, so the president has the right support to be able to carry out the duties. I think campus community is always looking for stability at the upper-administrative level, not just in the presidential office. In order to avoid impingement in the longevity of succession we need to have a stable senior administrative team, which needs to be put into place as soon as possible. (p. 5)

Mary agreed that “in the short-term stability is very important and if there is a burning point that needs to be sorted out it needs to be sorted out or at least it needs to be addressed regardless of what that may be” (p.5). Rick also mentioned the changes in staffing due to new leadership, as well as the ability to recruit new people into the institution. According to Rick, “due to the changes at the top, there is an impact on who will want to come to work at a university, and often the tone for that is set by the president” (p. 4). The participants agreed that personnel changes are not avoidable and are to be expected when a new leader starts, so she or he can have the right team in place to be successful.

Long-Term Impacts of Presidential Succession

Several themes came up under the question regarding long-term impacts of presidential succession. The participants identified the following as most vital: the state of the university to which the president enters, shifting the university in a new direction, and the length of term consideration.

State of the university at time of appointment

According to a number of participants, the long-term impact of the presidential succession depends on the state of the university that the new president enters. Tom talked about

his experience with a president who was external to the institution and who started implementing a number of significant changes very early on, which were met with substantial resistance from the campus community. “The next president seemed to be more open and less autocratic. The impact for the successive incoming president really does depend upon what they are coming in after; what kind of president they’re coming in after” (p. 4).

Andy also stressed the significance of the initial state of the university; she pointed out the importance of the new president not sharing the spotlight with his or her predecessor. Andy emphasized that “in the long term, it is beneficial to prevent presidents lingering, so the new president feels empowered to do the work as the new leader, and the former president needs to let her or him do that work” (p. 4). The majority of participants agreed that the initial state of the university plays an important role in setting up the future success of the incoming president.

Shift in a new direction

Rick, Andy, Mary and Glen talked about shifting the university in a new direction as one of the major long-term impacts of presidential succession. According to Rick, the newly selected president “sets a tone for the leadership of the organization as a whole, but also the appointment of a new president is always an opportunity to reassess the vision and the direction of the institution and to rearticulate long-term goals” (p. 4). Andy noted that shifting the university in a new direction can be challenging, “particularly if the new president is taking the university in a direction that shifts areas of strategic planning where people are currently invested doing research” (p. 5). Glen argued that external presidents have a particularly difficult time shifting the university in a new direction. He pointed out that:

the biggest problem for external presidents, is a shift to the new culture. This is where they run into trouble. And you’ve got to be able to anticipate those differences and

distinctions, and learn and understand them; get to know the incoming president well enough to understand what her or his set - you know where they're coming from, what their values are. And then being able to think about how well they'll articulate here what their instincts are given certain situations and problems. And then be able to communicate to them what the expectations would be here as distinct from somewhere else. So you know that's what succession is all about; trying to kind of work through scenarios in order to make sure that your new president is engaged but isn't too far out ahead of everybody else. (p.5)

The participants agreed that change is not easy to accept by the campus community, and careful planning is vital in ensuring long term success of the new president.

Length of term consideration

Glen, Rick and Bob emphasized the importance of the optimum length of term for a president when considering long-term impact of succession. According to Rick, the overall expectation is that the newly elected president will be able to serve at least two terms. Rick noted that "most presidents aren't recruited to do just one thing, they're recruited to do a whole bunch of things, which takes a long time. Presidents really do need to have about a ten-year window" (p. 5). Bob also agreed with the importance of an appropriate length of term; he believed that "a president really gets into stride in the fourth and the fifth year; at that point they can begin to actually carry out the uniqueness of their vision as well as the legacy from sort of the larger vision" (p. 7). The participants believed that in order to see any meaningful long-term impacts of presidential succession, the new president need to be allowed to have adequate amount of time in the office in order to fulfill their agendas.

Bob argued that it is beneficial for the university to have a president go into their second term and keep the momentum going:

Fulfilling work ends up being good performance ultimately of the whole institution. So everybody's gain is experienced there from students, to faculty, to staff, to external constituents, and alumni. You know even from a fundraising perspective, the gifts are happening on the third, fourth and fifth times they meet the president, not necessarily on the first time. And that's not a small deal with a university that has to find multiple sources of revenue. Relationships aren't built in a hurry; they're built over time. And so sustaining, supporting, helping a president to be successful, giving them what they need to be successful in terms of both moral support, moral purpose, but also resources and decision-making latitude, but also parameters, just is infinitely important. (p.7)

Bob along with other participants noted that all new presidents need help and should be allowed an appropriate amount of time in the position in order to be successful, which in turn benefits the entire campus community.

Presidential Succession Process – Communicating the Results

The question regarding communication of presidential succession results to the university community sparked fairly similar responses from the majority of the participants. The main themes that emerged were: ensuring transparent and informed communication throughout the entire process of presidential succession; and a carefully planned final announcement recognizing different audiences and current context.

Transparent communication throughout the process

The majority of the participants emphasized the importance of the search committee being transparent and keeping the campus community informed as much as possible about the

progress of the presidential search at various stages, not only at the very end of the process when it is time for the final announcement. Rick noted that “due to the search being highly confidential, there are limited ways of keeping the campus community informed and final announcement of who was the successful candidate is the only option under these circumstances” (p. 4). Mary also pointed out that the communication throughout the process should be “transparent as possible given the necessary confidentiality of searches, so that suggests wide communication; communication about the process as well as the outcome” (p. 5). Maggie talked about her experience being involved in the presidential search:

It was really important to send that message out more than once; like at each stage. And to try to explain to our community in advance, what the stages are and ‘you will be kept informed’ and also we found that we needed to pick up the phone and call the government people and make sure they also knew where we were in the process and how things were coming along. So I think communication is really important even though you might not think you’ve got anything to report. It’s like, well nothing’s changed, we’re still just following the process – it’s still important to communicate that itself; that you actually haven’t run into any roadblocks. (p. 6).

The participants were clear on the point that, in order to ensure the final communication is as successful as possible, there needs to be a proper communication plan in place throughout the search process to keep the university community informed and engaged.

Planned and purposeful final announcement

Lisa, Tom, Andy and Glen talked about how important it is that the announcement of the new president is being carefully planned out with consideration of current context and different audiences. Andy stressed that the university needs to “engage their communications staff and

ensure that there's a formal communications strategy announcing who the president is. Whether that's through a series of short videos or through social media strategy, on-campus interviews, and particularly on that day, meeting with people" (p. 4). According to Andy, it is crucial for the announcement to present the new president in the best light possible and create as much buy-in as possible from the start.

Lisa noted the importance of "communicating the results to different groups within the university differently. There are some groups who are going to be much more finely attuned to succession and transition than others" (p. 4). Tom, on the other hand pointed out the need to be aware of the current environment on campus and plan the announcement strategy accordingly. Tom talked about his experience when the new president was revealed: "the last go-around there was a huge turnout because of the turmoil that the university had been through prior. Campus community wanted to make sure that the search committee had chosen the right person this time" (p. 4). Glen agreed that the communication strategy has to be planned and purposeful, but he also believed that the announcement should be done

with as much fanfare as possible. The committee has to seem to be completely behind the new person, the senior administration, what's left of them, has to be completely behind – seem to be completely behind. So it has to be orchestrated as a major turning point for the institution. You can't do it at a higher level – it's got to be a big deal. That's what I meant about the announcement piece. I kind of underestimated how much effort and energy had to go into that because it was our one opportunity to make it clear that we weren't the same institution as we were before. (p. 6)

The communication of results of the succession outcome was seen by most of the participants as a vital part of the search process that needed to be carefully planned with consideration for a number of factors.

Lessons Learned

Numerous themes emerged under the question of what can be learned by universities through their presidential secession process. The following were identified as the most important: actively looking for candidates with clear expectations, critical and bias-conscious evaluation of candidates, and improved transition process and learning from others.

Active search with clear expectations

Participants recognized the need of the search committee to actively participate in looking for candidates and having clear expectations of what exactly they are looking for in the process. Rick noted that search committee members should be “actively looking for candidates not just passively receiving applications, but actually seeking out actively the kind of people who might be interested in a job. The more difficult the search, the more of that I think needs to be done” (p.5). Most of the participants agreed that the search committee should limit its reliance on search consultants and be more involved in the process themselves.

Rick also believed that clear and realistic expectations of the new president should be set; he argued that:

universities often make it too big a deal and heap excessive expectations on a president.

That’s expressed in a variety of ways including in recruitment materials; what the candidate is said to be responsible for, what attributes they’re expected to have. So I think often there are extremely high and often virtually impossible expectations, frequently looking for them to have a vision for the future of the institution. But in fact, almost no

university that I know of would be happy with a president who came in from outside with their own vision for the institution. What people actually want is a president who will work with the people in the institution to develop a shared vision. So I think there's an excessive reliance on what candidates are supposed to bring with them. (p. 5)

Rick stressed the importance of universities needing to be clear on that exactly they are looking for, avoiding overinflating their expectations from potential candidates.

Critical and bias-conscious evaluation

Mary, Rick and Tom emphasized the significance of improving evaluation of candidates; the search committee needs to be more critical and conscious of their own bias throughout the search process. Mary noted that it is crucial to “make sure all nominees are evaluated critically; there needs to be more than just impressive resume, making sure these people are actually capable” (p. 6). Tom also agreed that committee members need to be critical of what they see on paper, and to ensure that proper background checks are done. Tom talked about his experience where a university hired a president without knowing all the facts, which was “a result of lack of due diligence, either on the search committee's part or on the search company's part. I think it is truly prudent to really enforce that due diligence and go overboard and use all means possible”. The participants believed that taking additional steps to critically evaluate candidates is crucial.

Rick argued that the search committee needs to learn how to evaluate candidates and to be cautious about it:

I think in every search process including presidential searches, it's difficult for search committees to equally appraise unconventional candidates if I can put it that way. And by unconventional I just mean anything different from what people would've been familiar with in the role. That might be about age, it might be about gender, it might be about

geographic origin, it might be about disciplinary background, it might be about whether they're an academic or not. So whatever the dimension may be, people will come into a search process with assumptions. And I think every committee can strive to do better on that. It's extremely difficult for committees to completely set aside their cognitive biases. And I think it takes a very systematic and thorough effort to do that. So I think that can be generally improved in all searches. (p. 5)

Rick noted that personal bias is not something that can be avoided, but it needs to be recognized and talked about as part of the search process in order to see improvement in the future.

Improving transition process

Rick, Bob, Maggie and Lisa pointed out that there is always room for improvement and something to be learned from a previous experience of a presidential search. The participants specifically talked about improving the transition process and talking to other institutions about their experience. Rick mentioned his experience on a transition committee:

Distinguishing between transition activities on the one hand, and regular work activities on the other, that turns out to be a big deal. If you can't do that then the transition committee's going to be wandering around kind of getting in the way of people, or else they'll just back off and say, 'well there's nothing for me to do because Joe's got that covered and Jill's got that covered.' So you have to understand, what is a transition event? What is a transition activity? We didn't think about that very much. We didn't say, what constitutes transition? What are we doing when we're transitioning somebody, as opposed to then doing the job? But we got better at that. (p. 7)

Bob agreed that the transition period needs to be thought through and planned, keeping in mind the type of incoming president and the needs of different stakeholders.

Number one is that there is a plan. And number two, that it's a negotiated and agreed-upon plan. And number three, that it's an evolving plan based on the perceived needs of the parties involved – especially the Board, those people who are up close and part of the transition and the incumbent – the person themselves; the president themselves. I think it's really important that we use different kind of measures and metrics for the development of that plan and it should be a developmental plan that actually moves the president towards not independence, but interdependence. But then worked out in terms of how that suits their personality. So I think a conscious and strategic and developmental orientation is key. (p.7)

According to Maggie and Lisa, talking to others who recently went through a presidential search is always very helpful: “there are a lot of good tips about how to run a good process and just things to watch out for” (Maggie, p. 8). Maggie also pointed out that it is important to “continually improve, we have an evolving environment and things change so it is good. Tools change – you know what you can use. So it really helps to speak to others” (p. 8). The participants believed that striving to continuously improve the transition process and reaching out to others for advice are good lessons to be implemented in future searches.

Summary

In the third part of the interview, the participants were asked to share their perceptions regarding the outcomes of the succession process. The participants were asked sub-questions in order to identify short-term and long-term impacts of the presidential succession process: How should the results be communicated to the university community?; What can be learned from the presidential succession process? What strategies and processes could be improved? The participants named several themes about short-term impacts of presidential secession process.

The following were identified as the most central: the importance of first impressions and buy-in, along with the implications of changes in personnel and senior administration team.

Also, several themes came up under the question regarding long-term impacts of presidential succession. The state of the university to which the president enters, shifting the university in a new direction, and the length of term consideration were identified as most vital. In regards to the communication of presidential succession results to the university community, the main themes that emerged were: ensuring transparent and informed communication throughout the entire process of presidential succession; and a carefully planned final announcement recognizing different audiences and current context. From the final sub question of what can be learned by universities through their presidential secession process, the following themes emerged: actively looking for candidates with clear expectations, critical and bias-conscious evaluation of candidates, an improved transition process and learning from others.

Impact of Succession Process on Organizational Culture

Participants were asked to share their perceptions regarding the impact of succession process on organizational culture; they were asked to talk about the potential impact succession process may have on university culture, the relationships of stakeholders with university, and what barriers and facilitators of presidential succession can impact organizational culture.

Numerous themes emerged under the question regarding the impact of succession process on the culture of the university. The following were identified as the most vital: shifting university culture in a new direction and the impact on campus morale and productivity.

Shifting University Culture in a New Direction

Andy, Tom and Glen stated that with a new president in place there is an opportunity for the university culture to shift in a new direction. They all recognized that this process takes time and requires the new leader to be familiar with a current culture of the institution he or she is leading. Andy noted that “first, that’s them adopting the university’s culture, but as time goes on, that’s them shifting the culture of the university to make it better reflect their priorities and their vision for what the university can be” (p. 5). Tom also stressed the importance of taking the prior culture of the university into account before shifting in a new direction:

This University has a huge, a tremendous history. A very successful history. It’s a collegial history. So if you want to try and get things done, history shows you that you get it done collegially as groups together. If you have a president coming in who really wants to dictate and drive rather than in a collegial manner, it won’t work. We have a strong faculty domineering culture on campus. Recognizing that and working with it and possibly at some point around it, has to happen for a president to be successful. Culture that we do have, will really impact the success of the president. I think the history and the culture of this University can be used very positively. And so you need to be able to choose the right person who understands that and uses the history in a positive manner moving forward; doesn’t try to battle back constantly. (p. 5)

The participants agreed that one of the potential impacts of succession on university culture is shifting it in a new direction, but only when the new president in place recognizes the importance of the current culture and works within that culture to achieve a positive shift.

According to Glen, one example of shifting university culture in a new direction is the institution’s commitment to provide support to newly appointed leaders:

I think there's just a general awareness that has been growing over the past several years that senior executives are not guaranteed success simply because they're appointed to the job, that the university has some responsibilities to make it possible for them to succeed, that goes beyond simply the Board supporting the president for example, or the provost or whatever. Any of the vice-presidents. That extends to making deliberate plans to inform these individuals about the institution, its priorities, its history, its culture, and to give them access to advice and coaching and other things that will help ensure their success. So we're now much more deliberate. We did use a lot of resources to make that work. And so we've got to figure out how to be effective in the transition process without expending a lot of resources and using a lot of people's time. (p. 7)

Glen added that, by providing proper transition to the new leaders, universities are able to make them more successful, and that universities should continue that practice into the future.

Impact on Morale and Productivity

Maggie, Lisa and Rick noted that succession impacts the morale and productivity of the campus community; whether it's a positive or a negative impact all depends on how successful the new leadership is. Maggie argued that succession can significantly influence morale, "if people in an organization feel like something is not quite right with leadership, it will influence their morale. Good succession gives people a healthy trust so they can go on with their own job and everything will be fine" (p.8). Lisa pointed out that "if succession is managed well it can be very positive, just for creating stability in general which I think is incredibly important, especially if you've come through a period of upheaval" (p. 4). Also according to Rick, succession and the newly selected leader have a significant impact on the campus community, particularly on morale and productivity:

I've noticed that when people don't know the direction of the person they're working for, that creates uncertainties; it creates anxieties; it creates a variety of ineffective behaviours; sometimes opportunistic behaviours. A president by how active they are and what signals they send, can pretty directly affect, through the leadership, a lot of things across the institution. So I think whether a president is seen to encourage people to express opinions, to encourage them to take risks in their job, to engage with them and support them in what they're doing, will make an enormous difference in how productive the rest of the university is. (p. 5)

The participants agreed that succession can have a negative or positive impact on morale and productivity at the university, and that it greatly depends on how successful and effective the new leader is.

Impact of Succession on Relationships with Stakeholders

Several themes emerged from discussion with participants regarding the ways in which succession can impact relationships of stakeholders with university. The following were identified as the most central: the importance of the relationships with stakeholders and the need for being strategic about them, the opportunity to renew relationships, and the potential to weaken them.

Relationships with stakeholders - need for being strategic

Mary, Maggie, Lisa, Bob and Andy, all talked about how crucial relationships with stakeholders are, and how important it is for the new leader to be strategic about maintaining and developing new relationships. Mary noted that "stakeholders nowadays are very important for any success of any institution. So I always simply say that you have to meet as often you can, and listen to them" (p. 7). Andy also argued that relationships with stakeholders is crucial

especially for an incoming new leader (p. 8). Maggie noted that “It’s really important to have the president meet personally with a number of different stakeholders. There might be relationships that are damaged so it’s extremely important to bring back a sense of confidence in the university – it’s all about relationships” (p.8). Lisa stressed that new leaders need to be strategic about the relationships with stakeholders:

I think we’ve got key constituencies that are affected by presidents and their relationships. And so you want to make sure they are managed effectively throughout the process. And of course, the challenge is that there are so many people the president has to sort of touch in important ways. I think that you need – when you go through a succession phase you need to make sure you’re hitting all the right groups of people.
(p. 4)

Bob also noted that “the president needs to have people who can map those people with him or herself, and can actually get to those people, touch them, develop relationships with them” (p.8). The participants all agreed that relationships with stakeholders are very important, and that it is crucial for the new leader to be strategic about these relationships.

Opportunity to renew relationships

Glen and Tom noted that with a new leader comes an opportunity to renew relationships with some of the stakeholders. Glen talked about the centrality of relationships in his experience with a new president coming in:

succession provides a really great opportunity to renew relationships, to tell donors, for example, tell the government, to tell the local community leaders, that we value them and that we value their input and their advice. So when presidents meet with the business community for example it’s a reminder to them that the university considers

them to be major players in the future of the institution. A chance also for the president to develop some personal relationships with people he may only know vaguely if at all. It means and in some ways that while we're not in control, but at the same time, we are likely to meet new people we might not otherwise have met, by engaging other people in the actual management of these events. (p.8)

In this comment, Glen provides some valuable elaboration on the earlier discussion of useful strategies for the new leader.

Tom pointed out that some relationships that the university has with stakeholders are very positive, with stakeholders believing and supporting the university. "I think the University has really good relationships with the city; with the external provincial community; with the national community" (Tom, p. 6). However, according to Tom, not all relationships are in a good condition; "the one problem we do have at the moment is our relationship with the provincial government and I think that does impact us quite a bit" (p. 6). The participants agreed that with a new leader comes new opportunity for renewing and strengthening the university's relationships with its stakeholders.

Potential to weaken relationships

Both Tom and Lori talked about succession and how it has the potential to weaken the university's relationships with stakeholders. Tom shared his experience at his institution where a president was left to make significant repairs to relationships that were substantially weakened by the previous president and the process itself that led to the final selection. Tom believed that:

if you have a president that thinks they can do everything themselves and what they want to do is what everybody else has to do, has to follow, then you end up totally isolating not just the president but the university as a whole. So if you have a university

president who does not interact well with government, with the premier, with the Minister of Higher Education, then you do start to run into problems because we are so dependent still on the government grant here. And so if we do not have those good governmental relations then you get side-swiped, you get government not trusting what we are doing as a university. (p. 6)

Tom noted that there is a potentially significant disadvantage in having a president who is not cooperative and does not care about keeping good relations with a number of stakeholders. Lori also brought up her experience with a new leader coming in and trying to change too much too quickly, which inherently led to damaged and weakened relationships with stakeholders. Lori noted that “when leaders are making decisions, when they’re trying to implement change or when you’re talking about leadership succession, you need to make sure that you don’t forget to bring everyone else along” (p. 8). The participants agreed that with succession there is always a chance that the new leader will damage some of the relationships the university has with its stakeholders.

Barriers to Effective Succession

Several themes emerged from discussion with participants about barriers to effective presidential succession that can have a negative impact on organizational culture. The following were identified as the most central: a problematic match with cultural norms, university being at standstill and a lack of transparency with the newly selected president.

Problematic Match with Cultural Norms

Jon, Lori and Bob noted that one of the barriers to effective succession that can have a negative impact on organizational culture is a problematic match between the incoming president and the cultural norms. According to Jon, “having a new leader who is unfamiliar

with the current culture of the university and bringing a new philosophy and perspective that can potentially either create conflict or even disrupt the sort of progression of the university” can be problematic (p. 4). Also Lori believed that having a president who is external to the culture is difficult for the university and there will be challenges culturally. Bob noted:

Patrick Lencioni just wrote a book this summer on teams. And he said there were three basic features of good team players, of which a president is the team leader: a president needs to be humble, hungry, and people-smart. If there’s a lack of humility, but there is arrogance, elitism, I’m-better-than-you, or my team is or even our university is, that will not go very far. (p. 8).

Bob pointed out that a president with certain characteristics can be a barrier to effective succession processes with a negative impact on organizational culture.

Lori similarly noted that “presidents need to form real engagement, real relationships with people, because that’s how trust forms, that’s how respect forms, that’s how organizations work together well” (p. 9). The participants agreed that a poor match between the selected president and prevailing cultural norms can negatively impact the organization.

University at standstill

Maggie, Lisa and Andy pointed out that often during, or as an effect of, presidential succession there is a danger of the university not moving forward but rather coasting and waiting for a new leader to come in or to start leading, which can have a negative impact on organizational culture. Maggie noted that:

the negative impact, it just takes time. It takes time to – especially if you have an unplanned succession, but I think even with the planned succession it takes time for the person to get in, get going, get running. So the biggest negative impact is often your

university or your organization is on hold. You try to keep things going but it's really hard to feel like you might be able to – I'll do the sailing ship comparison – you might be able to keep this ship sailing. It's hard to direct its course. So as long as you're pointed in the right direction and kind of there's no turbulent waters you'll be fine. But if at any point during the time when you're trying to fill this position you get hit by a storm or you get hit by a course correction or it's time to turn, those are hard to do without your leader identified. So that's the most negative impact on the organizational culture. (p. 9)

According to Lisa, when there is a lack of leadership or the new leader is not trusted “it makes it a lot harder for the institution to pull together in one direction. So I think there's a tendency at the organizational level to retrench and to pull back” (p. 5). The participants believed that the university being at standstill is one of the barriers to effective presidential succession which has a negative impact on the organizational culture of the university.

Lack of transparency towards candidates

Mary talked extensively about the lack of transparency and not providing the real picture of the current state of the university to the presidential candidate; this lack of transparency can be a potential barrier to effective succession and have a negative effect on organizational culture. Mary noted that:

if we are not transparent and not giving the entire information to presidential candidates, I think we are creating a problem for them, and also we are creating a problem for ourselves. It's very important to be honest, sincere, because we are looking for somebody to come head our institution. So it's the duty of our search committee and the Board of Governor's Chair, to make sure that all the appropriate information was given.

Also including any concerns the candidates may have, we have to be very honest and sincere to tell them this is what has happened. Hiding some information doesn't help because once that information comes out, people get concerned about it. So it's very important that we have to be open, honest, and to make sure that everything is given to the candidates or the president. (p. 8)

The participants believed that not being fully transparent about the current and prior state of the university with the presidential candidate will potentially have a negative impact on the organizational culture, jeopardizing the effectiveness of the presidential succession.

Facilitators of Effective Succession

Numerous themes emerged concerning the facilitating factors for effective succession with implications for organizational culture. The following were identified by the participants: careful planning for the transition and the strengths of the leader put in place.

Well-planned transition

Jon, Mary and Rick emphasized the importance of planning for presidential transition, recognizing strengths and potential weaknesses of the new president and making sure they are as successful as they can be. According to Jon, "the role of succession planning is to make sure that you don't create a situation of oil and water. Somebody who understands the culture is going to be more successful than somebody who doesn't" (p. 4). Mary talked about his experience with a transition committee as an example of positive factors contributing to effective succession with positive implications for organizational culture. "We needed to create a transition committee with various representatives across stakeholders' groups to make sure that we can help the president feel comfortable in most areas" (p. 8). Rick also noted:

So you've got to pick a spot in your transition work that is more encompassing. So

that's why the planning piece is so important. In our case we had basic rough plans about introducing this President to the external community first as a priority. Everything depends on the president you've got. But our view was that's what needed to be done first; that the internal community could wait; that they could be satisfied with a big internal announcement, and a change in the website, and some photo ops and stuff like that, and basically be told, 'we will let you interrogate this person later'. The other thing we learned, and I think is really important for our success, was we engage the faculty through the Faculty Association. And I think that proved to be a wise thing to do. I wouldn't do everything through the Faculty Association – far from it. But I would do that. (p. 7)

The participants seemed to believe that having thoughtfully planned transition is one of the facilitating factors of effective succession which has a positive impact on the organizational culture.

Exceptional leader

Bob and Lori argued that the right leader put in place, one that is exceptional, can make all the difference in presidential succession effectiveness and positively impact the culture of university. Bob noted that:

a president with humility, passion and love for the university is absolutely critical. If there isn't humility, if there isn't a hunger, a passion, a focus, a loyalty, a sense that we are making a difference, we will make a difference, we need to equip people to make those differences and help them to succeed because their success collectively will make our success. The university is the people. And so a president needs to have both in themselves and in their team and in their subsidiary teams, needs to have a tremendous

amount of people-smarts; that capacity to be able to interact with different kinds of people in ways that actually build people up. (p. 8)

Lori also talked about the right leader making a difference and facilitating an effective succession, she noted that “leadership change can be a really positive thing for any kind of organization, it’s just whether it’s the right leader” (p.10). The participants agreed that once an exceptional leader is selected then that person can make everything work, creating a positive culture across the institution.

Summary

In the fourth part of the interview, the participants were asked to share their perceptions regarding the impact of presidential succession on the organizational culture. The participants were asked four sub questions asking about the impact presidential succession has on the culture of the university and the relationships with stakeholders, as well as the barriers and facilitating factors of presidential succession. The participants noted numerous themes regarding the impact of succession on the culture of the university. The following were identified as the most vital: shifting university culture in a new direction and the impact on campus morale and productivity. Also, several themes emerged regarding the ways in which succession can impact relationships of stakeholders with the university. The importance of the relationships with stakeholders and the need for being strategic about them, the opportunity to renew relationships, and the potential to weaken them were identified as the most central.

The participants talked about barriers to effective presidential succession that can have a negative impact on organizational culture, and the following were identified as the most central: the stance of selected president, the university being at a standstill and a lack of transparency with the newly selected president. In terms of facilitating factors for effective

succession the following were identified: careful planning for the transition and the quality of the leader put in place.

Implications of the Succession Process for Succession Practices

Participants were asked to share their perceptions regarding the implications of the succession process for succession strategy; they were asked to talk about what could be learned from the process itself, and what policies, procedures or structures could be developed to inform future presidential succession.

Lessons Learned from the Process

The participants were overwhelmingly united when answering this question; they all talked about the importance of learning from past mistakes. Some mentioned changing the search firm as one of the lessons, while others commented on the change of the communication strategy. There were numerous remarks made around the need for community involvement and the value of a transition process.

Learning from past mistakes

All the participants talked about the importance of analyzing previous presidential succession processes and making sure to learn from the past and improve all the elements that did not work well or may need a slight adjustment to be more effective in the future. Glen talked about his experience with a presidential search:

I think we've made some mistakes at the beginning, we've corrected those, and we learned things. I think that the next time we do the process I'm sure it'll be a little bit better, but frankly I think we did a pretty good job out of the gate without anything in the way of real guidance except what we had learned from another university that went through this process. And theirs was a very different situation because they were

recruiting somebody from the outside who didn't know the university. (p. 8)

Bob argued that “every new search committee and every succession or transition committee needs to ask: what do we have from our past habits that we can learn from? What's worked and what hasn't?” (p.10). According to Tom and his experience:

you never have a perfect process but I think we have a much better process now. We changed the search company, probably because we thought the previous search company was getting a little blasé or a little negligent in their work. So we went with a different type of search company for this most recent search. It was good that we kept providing updates about where we were in the process. I think it's important for that to happen. I think, even for a confidential search it's important for the campus community to know where the process of the search is. So I think we learned a lot from our past which is positive. (p. 7)

The participants strongly believed in learning from the past processes, ensuring not to make the same mistakes and building on the elements that worked well.

Campus community as part of the process

Andy talked about the importance of involving the campus community in the presidential process. She noted that:

Increasing involvement, consultation and having it be a community process is essential. And that doesn't mean allowing everyone in the room and let everyone have a vote or allow everyone to know who's on the short list. But there needs to be some way that members of the campus community feel they have been a part of the process. And the naysayers who are on every university campus who always oppose everything the university does, are never going to feel like they've been involved and that's fine. The

problem is when people who have dedicated their careers or who have chosen to study or have deep, deep ties in the university, aren't involved, there's a huge risk. So that needs to be very thoughtfully and purposefully discussed and written into the succession planning but also into the process itself. (p. 6)

From Andy's point of view, the current presidential succession process would benefit from having a greater campus community involvement throughout the process. Her sentiments were echoed by most other participants.

Reliance on a proven transition process

Both Lisa and Rick noted that a transition process was something that had worked well in a previous presidential search, and that there should be an increased reliance on the transition process in the future. Lisa talked about her experience from a previous presidential search:

I think the transition process that was used in this case was really quite outstanding and I think it's had enormous benefits in almost all areas. Because I think that the relationships have been managed very well from what I can tell, which means the Board of Governors has faith in the President, the province seems to have faith in the President, at least in terms of what we're doing. You think about other key constituencies that the President is working with. And so that has implications not only for the way we're governed and presumably having more harmonious relationships than less harmonious relationships, both with the Board of Governors and hopefully with the province. I think it also has implications for how we see ourselves as an institution and how we project ourselves externally. (p.5)

Rick also noted that "it's important to have a supportive team to accompany the new president to keep the work of the university going, to support them through their first year or two, and who

are actively seeking to assist in presidential transition” (p. 6). The participants saw that process as something that worked well as part of the presidential succession process, and something that needed to be relied on more in the future.

Improving Future Presidential Succession Strategy

Several themes came up under the question about what policies, procedures, or structures could be developed to inform the next presidential succession strategy. The participants identified the following as most crucial: enhancing and regulating the transition process, and developing succession planning.

Regulating the transition process

Glen and Maggie noted that it would be beneficial for the next presidential succession strategy if the transition were enhanced and formalized as a process. According to Glen:

the transition process as a process could be enhanced if you actually had a policy around transitions. So if the university were to adopt a set of procedures, standard operating procedures, that were vested in the University Secretary’s office, so that the next time we run into this, we have a kind of to-do list, you know a kind of set of things that happen relative to transition. When you’re crafting a search committee, you’re already thinking about the transition committee. So I’m thinking that to institutionalize it is to kind of make sure that we document what has happened in the past, and that we have basically just – when we do this search, the moment we start up on the search we start up thinking about the transition. (p. 8)

Maggie noted that “the presidential transition advisory committee was new for us. We could formalize the presidential transition advisory committee, write it up a bit better as to how to search for a president” (p. 10). The participants believed that formalizing the transition process

would be helpful in improving the next presidential succession strategy.

Developing succession planning

Jon, Bob, Tom and Andy talked about developing an internal succession strategy, which would benefit any future presidential searches. Jon argued that “what the institution has to do is to actually develop a succession process and make sure that everybody is informed about what that process is, and in particular educate faculty about what the purpose of succession planning is” (p.5). According to Bob:

One of the fundamental pieces I think that’s really important, is that there is a tendency to think about the atomistic or the individual nature of the presidency. It’s not that at all. And so really, succession isn’t about a person. And we get caught up in that, and it’s a mistake. It’s actually a culture that is getting succeeded and transitioned. It is a team that is being worked on. And if all the tension is just focused on person and position, that would be something that I would advise against. We need to be whole-system in our orientation here, and there needs to be some dip sticking where you actually kind of put the little rod in to see what is the level of oil here? You know, what’s the temperature here? There needs to be a barometer, to mix metaphors. Like what is the relative humidity of the place? What’s the climate that’s happening here and to what extent does this president have something to do with that? (p. 7)

Bob seemed to believe that developing an internal succession strategy would benefit future presidential searches. Tom also noted that perhaps we should start looking internally for our next leaders:

Something we don’t do very well at this University is really look internally. Not look internally for candidates at the last minute and say, “Oh I think you would do very well

to apply – good in this job so apply for it.” We don’t do succession planning very well at this University. So if we had a president stay for the five years and in that fifth, well the end of the fourth year said, “No I’m not going to go for another term,” have we actually looked internally and thought, ‘do we have anybody that could go for this position? And have we started giving them leadership help, leadership training, in order to be able to move into that role? (p. 7)

Andy was equally convinced that “there needs to be a handbook, an A-to-Z ‘how you do this’ when it comes to succession. And again, that means having staff who are invested in ensuring that the institution does well, not just in the current leadership” (p.7). The participants strongly suggested that succession planning is something that the institution should consider developing internally to better inform future presidential succession strategies.

Summary

In the fifth part of the interview, the participants were asked to share their perceptions regarding the implications of the succession process for succession strategy. The participants were asked two sub questions to identify potential lessons and develop new strategies for future presidential succession. The participants talked about the importance of learning from past mistakes. Some mentioned changing the search firm as one of the lessons, while others commented on the change of the communication strategy. Some talked about the need for community involvement and the reliance on a transition process. The participants also identified the following themes as most crucial for what policies, procedures, or structures could be developed to inform the next presidential succession strategy: enhancing and regulating the transition process, and developing succession planning.

Implications for Leadership Sustainability

As a part of the concluding questions, participants were asked to share their perceptions of what key strategies could enhance the capacity of the university to develop long-term leadership sustainability, and what is expected from the university to help effective presidential succession.

Key Strategies

The majority of participants provided similar answers to this question; they talked about the importance of leadership training within the institution in order to foster long-term leadership sustainability. The participants also noted that having a supportive environment is crucial for cultivating leadership sustainability with the university.

Leadership training

Tom, Maggie, Jon, Lisa and Rick talked about the need for the university to provide leadership training internally to ensure leadership sustainability. Lisa suggested that “cultivating internal leadership is essential. Coaching becomes really important, and offering continued professional development, especially in an academic environment you don’t get a whole lot of professional development; you came in as a professor; you never got the administrative training” (p. 7). Similarly, Tom recognized the need for internal leadership training; according to Tom, “human resources are the experts on leadership training, personnel training, whatever is needed” and they should be responsible for providing that service to various groups within the university (p. 9). Tom noted the challenges of providing internal leadership training, but he argued that it is essential in order to be proactive. Rick also talked about “a variety of attitudes and structures that are barriers to internal leadership development” (p. 7). Rick believed in a practice where “all universities would work at the development of all

their leaders, because they all would benefit; even if the leaders go to another institution, the pool among all universities would be more experienced or better-trained pool” (p. 7).

Bob stated that:

there needs to be a systematic approach to leadership development that is both personal as well as systematic, where there are opportunities that are afforded for people to cross-train, to have opportunities in acting roles that aren't actually in the pinch acting roles but actually strategic acting or alongside peer mentorship sort of a role. We are consciously and strategically reproducing leaders, whether they're department heads, whether they're a regular faculty member, into positions because we're just providing the opportunity for them to actually grow in their leadership capacity, capabilities and potential. (p. 11)

Bob alongside other participants, noted the need for purposeful internal leadership development and training, in order to ensure long-term leadership sustainability

Supportive environment

Tom, Glen, Lori, Bob and Lisa talked about the importance of providing a supportive environment internally and externally to foster leadership sustainability within the institution. Tom advocated to develop and nurture a culture of involvement from the point of hiring. According to Tom, new faculty should be encouraged to participate in meetings such as Faculty Council; “this is how they learn how their college operates and when they participate at university level, that's how they learn how the university operates”, which provides them with ideas of a future “avenue that they may be interested in” (p. 9). Tom added that it is important to encourage faculty to be proactive rather than have a reactive mentality toward administrative roles. He argued that “not all faculty are going to be researchers or teachers.

They may be administrators, so a whole attitude change towards administration and succession into administration needs to happen on campus” (p. 9).

Lori noted that if she were in a leadership position on campus she would expect a supportive environment; “I would want them to recognize that I bring certain strengths and I bring certain weaknesses to the job and that that’s okay. It’s about providing support and knowledge and the access to it” (p. 12). Bob argued that there is a need for:

people committed to the idea and the actions that are required for the president, the figure head and actual leader of the organization to be successful; the vision that when they are successful, the likelihood of other people being successful is increased. That there is a mutuality of success when a president is successful. It’s not about the person or the position, but they are a hinge or a linchpin or a cardinal factor in the success of the university. The president’s role is absolutely crucial. It’s a daunting, scary, role that most people are undersized for. But if it’s done in the context of a community of people who are joining together in that function, so it’s not even so much the president but the office of the president, and helping that office to be all that it can be. (p. 12)

In short, Bob addressed the cruciality of the president’s role and vision, and the value of a concerted commitment and moral purpose across the campus community to supporting that work. The participants believed that a supportive environment can be very beneficial in enhancing leadership sustainability on campus, which is favourable for everyone.

Expectations

The participants talked about the main expectations that should be met by the university when a new president starts, in order to facilitate development of leadership sustainability. Having the Board’s full support and transparency regarding the current university situation

was a key expectation noted by the participants.

Board of Governors' support

Rick, Bob, Jon, Lisa and Mary talked about the importance of the Board being supportive of the president in order to ensure long term leadership sustainability. Rick noted that:

Boards actually in all organizations but certainly in universities have a dual role; every now and then it's their job to evaluate a senior executive to replace them or to appoint a new one. But ninety-eight percent of the time their job is to support the one they got. And that I think is a critical role. So it means paying attention, providing scrutiny, providing advice, being engaged, not hanging back and letting a person make mistakes. (p. 7)

Rick seemed to believe that support of the Board is a critical element of having successful leadership sustainability. Similarly, Bob argued that:

the Board – they're the owner group in terms of the governance, the way that works. I would expect them to tell me when I should stop doing things, when I should start doing things, when I should keep doing things. I would expect that the feedback would be significant; that they would put the supports in place to help me to do the job; that they would be rigorous; they would be committed to the same purposes – have hunger, humility and people smarts as well; that we would grow together, and that there would be a reciprocity, an interchange that would take place. There's no board member or board that does not want to be successful. And so they need a good president for that to happen and a good president needs that as well. (p. 11)

Participants noted that having a supportive Board is one of the key elements facilitating

development of long-term leadership sustainability.

Transparency

Glen, Andy and Mary advocated complete transparency with the new president to create successful leadership sustainability. Glen noted that if he was stepping into a leadership role at the university he:

would want a frank briefing on the financial situation of the institution: all funds, all risks beyond the financial risk but first of all I would want to understand the financial risk. Then I'd want a run-through of all the risks. So I'd want to take a look at the risk registry and I'd want to go through all the risks with everybody and I'd want them all to be prepared to explain these to me. (p. 10)

Glen noted that it would be crucial for a new president to be fully informed about all affairs of the university to afford him or her the knowledge needed for future decision making.

Furthermore, Andy advocated for transparency with the newly elected leader; she urged for providing:

a clear environmental landscape; what have problems been in the last three to five years; what was the previous president's major struggle; what was he known for; what was he liked for; what was he criticized for. And really just telling me what the university's looking for now; is it looking for the same sort of leadership? Is it looking for a different kind of leadership and that sort of stuff. The stuff that you don't necessarily think about but it makes a real difference to people once they get to know you. I just want to feel hundred percent prepared so that when I step out from behind that curtain and the confetti's going, the marching band's playing, that people can really buy what I'm selling. (p.7)

Most believed that being fully transparent with the presidential candidate is important. Transparency is expected by the newly appointed leader, and it is an essential part of developing a long-term leadership sustainability.

Summary

In the sixth part of the interview, the participants were asked to share their perceptions on the key strategies that could enhance the capacity of the university to develop long-term leadership sustainability, and what is expected from the university to help effective presidential succession. The participants talked about the importance of leadership training within the institution to foster long-term leadership sustainability. They also noted that having a supportive environment is crucial for cultivating leadership sustainability within the university. Furthermore, the participants argued that there are certain expectations that need to be met by the university when a new president starts in order to facilitate development of long-term leadership sustainability. Having Board's full support and transparency regarding the current university situation was identified as the most vital to success in the future.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I reported on the data collected from the semi structured interview responses. Participants highlighted several key qualities of effective presidential succession: a thorough environmental scan; clear expectations for the role; a clear transition process; a clear role for the search committee and its relationship to the role of the Board; and careful attention to distinguishing search committee and transition committee roles.

The outcomes of the succession process for these participants included: the need for attention to first impressions and buy-in; changes in personnel and senior administration; shifting the university in a new direction; and improvements to the succession process. Among the major

impacts of presidential succession on the organizational culture, participants highlighted: the shifting of university culture in a new direction; impacts on campus morale and productivity; impacts on relationships with stakeholders; the opportunity to renew (or weaken) relationships.

Implications of the process for succession strategy included: learning from past mistakes; reviewing the university's communication strategy; ensuring meaningful community involvement; enhancing and regulating the transition process; and developing continuing succession planning processes.

Participants noted that the university's capacity for leadership sustainability would benefit from ongoing leadership training within the institution; a supportive environment for cultivating leadership sustainability; and having the Board's full support and transparency regarding the current university situation.

CHAPTER FIVE

Summary, Discussion, and Implications

In this chapter, I present a brief summary of the case study, following which I examine the findings further in the light of the related theoretical and research literature examined in Chapter Two. I then discuss the implications of my findings for policy, practice, theory and future research in this area. In the final section, I reflect on the study's methodology and examine the strengths and weaknesses of the study's design. I conclude by highlighting my reflections on the overall study.

Summary of the Study

Due to my strong interest in university presidential succession, I wanted to research the context under which the succession process unfolds, the implications of the succession planning process, and how it affects leadership sustainability. I chose to explore stakeholders' perceptions in one university regarding presidential succession and to examine its implications for organizational culture, succession planning and leadership sustainability. Qualitative research using a case study design was employed to explore:

1. How do stakeholders perceive the importance of context in succession processes?
2. What are the perceptions of stakeholders regarding effective succession processes?
3. What are the perceptions of stakeholders regarding the desired outcomes of succession processes?
4. What are the perceptions of stakeholders regarding the implications of succession processes for organizational culture?
5. What are the perceptions of stakeholders regarding the implications of succession processes for future succession planning?

6. What are the perceptions of stakeholders regarding the implications of succession processes for leadership sustainability?

Literature related to these areas was presented in Chapter Two. I reviewed the literature pertaining to the phenomenon of succession in the context of presidency change and its implications for leadership sustainability. I examined the context in which universities are situated while facing unprecedented fiscal challenges in changing societal and economic contexts. I also looked at the pivot in direction that universities have taken away from the collegial governance model towards a more efficient corporate model of governance. Furthermore, I studied the leadership qualities that a university president must demonstrate in order to be successful in the ever-changing post-secondary landscape, the need for a leadership succession strategy and the importance of sustainable leadership in ensuring the continued success of a university.

Data were gathered through open-ended, semi structured interview questions. The preceding research questions provided the structure for the interviews. Further probing questions were used where necessary to elicit more information. I conducted the interviews with ten participants who were current and past senior administrators, and members of senior committees including faculty and student representatives at one university.

Findings

All participants in this case study were members of Alexandria University; they were current and past senior administrators, members of senior committees including faculty and student representatives. Alexandria University had undergone presidency transition relatively recently. The participants provided me with their perceptions of successful presidential succession, the context under which the succession process unfolds, the implications of the

succession planning process, and how it affects leadership sustainability.

The conditions under which the succession process can unfold

When looking at the context under which the succession process can unfold the participants identified external and internal conditions that impact presidential succession along with circumstances under which presidents may leave and what may be the implications of their exit for the next leader. A number of external conditions were identified; the importance of being able to create positive relationships with many different stakeholders was recognized as one of the most important external conditions affecting presidential succession. A majority of the participants described the important role that governmental priorities play as an external factor impacting the presidential succession process. Other major external conditions impacting presidential succession which were mentioned were the reputation of the institution and attractiveness of the city itself.

There were a number of internal conditions identified that were believed to impact the succession process. The majority of participants agreed that the university environment and culture are among the most critical conditions impacting the success of leadership at the university. Also, the importance of the Board of Governors' stance and involvement was pointed out by the participants. It was agreed that the Board should be significantly involved in the presidential succession process right from the beginning. Additionally, the search committee was identified as one of the internal conditions crucial to the success of the presidential succession. The search committee can significantly impact the future leadership of the university. It was suggested that often committee members' biases play a role in the search outcome.

Several circumstances were identified under which presidents might leave their position

and what implications this may have for the next leaders. Retirement was pointed out as one of the most common circumstances under which presidents may leave their position, and one that is most neutral for the university and causes least tension; it was also noted that the relationship between the Board of Governors and the president seems to be very important in ensuring that the presidency is successful. Participants believed it is very rare to see a president leave voluntarily when unsuccessful, or perceived to be so; it is much more common to have the Board terminate an incumbent's position prompted by specific events or buildup of tension between the president and the Board. Participants noted that the circumstances with the previous president and why the previous president left have major implications for any successive president. Some presidents are much easier to follow than others, depending on circumstances.

Effective presidential succession process

The participants identified a number of key elements that are essential for an effective presidential succession process. Recognizing the current university environment was identified as crucial by the participants. It was agreed that before successful on-boarding of a new president to a particular campus culture or campus community can take place, it is important for universities to understand their own environment and culture, so they can be equipped with the appropriate resources to ensure successful transition to the presidency. Also, stating clear expectations for the new president was noted as one of the key elements of an effective presidential succession process. The Board needs a clear understanding of what they are looking for in the future president, and there needs to be a comprehensive consultation with all the stakeholders to determine what the university as a whole is looking for in their next leader. Once the new president is elected, having a transition process is an important component for the

success of the incoming leader. It was noted that establishing a transition team, when a new president is hired, is a very useful strategy. Establishing a group of people to provide unvarnished opinion and advice is incredibly important for an incoming president.

Participants were unanimous in their belief that the search committee plays a number of fundamental roles in the presidential succession process. It was noted that the key role of a search committee is to identify the best person possible to be the next president in order to put a recommendation to the board. It was also identified that another important role of the search committee is to work closely with the board throughout the process, particularly the chair of the search committee who is the person responsible for communicating with the board. In addition, participants pointed out that it is crucial to make a clear distinction between the roles and responsibilities of a search committee versus those of the transition committee. These two committees have vital roles to play, but they need to be clear and strategic.

A number of components that contribute to the ideal search committee structure were identified in this case study. An appropriate representation from major stakeholders on the committee was mentioned by the majority of participants. A search committee separate from the Board with representatives from the Board and various stakeholders from the campus community is essential to its ideal structure. Also, having a predefined list of search committee members outlined in search procedures would allow a positive start to a search process.

The size of the committee is another component that came up frequently; the size of the committee is believed to contribute to its effectiveness. However, it was noted that it is very difficult to establish a committee that is functional, and fully representative. Further, there seemed to be opposing views on whether the search process should be transparent or confidential. Some participants were convinced that a closed process is most effective, where

others believed that perhaps an open process would prove to be more successful. Most pointed out that the process needs to be confidential; otherwise many people will not even apply.

Potential candidates want to be assured that their names will be protected by the process.

In addition, the role of the Board was identified as one of the key elements for an effective presidential succession process. The Board was perceived to be responsible for running, managing and making the final decision during the search process. One of the most important responsibilities of the Board is to provide oversight of the presidential search. In particular, the role of the Board's Chair was believed by the participants to be essential in having an effective Board that fulfills its responsibilities when it comes to a presidential search. It is the most crucial position on the Board and the responsibility of running and managing the search falls on the Chair of the Board.

Desired outcomes of the process

In terms of the desired outcomes of the succession process, the participants identified short-term and long-term impacts of the presidential succession. They also talked about how the results should be communicated to the university community; and what can be learned from the presidential succession process, and what strategies and processes could be improved.

First impressions were identified as one of the short-term impacts of the presidential succession process. It is important to not underestimate the significance of first impressions and initial buy-in from campus community. Staffing changes was another example of the short-term impacts of presidential succession. Typically, when a new president starts his or her term, personnel changes are to follow, according to some of the participants. These changes happen fairly early on; the new president needs to ensure he or she has the right people in place to help him or her be successful.

It was pointed out that the long-term impact of the presidential succession depends on the state of the university that the new president enters, and what kind of president they are

replacing. Also, shifting the university in a new direction was identified as one of the major long-term impacts of presidential succession. New leaders need to be engaged in these processes carefully because shifting direction can be challenging particularly for an external president.

When it comes to the communication of presidential succession results to the university community, transparent communication throughout the process was pointed out by most participants. It is important for the search committee to be transparent and keep the campus community informed as much as possible about the progress of the presidential search at various stages, not only at the very end of the process when it is time for the final announcement. Also, it was suggested that a carefully planned final announcement recognizing different audiences and current context is crucial. It is essential for the announcement to present the new president in the best light possible and create as much buy-in as possible from the start.

Numerous lessons were identified for improving the future presidential succession processes. An active search for candidates with clear expectations was one of the identified lessons. The search committee should limit its reliance on search consultants and be more involved in the process themselves, seeking out actively the kind of people who might be interested in a job and not just passively receiving applications. Additionally, participants emphasized the significance of improving evaluation of candidates; the search committee needs to be more conscious of their own bias throughout the search process. It was pointed out that committee members need to be critical of what they see on paper, and need to ensure that proper background checks are done. Taking additional steps to evaluate candidates is crucial. It was also suggested that improving the transition process is critical for future presidential succession process. There is always room for improvement and something to be learned from a previous

experience of a presidential search, particularly improving the transition process and talking to other institutions about the experience. It is essential that the transition period be thought through and meticulously planned, keeping in mind the type of incoming president and the needs of different stakeholders.

Impact of succession on organizational culture

The participants identified numerous themes regarding the impact of succession on the culture of the university, including shifting university culture in a new direction and the impact on campus morale and productivity. It was stated that with a new president in place there is an opportunity for the university culture to shift in a new direction. Participants all pointed out that such a shift takes time and requires the new leader to be familiar with the current culture of the institution he or she is leading. They stressed the importance of taking the prior culture of the university into account before shifting in a new direction. Participants argued that succession and the newly selected leader have a significant impact on the morale and productivity of the campus community; whether it is a positive or a negative impact depends on how successful the new leadership is.

Additionally, several themes emerged regarding the ways in which succession can impact relationships of stakeholders with the university. Participants talked about how essential relationships with stakeholders are, and how important it is for the new leader to be strategic about maintaining and developing new relationships. It was noted that with a new leader comes an opportunity to renew relationships with some of the stakeholders. Participants talked about succession and how it also has the potential to weaken the university's relationships with stakeholders. It was noted that there is a potentially significant disadvantage in having a president who is not cooperative and does not care about keeping good relations

with stakeholders.

The participants discussed barriers to effective presidential succession that can have a negative impact on organizational culture. It was noted that one of the barriers is the type of president selected. For instance, having a president who is external to the culture is difficult for the university and there will be challenges culturally. Participants also pointed out that often during, or as an effect of, presidential succession there is a danger of the university not moving forward but rather coasting and waiting for a new leader to come in or to start leading, which can have a negative impact on organizational culture. Furthermore, the participants talked extensively about the lack of transparency and not providing the real picture of the current state of the university to the presidential candidate; this lack of transparency can be a potential barrier to effective succession and have a negative impact on the organizational culture, jeopardizing the effectiveness of the presidential succession.

In terms of facilitating factors for effective succession, the participants emphasized the importance of planning for presidential transition, recognizing strengths and potential weaknesses of the new president and providing support to ensure they are as successful as they can be. It was pointed out that when the right leader is put in place, one that is exceptional, it can make all the difference in presidential succession effectiveness and positively impact the culture of university.

Implications of the succession process for succession practices

The participants shared their perceptions regarding the implications of the succession process for succession strategy; they talked about what could be learned from the process itself, and what policies, procedures or structures could be developed to inform future presidential succession. They discussed the importance of analyzing previous presidential

succession processes and making sure to learn from the past and improve all the elements that did not work well or may need a slight adjustment to be more effective in the future.

It was noted that the presidential succession process would benefit from having a greater campus community involvement throughout the process. Some participants also pointed out that a transition process was something that had worked well in a previous presidential search, and that there should be an increased reliance on the transition process in the future.

Additionally, the participants identified what key policies, procedures, or structures could be developed to inform future presidential succession strategy. They noted that it would be beneficial for future presidential succession if the transition were enhanced and formalized as a process. They also talked about developing an internal succession strategy, which would benefit any future presidential searches.

Implications of the succession process for leadership sustainability

The participants identified key strategies that could enhance the capacity of the university to develop long-term leadership sustainability, and what the university could do in order to support effective presidential succession. The participants talked about the need for the university to provide purposeful leadership training internally in order to foster long-term leadership sustainability, and to provide a supportive environment in which this can occur.

Furthermore, the participants talked about the main expectations that should be met by the university when a new president starts; they noted that support of the Board is a critical to successful leadership sustainability. Additionally, it was pointed out that complete transparency with the new president is required throughout the process.

Discussion

In this section, I examine the connections between the findings and related literature, and discuss the findings in relation to theoretical and practical applications. I organized this section according to the broad themes that emerged from the interview questions.

The Conditions Under which the Succession Process Can Unfold

Trachtenberg et al. (2013) posited that in recent years, university presidents have become as expendable as football coaches; one bad ‘season’, scandal, or political or financial misstep and they are ‘sent packing’. These high-profile appointments are faced with increased scrutiny from students, faculty, administrators, alumni, and the media, and problems that perhaps should remain internal are discussed all too publicly (Cafley, 2015). Turpin (2014) noted that a combination of constrained resources and a new trend toward hiring from outside of academia results in tensions between governing boards and presidents that can erupt quickly into an outright conflict. In this case study, I found that this was one of the reasons mentioned for presidents leaving their posts, which created unfavorable conditions for the next leader stepping into this role. Trachtenberg et al. (2013), in a series of case studies, illuminated the types of behavior exhibited by presidents and boards that led to termination within the period of the first contract. These cases were followed with advice for aspiring presidents and boards about improving the processes of search, transition, and assessment.

Whether the reasons for departure are positive or negative, the outgoing president’s role has an influence on a new presidency. Regardless of the context of the predecessor, this individual has a direct impact on the expectations for the incoming president. According to Trachtenberg et al. (2013), the success of the previous president and the culture that was created impact the circumstances for an incoming president. If the outgoing president was well-loved

and respected, the Board needs to provide support and guidance for the incoming president. This transition from a beloved president can be more challenging to manage (Trachtenberg et al., 2013). Also, in this case study, it was clearly illustrated that the transition period is very important along with the consideration given to the circumstances under which the previous leader left, and the state of the university at the time of the new appointment.

Effective Presidential Succession Process

Michael, Schwartz and Balraj (2001) described the university president as “the most visible embodiment of institutional mission, vision and culture” (p. 332). Paul (2015) saw the most important role of a university president as managing the big picture: the institution’s mission, vision and long-term goals. The role of a university president as a leader is extensive, and as found in this case study, it is crucial for the search committee to select the best candidate possible to ensure effective presidential succession. Gray (2004) underlined critical components of the university president’s role: university management and budgeting; crafting the university’s mission and vision; serving as the public face of the university; establishing the academic plan and facilitating a positive campus climate. With so many competing demands, the complexity of the university president’s role becomes apparent. This understanding is particularly imperative in a time when the university itself is undergoing significant change. In this case study, I found that it is critical for the search committee to set out clear expectations for candidates and be transparent about the state of the university in order to facilitate appointing the right person for the job.

Trachtenberg et al., (2013) provided guidance to selection committees for university presidents. They suggested undertaking a governing board assessment; carefully appointing the selection committee; clarifying professional support needed; prioritizing characteristics of the

next president; sharing information; working together to establish mutual expectations; carefully screening candidates, and presenting a shared stance with regard to the appointment (Trachtenberg, et al., 2013). In this case study, the search committee, its makeup and expertise of members were found to be particularly important. Training of search committee members and clearly outlined procedures were suggested for improved effectiveness of the search process. This process signifies the beginning of the future board-president relationship and all cautionary steps should be taken. It was pointed out that the relationship with the search firm is something to pay attention to when discussing the search process. The participants were sensitive to the role the search firms play, but they argued that the hiring process cannot be entirely delegated to the search firm.

Paul (2015) noted that while the role of the university president has evolved dramatically in recent years, the recruitment pool and selection process has experienced little change since the 1960s. Organizational culture and institutional fit are crucial for leaders confronting key academic issues such as academic leadership and accountability, student success and support, university funding and fund-raising, strategic planning, government and community relations, and internationalism (Paul, 2015). Paul (2015) argued that changes to some long-standing practices are necessary, particularly in a time when the quality of universities has never been more vital to the economic, social, and political success of the country. In this case study, I found that planning is essential in ensuring effective succession process, especially doing an environmental scan and consulting multiple stakeholders prior to starting a presidential search. It is vital to establish current organizational culture and the direction the institution is taking, which would help in narrowing the type of new president that would be most desirable for the institution at that particular time.

Chan and Richardson (2012) found that the Board of Governors is typically responsible for the overall governance of the university, including all financial matters and matters related to property. Generally speaking, Boards of Governors devote their attention to seemingly non-academic matters (Jones & Skolnik, 1997). The Board of Governors is a key player in ensuring a successful presidential succession; this case study points to the Board of Governors' responsibility in overseeing the search process closely. The search process embodies the beginning of the Board-president relationship. Participants noted that hiring a new president is one of the most important roles of a university Board and this lengthy and complex process requires the full attention of board members.

Desired Outcomes of the Process

Watkins (2013) argued that transitions in leadership are periods of opportunity, a chance to start fresh and to make changes that are needed in an organization. However, they can also be periods of acute vulnerability, due to a lack of established working relationships and an inadequate understanding of the new role (Watkins, 2013). In this study, I found that presidential transition is an opportunity for a shift in a new direction. New leaders need to be careful, though, because shifting the university in a new direction can be challenging particularly for an external president. Outside leaders are not as familiar with the organization's structure and the existence of informal networks of information and communication. Similarly, an external leader would not necessarily be familiar with the organizational culture and therefore have greater difficulty adapting if any challenging circumstances arise (Klein & Salk, 2013). In this case study, I found that the transition process is central to the success of the newly elected leader, particularly in the case of an external appointee.

Impact of Succession on Organizational Culture

According to Schein (2010), the strength of a leader is directly related to the success of the organization. He described how different organizations begin to create cultures through the actions of strong leaders. Schein argued that leaders need to understand the natural processes by which culture evolves and changes as organizations grow and age to be able to steer them. Schein further contended that many of the problems faced by leaders are caused by their inability to analyze and evaluate their own organization's culture. Furthermore, if a leader tries to develop a new strategic plan or a new vision, he or she needs to ensure that it is consistent with the organization's culture, or else the plan or vision will not succeed. In this case study, I found that shifting organizational culture in a new direction can be very challenging especially for an external leader when current culture is not taken under consideration. Difficulties with organizational transformations arise from failures to analyze an organization's existing culture (Schein, 2010).

Schein (2010) defined organizational culture as:

a pattern of shared basic assumptions that the group learned as it solved its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, that has worked well enough to be considered valid and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems. (p. 12)

Schein (2010) identified three levels of organizational culture: artifacts, norms and values, and basic underlying assumptions, which can be unconsciously taken for granted and these are not visible. The bottom layer consists of basics underlying assumptions, which are the foundations upon which culture is based on. The underlying assumptions are often difficult to

describe, are taken-for-granted and are often only really understood by people who are used to the way the organization works. Underlying assumptions are usually invisible, and are not written down anywhere. People may not want to talk about them. However, they exist and are often powerful. The middle layer of the triangle represents norms and values, which are the public statements about what the organizational values are. Often organizations outline what their "core values" are; these are the espoused values by which the organization conducts its business. The top layer of the triangle is made up of artifacts, which are the visible signs of an organization's culture. They are visible; they can be seen, heard and felt, such as the logo, the dress code, how employees address each other and how they communicate internally and externally.

According to Schein (2010), basic assumptions is the most important since the "human mind needs cognitive stability and any challenge of a basic assumption will release anxiety and defensiveness" (p. 29). Many change programs fail for that very reason. In this case study, I found that with a new president in place, there is an opportunity for the university culture to shift in a new direction, although such a shift takes time and requires the new leader to be familiar with a current culture of the institution. The new leader needs to recognize the complexity of the organizational culture and be willing to learn all of its layers, and most importantly learn what the basic assumptions are before shifting into a new direction. As found in this case study, such organizational culture knowledge will be much more challenging to obtain by an external leader and it will take significant amount of time to learn the underlying assumptions and how the organization really works.

Schein (2010) identified a number of primary and secondary elements, or qualities and conditions that are critical for effective culture change. The primary mechanisms are the main

ways by which leaders effect cultural change through their visible actions. He pointed out the importance of attention, reaction to crisis, role modeling and reward allocation within organizational culture. According to Schein (2010), “leadership is the source of the beliefs and values and the most central issue for leaders is to understand the deeper levels of a culture (...) and to deal with the anxiety that is unleashed when those assumptions are challenged” (p. 20). This case study suggests that university environment and culture are among the most critical conditions impacting the success of leadership at the university.

Schein’s (2010) conceptual model for culture change stresses the fact that change creates learning anxiety, caused by leaving what we know and moving into something unfamiliar. This learning anxiety can be attributable to any of the following reasons: fear of loss of power or position, fear of temporary incompetence, fear of subsequent punishment, fear of loss of personal identity and fear of loss of group membership (Schein, 2010, pp. 303-304). The higher the learning anxiety, the stronger the resistance and the defensiveness. Schein (2010) argued that change agents must draw on survival anxiety, making sure that survival anxiety is greater than learning anxiety. In order to achieve this, Schein (2010) strongly recommended to lower learning anxiety and create psychological safety, by engaging in a number of practices. These practices and structures include: communicating a compelling vision, establishing formal training, facilitating involvement of the learner, promoting informal training of groups, providing positive role models, setting up support groups in which learning problems are discussed and establishing systems and structures consistent with the new way of thinking and working (Schein, 2010). In this case study, I found that taking a sufficient amount of time for transition is central in order to achieve a culture shift that has a positive impact on morale and productivity. This shift requires consultations, communication, transparency, and relationship

building with campus community, which is all time-consuming.

According to Strom (2014), it is also important that leaders be able to adapt to change, and fit to new circumstances to the best of their ability. Strom believed that wisdom, personality, having a vision and the ability to decode the on-going situation and act accordingly are some of the key attributes possessed by a successful leader. In this case study, it was pointed out that one of the facilitators of effective succession is selection of an exceptional leader who exemplifies these attributes. Changes taking place within the broader context of universities directly impact the roles and responsibilities of their leaders, particularly the university president (Goodall, 2006). Buller (2014) highlighted the importance of the university president rising above the complexity in order to inspire, direct and guide transformation.

Implications of the Succession Process for Succession Practices

According to Hargreaves (2005), one of the most significant events in the life of a university is a change in its leadership. Bornstein (2010) noted that the end of a university presidency is an event about which institutions understandably avoid thinking and talking. Due mainly to tradition and culture, succession planning in higher education is not a formalized process (Klein & Salk, 2013). Few institutions have a protocol in place that describes the processes of what will happen once a president steps down. Planning for a transition when change is not imminent simplifies the process of developing procedures that earn the trust of the stakeholders (Hart, 1993). Succession planning in higher education focuses on the preparation of individuals to take on key leadership roles when other leaders retire, transfer, or find new opportunities outside of an institution or higher education (Hargreaves, 2005). This case study also advocates for developing succession planning which would benefit any future presidential searches.

The rationale for why the culture of higher education has not developed succession planning models includes the possibility of an institution's desire to go in a different direction, and disregarding the logical internal successors such as the provost, vice presidents, and deans. The lack of consideration for succession planning in academia is also due to the limited time devoted to an internal operational focus on leadership (Buller, 2014), along with the belief that only a national search can address concerns regarding a fair and comprehensive selection process (Bornstein, 2010). In this case study, recommendation was given for succession planning but there were different views and occasionally a lack of opinion regarding what the process of implementing a succession plan would actually look like due to a shared governance system within universities. In order to develop a successful succession plan, the institution's governance system has to be taken into account, ensuring that all governing structures and systems are in place.

Implications of the Succession Process for Leadership Sustainability

Today, leaders must possess a sophisticated understanding of their multifaceted organizations. This knowledge includes having an understanding of the organization from several perspectives. These perspectives include an understanding regarding the impact of human dynamics and human interactions, of the underlying culture of the organization, and of the importance of using organizational structures in the promotion of the organization's vision and mission. (Bolman & Gallos, 2010).

Unfortunately, there is no "one size fits all" manual that could be used to attain successful leadership skills. Instead, there are a wide variety of leadership styles and suggested behaviours laid out in literature and countless leadership improvement guides (Strom, 2014). One of the key

strategies identified in this study was to provide purposeful leadership training internally in order to foster long-term leadership sustainability.

As the chief executive officer of the university, the president is hired by the Board of Governors to, among other responsibilities: help the institution to define its mission, mandate, and priorities; ensure the effective management of the institution, its programs, and services; ensure the institution's fiscal health; ensure the quality of its academic endeavors including programs, teaching, research and scholarship, along with ensuring a climate of academic freedom and support for the pursuit of knowledge and truth (Turpin, 2014). The task of presiding over a contemporary university is far from simple. Therefore, it is critical for a president to have the support of the Board in order to ensure successful leadership sustainability.

According to Trachtenberg et al. (2013) from the moment that the predecessor announces their departure, through the first eighteen to twenty-four months of the new president's mandate, there will be a higher level of scrutiny and more intense observation of the president. The Board's support of the president is crucial during this time period. Trachtenberg et al. (2013) articulated several guidelines to inform the transition period: address campus anxieties carefully; highlight the notion that each presidency is different; consider a presidential transition as an opportunity for change; identify the ongoing dimension of transitions: establish a foundation for planning; invest in resources and activities for transition or on-boarding of the new president. This presidential transition period can be more carefully managed by engaging in proactive planning, encouraging authentic engagement, and ensuring unconditional support of the Board. In this case study, I found that providing a supportive environment internally and externally, especially support of the Board, is critical in order to ensure successful transition. Also, complete transparency with the new president is

required in order to create successful leadership sustainability.

Implications

The findings of this case study have several significant implications for policy, for practice, for theory, and for research. In the following sections, I explore these implications.

Implications for Policy

The policy around presidential succession is complex but very important to the effectiveness of the process. From the findings in this case study, I suggest that organizations need to examine their organizational practices and policies to determine what revisions and additions would prove most helpful to the success of their organization. I will focus on the presidential transition policy, which I found to be most critical in ensuring successful presidential succession.

In this case study, it was very clear that the Board needs to invest time and effort in better understanding their policy related to the recruitment process and transition for new university presidents. The presidential transition policy should begin when the predecessor announces his or her departure and continue well into the new president's first year or two of service. Presidential transitions are times of excitement and opportunity, but also times of risk. In the current university environment, the institution should not recruit another president without first putting in place a thorough transition policy.

The two main keys to a successful presidential succession are choosing the right person for the office and providing them with the appropriate support to be successful. If the wrong person is selected or if the right supports are not available, challenges are unavoidable and the process will most likely be unpleasant for all involved. Also, the incoming president, if the right

person was selected, will understand and welcome the transition policy and mentorship that is required as a condition for success, regardless of being an internal or an external candidate. Ideally the presidential transition committee should be formed in advance of the final candidate selection. The committee would support the new president by providing appropriate information, and advice assisting in building, retaining and enhancing appropriate relationships; and facilitating appropriate activities during the transition and first year in office.

Based on the findings in this case study, there a number of policy considerations that are required in order to ensure a successful presidential transition process. One of the most important elements is the level of clarity regarding the role and functions of the Board. For example, the transition committee would report directly to the Board and provide updates on how the process is unfolding on regular basis. The Board will support the structure of the search process and fund the process to ensure this is the top priority. Another crucial policy consideration to keep in mind is recruitment of the right people for the transition committee, especially the chair who can command the respect of the incoming president and the Board. The transition committee chair is a person the new president needs to be able to rely on for direction, guidance and support. All members selected for the committee should bring unique perspectives and contacts that take the new president into both familiar and unfamiliar parts of the institution. The committee needs to be committed to doing whatever is required to make the incoming president successful well into the first year in the office. The third critical policy consideration is for the transition committee to be strategic when planning events and activities so the president's time and energy is being protected. The committee will need to prioritize events and activities depending on the incoming president and if he or she is recruited from outside of the university. Finally, it is important for the transition committee not to forget about the outgoing president and make sure all his or her

needs are met, and ensure that lines of communication are open between the incoming and outgoing presidents during this process. These are all activities that need to be anticipated and facilitated within the existing policy. The key policy considerations of presidential transition as they emerged in this study are illustrated in Figure 5.1.

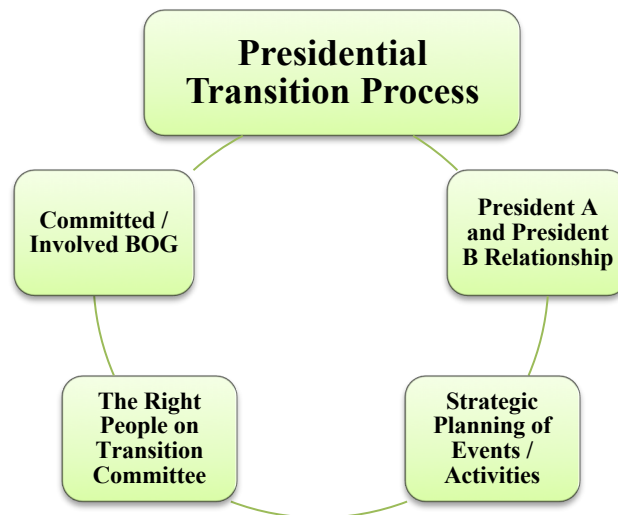


Figure 5.1: Key policy considerations of presidential transition.

Based on the finding in this case study, Figure 5.1 represents four main policy considerations for ensuring a successful presidential transition process. First of all, the commitment and involvement of the Board in a transition process is essential. Another important element is the selection of members for the transition committee, especially identifying the right chair. Further, the committee has to be strategic when planning events and activities for the new president, setting priorities based on the needs of the incoming leader. Finally, it is important to establish appropriate relationships and keep open communication between the new and the outgoing president.

My recommendation would be to extend the transition process policy to other senior leadership roles on campus such as Deans and Executive Directors of colleges, schools and

centers. These positions also require significant investment when recruiting but once appointed there is very little follow up and support provided. A lot is at stake when a leader fails; therefore, the institution should do its best to help their leaders succeed. Having a structured and clear transition policy in place would improve the chances for that success greatly.

Implications for Succession Strategy

There were numerous implications for succession strategy arising from this case study. As anticipated, the stakeholders' perceptions regarding presidential succession and its implications for organizational culture, succession planning and leadership sustainability provided a wealth of knowledge and valuable advice for presidents, boards and senior administrators within higher education setting. The implications include a need for an internal succession strategy, leadership training and mentorship, and a clear, appropriate search and transition process. This case study suggests organizational learning from past mistakes and successes as one of the resources when attempting to improve the above practices. These issues are represented within a formalized succession plan, as illustrated in Figure 5.2.



Figure 5.2: Key strategies of a formalized succession plan.

The following explanation describes each of these strategies. As illustrated in Figure 5.2, these eight key strategies central for a formalized succession plan include: clarifying roles of those involved; identifying desired outcomes; developing a clear search process; encouraging authentic community involvement; conducting an environmental scan; regulating the transition process; learning from past processes; and, developing leadership capacity.

In this case study, I found that there is a need for an internal succession strategy to ensure leadership sustainability. Planning for a transition when change is not imminent simplifies the process of developing procedures that earn the trust of the stakeholders (Hart, 1993). These strategies are briefly elaborated in the following sections.

Clarifying the roles of those involved. The organization's governance system must be taken into account when determining the roles for all the players. Considered within the context of the university's strategic plan, this includes the transparent, coordinated work of human resources, with the oversight of the Board of Governors, and the work of committees and individuals in planning and engaging activities and participants at each stage of the process. In short, the responsibilities of key individuals and stakeholder groups are carefully mapped out through the stages of preparatory planning, identification of the leadership needs of the university, identification of desired presidential qualities, search structures and processes, selection and induction processes.

There needs to be transparency; the human resources leadership works with the Board and stakeholders to craft the description of the ideal candidates. When crafting the profile of the preferred candidates, the priorities within the strategic plan need to be considered. Furthermore, the Board should review the search process, and determine who is involved at each stage. Within

this plan, the responsibility for communicating progress and eventual selection needs to be clearly articulated. The chair of the search committee plays a critical role throughout the entire process, and the process of determining the chair needs to be transparent. In determining the stages of the selection process, an emergency contingency plan will indicate procedures and actions that will happen should the selection committee determine there is not a suitable candidate.

Identifying the desired outcomes. It is important for the Board to set out a clear understanding of what they are looking for in the future president, and there needs to be a comprehensive consultation with the campus community and stakeholders. The Board ensures that well-articulated accountabilities are identified and the reporting structure is clearly stated. The university needs to be honest with itself with regard to what it is looking for, what are some must-haves in the future president. It is essential to find a candidate who fits those qualifications, and and is well prepared to meet future challenges. Furthermore, it is crucial to complete a relatively wide consultation in terms of determining expectations and be clearly stating what the president's role is. Before any candidate is appointed it is important to know what the expectations are, what resources are available and what the culture and the particular identity of the university is. Before advertising for candidates, the university needs to know if they want to attract someone who is an academic or someone who is just able to run a complex organization, or who might be able to juggle all of the commitments of that role. They also consider if they are willing to hire an internal or an external candidate; the challenges and opportunities of each scenario need to be identified within the current context of the university.

Developing a clear search process. The search committee plays a number of central roles in the presidential succession process, including selecting the best candidate, working closely with the board throughout the process, as well as making sure that its roles are clearly stated and are not in conflict with the transition process. The board makes the final decision; therefore, it makes sense for the search committee to be working with the board throughout the process. In order to have a clear search process, the Board and the search committee need to be in agreement regarding the qualities, and strengths they are looking for and what their roles are in the process. For the search committee to be effective there is a need for appropriate representation from major stakeholders on the committee, a determination of the appropriate size of the committee, and the process that the committee follows.

Encouraging authentic community involvement. There are a number of preconditions that need to be met in order to achieve authentic community involvement. First of all, the relevant community needs to be defined and learned about; there needs to be appropriate communication of information about the university; also developing trust is curtail and opens a lot of doors; creating reciprocal relationships; using faculty expertise and resources; using community resources; and lastly celebrating community. Where the above exist, authentic, meaningful and active involvement of the community in presidential succession is more likely. Authentic involvement of the community paves the way for the acceptance of the eventual selection of the president. If the whole community is invited to contribute to the process, members of the community will have an opportunity to add their voices in shaping the desired job profile. Additionally, updates to the campus community highlight the progress of the search committee and give the community a sense of being a part of the process. Finally, the introduction of the new president to the campus should involve opportunities for members of the

university and the wider campus community to engage with the incumbent. Initial events can be followed up periodically with other opportunities for engagement and dialogue. If there is a preexisting culture of community involvement it is more likely that the community will be meaningfully engaged in the process.

Conducting an environmental scan. According to this study's findings before successful on-boarding of a new president to a particular campus culture or campus community can take place, the university needs to figure out what that environment is. Environmental scanning is a valuable tool for Boards to gather information about events and trends within the university's internal and external environments that can help focus their leadership succession (and other) activities. These can include such phenomena as enrollment trends, world events, federal and provincial initiatives, funding issues, emerging training / education/ programmatic shifts in the wider environment, and related needs across colleges and faculties. This function could well be facilitated by a committee established for this purpose, though the existing provisions utilized by the Board of Governors would likely be valuable.

Regulating the transition process. Transition process is a crucial component for the success of the incoming president. This process begins before the incoming president's first day. Constructing an effective communication strategy that incorporates the search process, and the announcement of the selection is essential for ensuring transparency of the process. When and to whom the announcement is made is an important consideration. From the time of the formal announcement and onwards, a transition team can work with the new president in familiarizing him or her with the campus and facilitating introductions with stakeholder groups.

The new president is only able to see so much from his or her perspective; hence having more strategically relevant people involved providing guidance and advice is a helpful tool for

the new incumbent. As part of the transition process and on-boarding of the new president, connecting with the community including introductions with the various groups and stakeholders, during formal and informal opportunities is crucial.

Learning from past process. According to this study, there are always important lessons universities can learn from past presidential secession processes; periodically, university committees can critically examine past processes to determine what issues occurred and what went well. In addition, talking to other institutions who recently went through a presidential search can be very helpful. There is a potential to find out how to run an effective process and what challenges may be encountered. Successful universities should strive to continually improve; the environment and context change as do the tools that need to be employed. Therefore, it is important to reach out to others to learn from. This case study stressed that striving to continuously improve the transition process and reaching out to others for advice and lessons learned for future searches.

Developing leadership capacity. In addition, I believe the study's findings advocated the importance of leadership training programs and mentorship. It was pointed out that those with an interest in leadership positions are not as actively supported or encouraged as they are in the private sector. Some institutions now offer professional development training programs to those who aspire to move into administrative positions, such as department heads, deans and directors. Typically, these programs aim to help participants develop an awareness of their leadership style and how to build a team, foster community relationships and develop a support network, among other things. The study's findings advocate for professional development opportunities at junior administrative levels, which can help set the foundation for a successful leadership role down the road but it also advocates for mentorship for leaders who are already in

senior administrative roles. Universities incur a variety of unnecessary costs by not being intentional about succession planning. It would be beneficial to develop internal candidates for leadership roles with a view to sustaining the availability of a high standard of senior leadership capability within the organization. If the university is incapable of making any type of forward commitment or even giving someone a reasonable assessment of their chances for future advancement into senior leadership roles, a viable internal candidate may be easily lured away by other institutions, which depletes the internal talent pool.

Anticipating the stages of succession events and aligning core activities includes the departure of the outgoing president. It was pointed out that the membership of the committee, both the size and representation, should be periodically reviewed with a view to the needs of the university. Also, it is essential to have a more active search process with reduced reliance on search firms. The search committee needs to be transparent, ensuring that the complete story regarding university finances, human resource issues, or legal challenges is fully exposed to the candidate before hiring. A well-defined and formalized succession plan facilitates a more transparent and effective process leading to more confidence that the eventual selection of a senior leader will be a good fit for the university and will be prepared for the transition.

Implications for Theory

As I analyzed and interpreted the data, I came to believe that this case study had a number of important theoretical implications, especially for theories of organizational culture and organizational learning. Schein (2010) through his organizational culture model, suggested that the organization's structure can be modified through assessing and changing the organization's culture. Based on this case study, I found that Schein's model would need to be modified in order to adequately account for the impact of subcultures within the broader

organizational culture. It also did not account for the differences between the choice of the external versus the internal new leader and his or her ability to navigate or be aware of the organizational culture and subcultures in place.

Universities are complex institutions with various stakeholders, and that complexity needs to be reflected when looking at Schein's (2010) organizational culture model. Adding subcultures to the model requires noting that their basic assumptions, norms and values may be different and often not necessarily equal. The model needs to recognize that it is very challenging for a new leader to be able to analyze and evaluate the organizational culture of all the subcultures and determining how to prioritize which subculture carries the most power within the organization and whose needs have to be met first. This process is a complex task for any new leader but becomes extremely perplexing for a new leader who is external to the institution. Furthermore, in this study, it was pointed out that when a new leader is being recruited, the first two layers of Schein's culture model are typically painted in a better light than they really are, which creates a false sense of what the organizational culture might actually be. For the purpose of the presidential succession process, I would suggest embedding the transition committee as one of the subcultures that is anticipating change, and being aware of the needs and wants of all the other subcultures. This case study suggests that in order to use Schein's model for organizational culture change in a university, there needs to be a further modification to his model in order to consider the influence of subcultures and the impact of the institutional background of the new leader. Figure 5.3 depicts the formalized succession plan in the context of informal and formal subcultures.

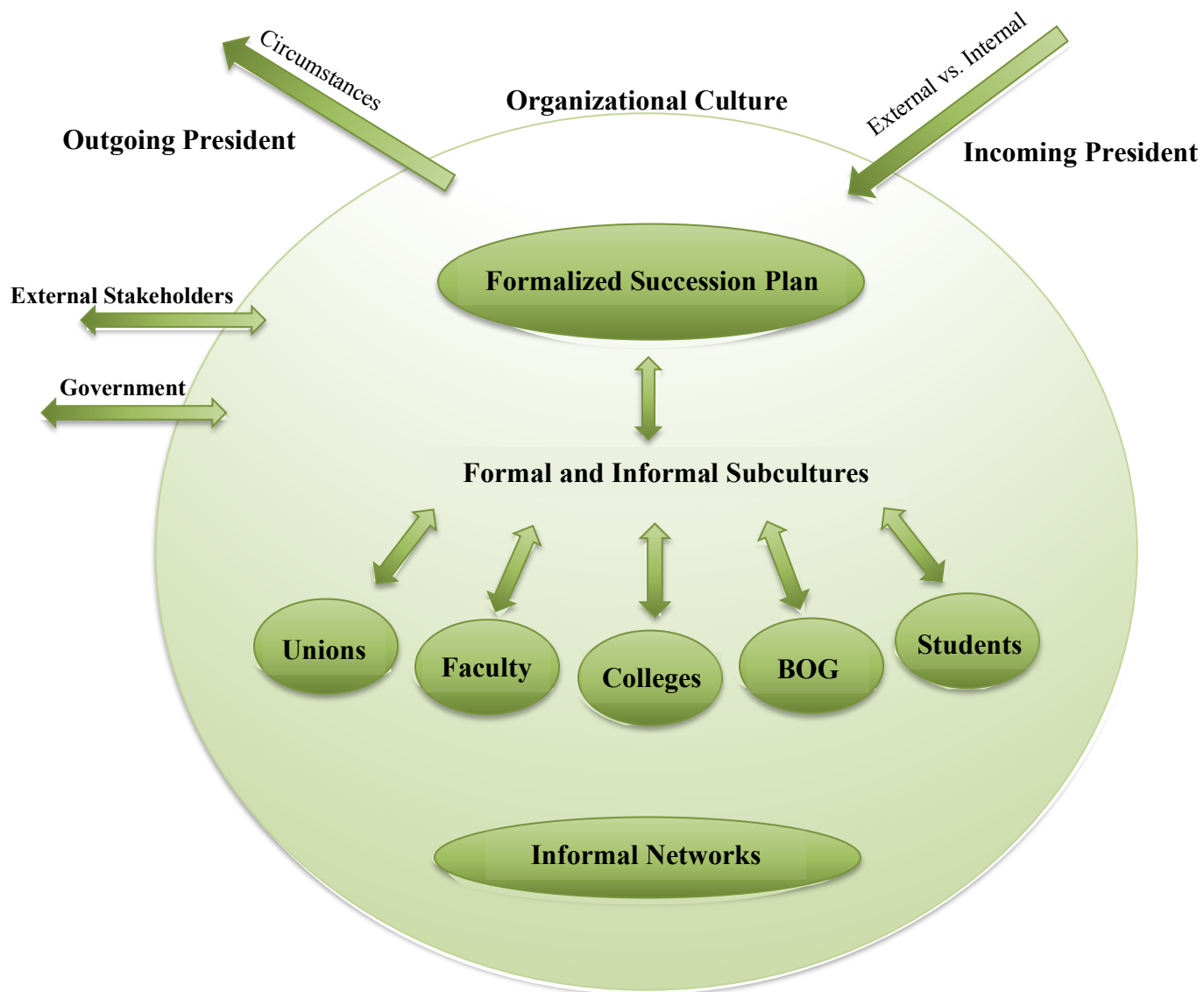


Figure 5.3: Formal and informal subcultures in the context of presidential succession.

As illustrated in Figure 5.3, the formalized succession plan is embedded within an organizational culture in the context and circumstances surrounding the outgoing and incoming presidents. Inherent in this representation is the realities of formal and informal subcultures that influence the activities of students, faculty, administrators, board of governors. All of these realities are reflected in the voices of the participants in this study. These elements are central to

planning for succession and the related activities that I have discussed in this study. However, at the heart of this discussion is the broader concept of organizational learning which touches all aspects of the succession process.

Organizational learning is the process of creating, retaining, and transferring knowledge within an organization. An organization improves over time as it gains experience. According to Argyris and Schön (1978), employees are an organization's building blocks with an overview of the organizational memory. In order to implement changes effectively, an organization would benefit from single and double loop learning (Argyris & Schon, 1978), in which the opinions and theories of employees are seriously considered in the implementation of new concepts, agreements and structures. Argyris and Schön (1978) saw that the individual member of an organization could serve as the initiator and central actor of organizational learning, though their theory overlooks the embodied patterns of practice and does not look at the power and potential of the collective learning.

In this case study, I found that organizational learning within the university setting might be challenging especially when comes to presidential succession. It may be difficult to learn from the past if the process is not well documented, there is no firm policy or practice outlined, or there is no follow-up after the process is concluded to document any areas needing improvement. Once the people having the institutional knowledge are gone and there is nothing written that documents the previous process, then it is difficult or simply impossible to learn from it. Most successful presidencies go for two terms; therefore, it is often ten years before the institution goes through another presidential search process. Even if the previous process was well documented the organizational culture and environment might be very different from that which prevailed ten years previously. This study suggests another source of organizational

learning, specifically learning from a comparable institution who recently went through a similar process; having the chair of the Board or chair of the search committee connect with their counterparts at the other institution is helpful in order to learn from each other, talk about experiences and share best practises.

Implications for Research

In addition to implications for organizational policy, practice and theory, this study has implications for research. Based on the themes of this study, I believe that several topics related to succession planning process, leadership development, transition process, organizational culture change and organizational learning require further research effort. Additionally, the findings of this study led me to wonder about a study of the relationships between Board of Governors and university presidents and the matter of Board governance within universities. Another implication for research that was apparent to me was a further study of search committee make-up and search procedures at other universities. It would also be interesting to see a study of public versus private institutions in light of effective succession. In addition, I would recommend having a more in-depth study exploring each of this study's research questions, as well as a longitudinal study prior, during and after the succession process.

Reflection

The participants in my case study were unsurprisingly, given their academic and professional backgrounds, very articulate and the majority provided a wealth of information about presidential succession and its implications for organizational culture, succession planning and leadership sustainability. Only one respondent seemed uncooperative and unhelpful in answering most of the questions. She claimed that they were unclear or difficult to

understand or would provide very terse answers. All of the other participants who were current and past senior administrators and members of senior committees including faculty and student representatives were very knowledgeable about the context and the process and provided insightful perceptions.

Looking back at my interview protocol, I would make some minor adjustments to my sub questions. One of the questions I would change inquired about barriers of presidential succession that can have negative impact on organizational culture, and the other asked about the helping factors of presidential succession that can have a positive impact on organizational culture. The participants focused mostly on the first question, which asked them about barriers. I think consolidating these two sub questions would have been much more effective by not narrowing down the answer for the interviewees. Overall, though, I am very happy with the material that I was able to gather from the interviews. I believe that the framing of the questions was in depth and responses were lengthy and comprehensive. The most challenging part of data collection was avoiding the temptation to engage not in conversation with the participant during the interview process. Most of them were incredibly knowledgeable and raised a number of valid points. I consider myself very lucky having the privilege of conducting this research and being able to learn from the participants' perceptions regarding the presidential succession process.

When comes to confidentiality, as the writing unfolded, I took many steps I needed to take to protect everyone involved. I used pseudonyms extensively throughout, when naming the university and the participants. In addition, I removed any identifying information from the data. As a researcher, I hoped that all the steps that I took to protect the participants' identities demonstrated my commitment to protecting confidentiality.

Concluding Comments

In this case study, I explored stakeholders' perceptions in one university regarding presidential succession and to examine its implications for organizational culture, succession planning and leadership sustainability. I believe that the study's findings have several significant implications for policy, for practice, for theory, and research in the area of presidential succession, organizational culture and organizational learning theory.

I found the personal journey to be an insightful one, as I developed a deeper understanding of the university context, the presidential search process, and organizational culture change theory. As much as the study was personally interesting, I hope that it contributes to the overall understanding of the presidential succession and transition process, along with organizational culture shift and organizational learning theory in this unique context.

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APPENDIX A:
SAMPLE INTRODUCTORY LETTER

Introductory Letter

(Insert Date)

Dear Participant:

My name is Anna Okapiec, and I am a Ph. D. candidate with the Department of Educational Administration at the University of Saskatchewan. My research is titled **Study of presidential succession in a Canadian university context; perceptions of key stakeholders**. My supervisors are Dr. Vicki Squires and Dr. Patrick Renihan.

The purpose of the study is to explore stakeholder's perceptions in one university regarding presidential succession from an organizational culture perspective and to examine its implications for succession planning and leadership sustainability.

This study will contribute to the policies that guide a successful succession along with effective strategies to ensure a successful presidency. I also hope to develop new theories and strategies that will provide insights into the most effective practices in achieving a successful leadership change and ensuring sustainable leadership within a university setting.

I will utilize two sources of data, documents and interviews. Because of your involvement in succession process at your university, I would like to interview you using a semi-structured format. Prior to meeting at a time that is suitable for you, I will send the questions to you so that you may have time to consider responses to the questions. After reflecting on the interview, I will contact you to clarify or to extend certain discussions or concepts. I anticipate that the initial interview will last approximately one hour. I may request a subsequent interview that will be conducted in-person, by phone and/or email. The taped interviews will then be transcribed verbatim. You will have an opportunity to read the transcripts and make any changes you would like. You will be asked to sign a transcript release form when you are satisfied with the transcript. Data resulting from the interviews will be examined for themes and coded according to these themes. Direct quotations from the interviews may also be used.

The resulting research may be used for presentations at conferences, professional venues, and scholarly and professional publications. Your cooperation in this study would be greatly appreciated. If you agree to participate, please read and sign the consent form.

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, I can be contacted by e-mail at anna.okapiec@usask.ca or by phone (306) 717-4754. Thank you, in advance, for your consideration and cooperation in participating in this study.

Respectfully yours,

Anna Okapiec, Ph.D. Candidate
University of Saskatchewan

APPENDIX B:
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Interview protocol

Initial demographic questions

- What is your current role?
- What is the nature and duration of your experience at this university?
- Have you ever had specific role(s) related to presidential succession at universities?

Research Q1: The context under which the succession process can unfold

- What are the major conditions external to this university (governmental priorities, societal changes, economic conditions) that can significantly influence the effectiveness of presidential succession?
- What internal conditions (policies, changes in university priorities, financial issues, relationships among stakeholder groups) can significantly impact the leadership of the university?
- From your perspective, what are the major circumstances under which presidents might leave their position? What do you believe are the major implications of this for the person who would replace her/him?

Research Q2: The succession process

- What does an effective presidential succession process look like?
- What criteria would be needed for an effective search process? Transparency/ Effectiveness?
- What do you believe should be the role of a search committee throughout this process, and what is the ideal structure?
- What is the Board's responsibility throughout the process?

Research Q3: Outcomes of the process

- What are your overall perceptions regarding the short-term and long-term impacts of the presidential succession?

- How should the results of the succession plan be communicated to the university community?
- What other major outcomes of this succession process do you see?
- What can be learned by universities through their presidential succession processes? For example, what strategies could be improved?

Research Q4: Impact on Organizational Culture

- What is the potential impact of succession on the culture of the university?
- In what ways can succession impact relationships of stakeholders with university?
- What are the barriers of presidential succession that can have negative impact on organizational culture?
- What are the helping factors of presidential succession that can have positive impact on organizational culture?

Research Q5: Implications for succession practices

- What can be learned from the process regarding: succession planning; governance; change leadership; involvement of stakeholders; policy implications?
- What policies, procedures, or structures could be developed to inform the next presidential succession strategy?

Research Q6: Implications for leadership sustainability

- What can enhance the capacity of the university to develop longer-term leadership sustainability at the CEO level?
 - What strategies can be identified in order to enhance the strength and motivations for senior leadership internally?
 - What would you expect of the university when the new president starts?
 - If you were joining this university as president, what would be your major expectations of your new employer?

Concluding questions:

- Based on your perception and / or experience what might a good succession plan for a university look like? What would be the major elements?
- In university context, what helps effective presidential succession?

APPENDIX C:
CONSENT AND RELEASE FORMS

Participant Consent Form

You are invited to participate in a research study entitled:

Study of presidential succession in a Canadian university context; perceptions of key stakeholders.

Researcher: Anna Okapiec, PhD Candidate, Department of Educational Administration, University of Saskatchewan, email: anna.okapiec@usask.ca, phone: 306 717-4754

Supervisors: Vicki Squires, Department of Educational Administration,
email: vicki.squires@usask.ca, phone: 306 966-7622;

Patrick Renihan, Department of Educational Administration,
email: pat.renihan@usask.ca, phone: 306 881-7620

Purpose and Objective of the Research:

The purpose of the study is to explore stakeholder's perceptions in one university regarding presidential succession from an organizational culture perspective and to examine its implications for succession planning and leadership sustainability.

I hope that my study will contribute to the policies that guide a successful succession along with effective strategies to ensure a successful presidency. I also hope to add to theories and strategies and provide insights into effective practices in achieving a successful leadership change and ensuring sustainable leadership within a university setting. Both study location and participants will not be named and participation will be confidential.

Procedures:

I will use a qualitative research design to explore the phenomenon of succession in the context of presidency change. I will conduct semi-structured interviews. As a second source of data, I will use various documents pertaining to the events at the studied university that will help me with examining the phenomenon of succession in the context of presidency change and examine its implications for succession planning and leadership sustainability.

I anticipate interviewing ten participants, current and past senior administrators and members of senior committees including faculty and student representatives and other key stakeholders with each interview being approximately one hour long.

Potential Risks:

There is a potential risk that the questions may make the participants somewhat uncomfortable, but the expectation is that participants will only answer questions with which they are comfortable.

Potential Benefits:

I hope that my study will contribute to the policies that guide a successful succession along with effective strategies to ensure a successful presidency. I also hope to add to theories and strategies and provide insights into effective practices in achieving a successful leadership change and ensuring sustainable leadership within a university setting.

Confidentiality:

The information gathered from the study may be used as data for publications related to this study, including the researcher's dissertation. The study may be presented at academic conferences or published in scholarly journals. Confidentiality will be maintained, as far as possible, and the Consent Forms will be stored separately from the (data records), so that it will not be possible to associate a name with any given set of responses. Participants will be given pseudonyms in the study. All information that could identify the participants or the institution will be removed from the material and kept confidential. Participants will be advised of any new information that may affect

their decision to participate in this study. Participants will be given the opportunity to review the transcribed data and may revise, delete, or add information and then sign the release form. There is a possibility of participants being identifiable to others when verbatim quotations are used. Individual participants could be identified because of the nature or size of the sample or because of their relationship with the researcher. No group emails will be sent to the participants and that the emails will be securely stored separately from the data.

Storage of Data:

- The PI will be responsible for storage of data, which will be stored on a secure U of S electronic storage facility. My co-supervisors and I will have access to the data.
- Data will be stored for 5 years and destroyed when no longer needed.

Right to Withdraw:

- Your participation is voluntary and you can answer only those questions that you are comfortable with. You may withdraw from the research project for any reason, at any time without explanation or penalty of any sort.
- Participants are free to withdraw from the study at any time, for any reason, and without any type of penalty.
- Your right to withdraw data from the study will apply until data has been pooled. After this it is possible that some form of research dissemination will have already occurred and it may not be possible to withdraw your data.

Follow up:

- Participants will be given the opportunity to review the transcribed data and may revise, delete, or add information and then sign the release form.
- Once the participants verify the data, they will be asked to sign a letter of consent to use the transcript.
- Once the study is complete an electronic copy of the study will be available on the library website.

Questions or Concerns:

- Contact the researcher using the information at the top of page 1;
- This project has been approved on ethical grounds by the University of Saskatchewan Ethics Board on (insert date). Any questions regarding your rights as a participant may be addressed to that committee through the Research Ethics Office ethics.office@usask.ca (306) 966-2975. Out of town participants may call toll free (888) 966-2975.

Consent:

Your signature below indicates that you have read and understand the description provided; I have had an opportunity to ask questions and my/our questions have been answered. I consent to participate in the research project. A copy of this Consent Form has been given to me for my records.

_____	_____	_____
<i>Name of Participant</i>	<i>Signature</i>	<i>Date</i>
_____	_____	
<i>Researcher's Signature</i>	<i>Date</i>	

A copy of this consent will be left with you, and a copy will be taken by the researcher.



**Research Ethics Boards (Behavioural and Biomedical)
TRANSCRIPT RELEASE FORM**

Title: Study of presidential succession in a Canadian university context; perceptions of key stakeholders

I, _____, have reviewed the complete transcript of my personal interview in this study, and have been provided with the opportunity to add, alter, and delete information from the transcript as appropriate. I acknowledge that the transcript accurately reflects what I said in my personal interview with [name of the researcher]. I hereby authorize the release of this transcript to [name of the researcher] to be used in the manner described in the Consent Form. I have received a copy of this Data/Transcript Release Form for my own records.

Name of Participant

Date

Signature of Participant

Signature of researcher

APPENDIX D:
BEHAVIOURAL RESEARCH ETHICS APPROVAL



Certificate of Re-Approval

Ethics Number: 16-183

Principal Investigator: Vicki Squires

Department: Department of Educational
Administration

Locations Where Research

Activities are Conducted: University of Saskatchewan, Canada

Student(s): Anna Okapiec

Funder(s): Unfunded

Sponsor:

Title: Study of Succession in a Canadian University

Approved On: 30/05/2019

Expiry Date: 29/05/2020

Acknowledgment Of: n/a

Review Type: Delegated Review

* This study, inclusive of all previously approved documents, has been re-approved until the expiry date noted above

CERTIFICATION

The University of Saskatchewan Behavioural Research Ethics Board (Beh-REB) is constituted and operates in accordance with the current version of the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS 2 2014). The University of Saskatchewan Behavioural Research Ethics Board has reviewed the above-named project. The proposal was found to be acceptable on ethical grounds. The principal investigator has the responsibility for any other administrative or regulatory approvals that may pertain to this project, and for ensuring that the authorized project is carried out according to the conditions outlined in the original protocol submitted for ethics review. This Certificate of Approval is valid for the above time period provided there is no change in experimental protocol or consent process or documents.

ONGOING REVIEW REQUIREMENTS

In order to receive annual renewal, a status report must be submitted to the REB Chair for Board consideration within one month prior to the current expiry date each year the project remains open, and upon project completion. Please refer to the following website for further instructions: <https://vpresearch.usask.ca/researchers/forms.php>.

Digitally Approved by Diane Martz, PhD
Chair - Behavioural Research Ethics Board
University of Saskatchewan