

HOOD COLLEGE



Whom Do We Entrust to Care for Our Students: Organizational Fit to Foster an Ethical Culture
of Employee and Student Success

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to the faculty of the
Graduate School of Hood College
In partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree
Doctor of Organizational Leadership

by

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DEDICATION

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Whom Do We Entrust to Care for Our Students: Organizational Fit
to Foster an Ethical Culture of Employee and Student Success

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ABSTRACT

With the shift in focus from access to college education to completion of post-secondary degree, community colleges are facing increasing challenges to ensure students succeed after arriving on campus regardless of academic preparation, cognitive ability, or socioeconomic status. In addition, community colleges are managing unprecedented internal competing priorities and are facing growing financial pressures with funding tied to completion rates. With everyone on the college campus playing a role in fostering a culture of student success, it becomes increasingly more important for institutions to discern which faculty, staff, and administrators it attracts, selects, and retains. This qualitative study explores the individual core values prized by faculty, staff, and administrators, the overall optimal values to foster a culture of student success, and how the ethical identity of an institution and person-organization (PO) fit—value congruence and perceived fit—foster a culture of student success. The research site is a large accredited mid-Atlantic community college in the Achieving the Dream network with multiple campuses in a suburban setting. The institution serves more than 20,000 full-and part-time enrollments with over 20% Pell enrollments. Contextual factors impacting the research site include a recent academic restructuring; lawsuit over professorial wages; a physical move with centralization of administration and central services across divisions; and the institution comprises three unions in

addition to non-unionized staff. All faculty, staff, and administrators representing every division of the college were invited to participate in this study, of which 298 participants completed an online anonymous cross-sectional survey, 39 participants completed individual interviews, and 24 participants completed focus group activities. The participants of this study represented every division of the college. Analysis of surveys, interviews, and focus groups revealed: a) employee success leads to student success, b) identification and operationalization of participant-identified optimal (PIO) values leads to optimal fit between individual and organization, c) the ethical identity and cultures of student and employee success reflect the values operationalized by the institution, and d) the operationalization of values reflect the ethical identity and cultures of student and employee success. Implications of these findings are critical to understand how colleges can improve selection practices, professional development efforts, and organizational effectiveness by hiring faculty, staff, and administrators with optimal fit to foster a culture of employee and student success. Further, organizations can identify and leverage optimal values to acculturate existing employees to improve fit with the organization. In addition, colleges can operationalize optimal values to target gaps in practices and address inefficiencies. Colleges can also endeavor into transformational cultural change by institutionalizing optimal values.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

To teach in a manner that respects and cares for the souls of our students is essential if we are to provide the necessary conditions where learning can most deeply and intimately begin.

—bell hooks, *Teaching to Transgress, Education as the Practice of Freedom*

What makes teachers valuable is not the education, lesson plans, and experience they bring to their jobs, but the humanity, the connection, and the ability to remember what it was like to sit on the other side.

—Linda Bolsen

Education must not simply teach work. It must teach life.

—W.E.B Du Bois, *DuBois on Education*

Community colleges have been undergoing a major shift in focus from access to post-secondary education to completion of post-secondary education (McClenney, 2013). While historically designed to promote social justice as open-access institutions where every student could enjoy the opportunity to go to college, community colleges are now facing increasing challenges to ensure students succeed, regardless of their academic preparation, cognitive ability, or socio-economic status. With so many students needing remedial education, living in poverty, and experiencing other social conditions affecting their ability to succeed, Roscorla (2016) states

that community colleges can no longer get away with saying that it is not their responsibility to help students deal with these issues. While the intent is not to absolve students' responsibility for their performance, educators cannot continue to assign blame solely to students for their lack of success once they arrive on campus. Educators must share the responsibility for students' success.

At its core, the educator-student relationship is like any other human relationship. The saying, "it takes two to tango" is a popular American idiom that implies active cooperation between two parties to resolve a problem. In other words, during difficult situations, both individuals are inextricably related in an active manner—both partners are essential. Relationships must engage or act to harmoniously result in a desired outcome. As such, a relationship can also be a partnership, which requires a careful balance of push and pull—a dance—to be effective.

The idiom, "It takes two to tango," also implies that both sides must share responsibility during difficult situations (Cambridge Dictionary, 2019). When relationships become or feel one-sided, meaning one side is either doing all the work, or perceives they are doing all the work, the relationship will suffer and not be fruitful. When this happens, there can be a natural inclination for individuals to shift blame away from themselves and onto the other person. On the extreme blame side of the Blame-Acceptance dimension, people can always find someone else to blame. Related to the study of blame is the Fundamental Attribution Error, where people excuse themselves from the same negative behavior that they blame others for. The five reasons that lead individuals to blame others are (Lench et al., 2014):

1. Defense mechanism. Blame preserves your sense of self-esteem through denial or displacement and avoids your awareness of your own flaws or failings.
2. Conflict-resolution. Blame is used as a destructive tool for attack and self-preservation.
3. Judgements. When we cannot figure out the cause of other people's behavior or our own, we tend to make illogical judgements.
4. Blaming someone else is easier than accepting responsibility. It takes less effort to recognize your contributions to a bad situation than to accept you are actually at fault, and then making changes so that you do not do it again.
5. Everybody lies. It can be easy to lie if you figure no one will find out or catch you in the lie.

There is a tendency for educators to attribute the lack of student success solely to students or external forces beyond institutional control (Tinto, 2012). When we shift blame to others, we fail to learn and grow from our experiences (Whitbourne, 2015). "The notion that when students succeed it is due to institutional policies and practices, but when students do not persist it is because of something the student did or did not do lacks empirical support and must be questioned" (Kinzie & Kuh, 2016, p. 17). Through reflection, we can hold ourselves accountable for our actions or inactions by asking ourselves in which ways we have contributed to or caused an undesirable outcome. Educators at community colleges must challenge themselves to engage in individual and collective reflection in order to understand how we are hindering student success.

Faculty are on the front lines and the trenches are disguised as classrooms. Poverty, disabilities, and other social issues often manifest themselves in the classroom, for example, arriving late to class, or falling asleep during lecture, or missing assignments, or submitting incomplete or poor-quality work, or inappropriate classroom etiquette, and so forth. While community colleges encompass diverse student bodies and there is certainly no shortage of average- and high-performing students who make the financially-savvy decision to attend community college before transferring to a four-year school, two-thirds of community college students are studying part-time and are least likely to graduate within six years (Stout, 2018). Of those 6.5 million students, most are working 20-40 hours per week (Dunlop Velez, Bentz, Arbeit, & RTI International, 2018).

At the community college level, those faculty members expecting their students to consistently have read material before class, arrive early to the classroom, or be adequately prepared for college, will be disappointed or even offended. Now, more than ever, educators working at community colleges must be able and willing to offer more both in and out of the classroom than just content expertise. The alternative could result in dire outcomes for students, institutions, and communities, in the form of increased student debt and poverty, failing graduation and transfer rates, and stagnating economic development because of an unskilled workforce unable to meet employer requirements. With so much on the line, one way for community colleges to address this challenge is to be more strategic in their recruitment and selection practices of faculty, staff, and administrators, and to hire educators who will thrive under these unique circumstances.

Problem Statement

In a recent commentary in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, David Perlmutter wrote, “We hire on CV, but we fire on fit” (2018). This statement succinctly describes a gap in higher education selection practices that is especially salient for community colleges. As an example, unlike alluring tech companies and startups, interview and selection practices for faculty in non-profit higher education are traditionally solely focused on discipline knowledge, content expertise, and previous experience or ability to perform job responsibilities. In other words, faculty are selected primarily on person-job (PJ) fit—content expertise and their ability to teach what they know to students. Little or no attention is given to the person-organization (PO) fit—ability and willingness to offer more in and out of the classroom than just content expertise as demanded by the ethos of a community college environment. A misfit between the faculty or staff and a higher education institution could not only significantly hinder student success outcomes, but it could also be calamitous for an institution in an environment where colleges and universities are being held accountable for degree completion rates; which are often tied to funding.

An abundance of empirical evidence exists to support that optimal person-organization (PO) fit results in positive job attitudes, improved performance, higher organizational commitment, increased organizational citizenship behaviors, more satisfaction, a favorable ethical climate, and reduced turnover (Andrews et al., 2011; Bao et al., 2012; Dolan, 2016; Farooqui & Nagendra, 2014; Hoffman & Woehr, 2006; Sekiguchi & Huber, 2011; Tull & Medrano, 2007; Weinstein, 2017). To not consider person-organization (PO) fit is especially detrimental in a higher education industry employing various categories of employees that

includes administrators, staff, and faculty, because together these three groups of employees play a synergistic role that can either foster or hinder student success, and thus, the success of the organization. To complicate matters, it is worth noting that each of these groups may have union representation, and thus, their behavior may be guided, primarily, by union contracts. Union contracts which are mostly pragmatic documents, unconcerned with the souls of students, ignore an organization's mission, values, and performance accountability.

Furthermore, as previously mentioned, the community college student body differs from its four-year college counterparts because of a higher percentage of disadvantaged and underprepared students (Center for Community College Student Engagement, 2014) who may be first-generation, minority, international, older, working, caring for family members, in need of disability and support services or remedial coursework, and from lower socio-economic backgrounds. With ongoing pressure on community colleges to close the persistent achievement gap, and an ever changing landscape of federal requirements—most recently the completion agenda—in the face of diminishing resources, it is increasingly important to identify, select, and hire high-performing faculty and staff with optimal person-organization (PO) fit, foster a campus culture that promotes shared values in order to help marginalized students achieve their dreams, and to help institutions achieve completion goals while navigating mounting financial pressures in an ethical climate.

Colleges and universities will continue to face growing financial pressures with funding tied to completion rates (Kelly & Schneider, 2012). With this added financial pressure, it becomes increasingly important for faculty, staff, and administrators to operate ethically, for example, in handling sexual harassers, faculty tenure, academic freedom, intellectual integrity,

and diversity. In the current business environment, there is an increasingly alarming pattern of CEO ethics violations, such as the cases involving Enron's Kenneth Lay, WorldCom's Bernard Ebbers, and Hollinger's Conrad Black. Colleges and universities are not immune from ethics violations and should consider the values of existing faculty and staff, and prospective employees when making selection decisions. Leaders can significantly influence the ethical culture and climate of organizations (Jordan et al., 2013; Kelly et al., 2004; Treviño et al., 2003; Treviño et al., 2000). In addition, they can "influence the thinking of other high-level members of the organization that work for them" (Jordan et al., 2013, p. 661).

According to Mayer et al. (2009), the positive effects of executive-level ethical leadership trickle down to lower level employees within an organization through the ethical leadership practiced by supervisors. They also argue that ethical leadership has a positive influence on several critical employee outcomes. In that same vein, the opposite is true. The lack of ethical leadership is a main antecedent of organizational deviance (van Gils et al., 2015). Leaders influence their followers through social learning processes, and as a result, influence the ethicality of the organization's leaders, which cascades to followers at lower levels of the organization (Mayer et al., 2009). Thus, the executive-leader's behavior influences and impacts follower behavior across different levels of the organization (van Gils et al., 2015).

Because of several gaps in the research of person-organization (PO) fit, it is unclear whether it is possible to identify and understand a job applicant's personal values during a screening process due to limited time of interaction and source of information. Moreover, there are concerns that a job applicant could intentionally display desired values based on their knowledge of the prospective organizational culture. Similarly, organizations could project a

favorable image of their culture that diverges from their actual functioning culture. Along the same lines, it is possible that job interviewers may not even represent organizational values, all of which hinder the validity of both staffing and the Attraction-Selection-Attrition (ASA) model as a means of achieving value congruence. It is also unclear how organizations can manage value congruence and other types of fit over time (Bao et al., 2012).

In response to calls for additional research on person-organization (PO) fit and student success, this qualitative study to explore how the values and person-organization (PO) fit of faculty, staff, and administrators foster a culture of student success, is useful to help higher education institutions understand how person-organization (PO) fit of employees, acquired through staffing and/or socialization, shapes institutional culture and ethical identity, and how it relates to student success. In addition, this research builds upon Kinzie and Kuh's (2016) Student Success Driver Diagram to foster a culture of student support.

Theoretical Models

Attraction-Selection-Attrition. The attraction-selection-attrition (ASA) framework, introduced by Benjamin Schneider, proposes that organizations are essentially functions of the kinds of people they contain (Schneider, 1987). The ASA framework focuses on understanding organizations by understanding the attributes of its people. Schneider (1987) suggests that organizations do not determine behavior, but instead, an organization looks the way it does because of the behavior of the individuals within the organization. In other words, individuals behave the way they do in an organization because they were attracted to that environment, selected by it, and remained in that environment. Employees whose values do not fit with the organization's values will either be removed by the organization or the employee will remove

themselves. While the ASA model implies that value congruence is best achieved through staffing, it can also be achieved through socialization (Bao et al., 2012; Schneider, 1987).

Ethical Identity Framework. According to Bandura (1977) and social learning theory, power, and status—inherent in the executive leadership role—“enhance the likelihood that an individual will be a model for the impartation of normatively appropriate behaviors” (Jordan et al., 2013, p. 661). From the social learning perspective, people can learn by observing and imitating the attitudes, values, and behaviors of other individuals in an organization (Bandura, 1977). In the community college context, ethical decision-making depends as much on an individual’s fit within the institution, as it does on the individual’s own views, values, and ethics. The value congruence between the individual, sub-group or department, and institution, can be assessed using the ethical identity framework (Anderson et al., 2009) based on the ethical acculturation model of Handelsman, Gottlieb and Knapp (2005) and Berry’s model of acculturation (1980, 2003; Berry & Sam, 1997). Many of the ethical issues in community colleges involve a web of relationships, processes, and obligations across faculty, staff, and administrators, which create the organization’s ethical identity (Anderson et. al., 2009).

Student Success Driver Diagram. There is an abundance of student success frameworks, and many models overlap in substantive ways, covering much of the same ground from various perspectives. Kinzie and Kuh’s (2016) Student Success Driver Diagram draws from improvement science (Langley et al., 2009) to develop a driver diagram, a structured logic chart, with the goal of explicating how a proposed solution path responds to understandings of a problem (Bennett & Provost, 2015). More specifically, driver diagram charts contain at least three levels including the description of a goal or vision, the identification of significant causal

explanation hypothesized to produce the goal—in other words, the factors, or drivers necessary to produce the goal, and the specific activities or interventions that would improve these factors. Driver diagrams help explain how the factors need to be addressed to stimulate change to achieve a specific goal, by illustrating the connection between factors. Kinzie and Kuh's (2016) Student Success Driver Diagram requires that faculty and staff improve collaboration, develop a student success mindset, and foster a culture of support to increase institutional student success outcomes.

These theoretical models are explored in further detail in chapter 2.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to identify the individual core values prized most by faculty, staff, and administrators in a community college and the overall optimal values to foster a culture of student success. In addition, this study explored the role of ethical identity in fostering a culture of student success, and how employee fit fosters a culture of student success. Fit was assessed through person-organization (PO) fit, as opposed to other types of fit, by using value-congruence and perceived fit.

Research Questions

I sought to answer the following research questions because of empirical and anecdotal evidence in the role I hold at my organization that individuals who have values congruent with the organization's values—or perceive as much—are more supportive of student success initiatives, and experience more student success, better job performance, improved job satisfaction, and reduced turnover. As a result, I explored what individual core values faculty, staff, and administrators prized most at their institution and which overall values they perceived

to be optimal in fostering a culture of student success. I used person-organization (PO) fit, through the lens of value congruence and perceived fit, to explore and understand the influence of objective and subjective and perceived fit on the ethical identity of the institution and its culture of student success. My central research questions follow:

1. Which individual values do faculty, staff, and administrators prize most in a community college?
2. Which are the overall optimal values perceived to foster a culture of student success?
3. What role does an institution's ethical identity play in fostering a culture of student success?
4. How does value congruence between person and organization foster an institution's culture of student success?
5. How does perceived fit of faculty, staff, and administrators foster an institution's culture of student success?

Research Methodology

I conducted insider action research (Herr & Anderson, 2015) at a community college located in the Mid-Atlantic region. I selected this college because of my access to and familiarity with the institution as an administrator and my investment in the success of its students and the organization. The roles I have held in higher education inspired me to conduct this research and I wanted to explore more deeply the role that person-organization (PO) fit plays in student success outcomes. My goal as a higher education administrator is to achieve the following student success outcomes in accordance with my institution's strategic plan:

- Increase graduation rates
- Increase transfer rates
- Increase grade point averages (GPAs)
- Reduce cost to graduation
- Reduce time to graduation

Through this action research, I aspired to expand my knowledge to help improve student performance in my daily operations, to expand the institution's capacity to improve its achievement of institutional outcomes, and to positively impact the long-term economic benefits to the local community. In addition, I hoped this research would contribute to a deeper understanding of how to improve student success outcomes for the greater academic community, and particularly for community colleges.

Because I conducted a qualitative insider action research study (Herr & Anderson, 2015) of naturalistic inquiry, my methodology was fluid. Data collection included content analysis of existing documents, a survey, and a series of semi-structured interviews and focus groups with faculty, staff, and administrators. I captured data from semi-structured interviews, and focus groups through jottings, field notes, and audio recordings, which I transcribed, coded, and triangulated to identify themes in my research (Auerback & Silverstein, 2003; Becker, 1998; Emerson et al., 2011; Mathison, 1998; Maxwell, 2013; Weiss, 1994). In preparation for this research I attempted to identify, and address in advance, any unanticipated issues with my research question or methodology to help navigate and mitigate dynamic conservatism and micropolitics at the institution (Herr & Anderson, 2015).

All data collection primarily relied on convenience sampling. Throughout my data gathering, I engaged in iterative cycles of plan-act-observe-reflect to allow for my methodology to evolve in the field as appropriate, and as a mechanism to continuously address my biases, ethical dilemmas, and various issues with outcome, process, democratic, catalytic, and dialogic validity (Herr & Anderson, 2015). I accomplished this by journaling and writing researcher memos (Herr & Anderson, 2015; Peshkin, 1988). In addition, I relied on member-checking to ensure that I was accurately capturing and interpreting the data I collected. To improve my understanding of the data and the multiple roles I played in my research, I routinely engaged in validation meetings with trusted friends and colleagues who provided a critical lens through which I was able to explore and develop new connections in my research (Herr & Anderson, 2015). I plan to share the final findings from my research with the institution at-large. I provide greater detail of my methodology in Chapter 3.

Positionality

As an insider, I brought acquired tacit knowledge, having over a decade of experience working with the institution. This raised logistical and epistemological issues in that I had conscious biases, prejudices, and assumptions because of anecdotal events I had observed that required examination. In addition, I had unconscious biases which I may never be aware of. I diligently engaged in and practiced active self-reflection to surface and examine these impressions and assumptions throughout my study. Additionally, as an administrator, I acknowledged and examined my position of power and its potential influence on my data collection. Lastly, as an insider, I was at risk of succumbing to the dynamic conservatism of the

institution. Therefore, I was vigilant in taking some risks and continually deciding how much I was willing to challenge the status quo of the institution.

Significance of Study

Community colleges are operating in an increasingly competitive environment and human capital is arguably its most important asset. According to Edwards (1991), the job performance of employees determines an organization's performance. Person-organization (PO) fit can be a reasonable predictor of organizational performance because of significant relationships between person-organization (PO) fit and attitudinal and behavioral outcome variables like job satisfaction, organizational commitment, organizational citizenship behaviors, individual performance, and reduced employee turnover (Hoffman & Woehr, 2006).

Like other organizations, the community college's major expense is the cost of labor. With a high likelihood that community colleges will continue to confront budget constraints and experience significant challenges with revenue generation in the future, the use of person-organization (PO) fit has important implications for selection practices at community colleges, and how they invest their limited resources into initial staffing and professional development efforts. In consideration of the circumstances, it is critical to explore how community colleges can leverage person-organization (PO) fit as an important antecedent of job satisfaction, organizational commitment, organizational citizenship behaviors, and performance to positively impact student success outcomes in alignment with institutional goals in an ethical manner.

Definition of Key Terms

Achievement Gap. The achievement gap refers to gaps in equality of degree attainment in higher education among students who are considered disadvantaged because of being a first-

generation college student, requiring English or math remediation, coming from a low-income household, identifying with an underrepresented minority ethnic group, or any combination of the aforementioned. Disadvantaged students have encountered various academic challenges that result in much lower academic performance and achievement rates when compared to their counterparts (Yue et al., 2018). The U.S. Department of Education (Snyder et al., 2019) reported that 21% of African-American students and 15% of Hispanic students age 25 and older earned a bachelor's degree compared to 35% of White students. White students are twice as likely to earn a bachelor's degree than their underrepresented peers. Similarly, according to Engle and Tinto (2008), gaps exist in bachelor's degree attainment with respect to socio-economic status, with the gap between low- and high-income students doubling in the last 35 years.

Campus Culture. Kuh and Hall (1993) have provided the most useful definition of organizational culture in the context of higher education. They defined campus culture as:

The collective, mutually shaping patterns of institutional history, mission, physical settings, norms, traditions, values, practices, beliefs, and assumptions that guide the behavior of individuals and groups in an institution of higher education which provide a frame of reference for interpreting the meanings of events and actions on and off campus (p. 2).

Completion Agenda. The Completion Agenda refers to a national movement by numerous foundations, think tanks and professional associations for institutional transformation of community and technical colleges to shift from a focus on access to one of completion and student success. This movement was initiated by the Lumina Foundation for Education in 2003, which led to the launch of Achieving the Dream in 2004, a cooperative venture with various

national partners—including 27 colleges—to promote and create a culture of inquiry and evidence to improve programs, services and the percentage of students who earn certificates and degrees (McClenney, 2013). The Obama administration’s rollout of the American Graduation Initiative (AGI) in 2009 is typically considered the launch of the national completion agenda (Kilgore & Wilson, 2017). AGI is a 10-year plan that committed federal funds to help community colleges graduate five million more students by 2020 to lead the world in college degree attainment (Kilgore & Wilson, 2017).

Ethical Climate. From a conceptual perspective, ethical climate is a type of organizational work climate, where climates are understood as shared perceptions of formal and informal policies, procedures, and practices within an organization. Ethical climates refer to shared perceptions of organizational policies, procedures, and practices with moral consequences. In other words, ethical climates imply various forms of ethical reasoning or behavior as expected standards or norms for decision-making within an organization (Martin & Cullen, 2006). Victor and Cullen (1988), defined ethical climate as the “prevailing perceptions of typical organizational practices and procedures that have ethical content” (p. 101). Unlike culture, climate is more focused on how organizations function with regards to what it rewards, supports, and expects (Schneider, 1987).

Organizational Culture. Culture is defined as the accumulated shared learning from solving problems of external adaptation and internal integration which is considered valid, because of working well, and thus, it can be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, feel, and behave in relation to those problems. Accumulated learning is understood as a pattern or system of beliefs, values, and behavioral norms that are taken for

granted as basic assumptions, which eventually drop out of our awareness (Schein & Schein, 2017). According to Edmondson and Lei (2014), the key to understanding culture is that it is a shared product of shared learning. Unlike climate, culture “addresses the assumptions and values attributed to why particular activities and behaviors are rewarded, supported, and expected” (Schneider, 1987, p. 448).

Person-Job (PJ) Fit. This level of fit is primarily concerned with the compatibility between individuals and specific jobs. Edwards (1991) defined person-job fit (hereafter referred to as PJ fit) as the fit between a person’s abilities and the demands of a job (demands-abilities) or a person’s desires and the attributes of a job (needs-supplies). I will use Kristof’s (1996) definition of job as “the tasks a person is expected to accomplish in exchange for employment, as well as the characteristics of those tasks” (p. 8). In this regard, PJ fit is judged because of the tasks performed, instead of the organization in which the job exists. Kristof (1996) further reinforces that while “many job requirements will mirror characteristics of the organization, they are conceptually distinct elements of the work environment (p. 8).

Person-Organization (PO) Fit. Kristof (1996) defined Person–Organization fit (hereafter referred to as PO fit) as the compatibility between people and where they work. Fit between people and organizations “occurs when: (a) at least one entity provides what the other needs, or (b) they share similar fundamental characteristics, or (c) both” (Verquer et al., p. 474). Rather than focus on the fit of a person with a specific job, vocation or group, this definition focuses on fit of the person with the whole organization. In addition, it accounts for two types of relationships that can occur between an individual and an organization: Complementary congruence, where the organization and the individual contribute to the fulfillment of needs of

the other, or supplementary congruence, where the organization and the individual share similar characteristics (Verquer et al., 2003). According to Kristof (1996), value congruence is the most often assessed dimension of PO fit, which considers the similarity between values of the individual and their respective organization. In addition, it is proposed to be an important antecedent of behavioral outcomes such as job performance, organizational citizenship behavior, and job turnover. Furthermore, PO fit may play a moderating and mediating role in ethical culture (Ruiz-Palomino & Martinez-Cañas, 2014).

Student Success. “Increased numbers of diverse student groups participating in high-quality educational experiences, earning high-quality credentials (degrees, certifications, certificates)” (Kinzie & Kuh, 2016, p. 3).

Value Congruence. According to Meglino and Ravlin (1998) and Rokeach (1973), value is defined as a predisposition of human behavior in that values are a fundamental cognitive mechanism that underlies human cognition, decision, and actions. In turn, they determine how individuals perceive and process information, how they communicate, and how they respond to stimuli. When people share values, they are likely to share similarities across goals, information processing mechanisms, communication styles, and action orientations. As such, value congruence among individuals leads to improved communication, cooperation, and predictability, which in turn leads to a positive and satisfying working environment for all (Bao et al., 2012). Value congruence is a multi-type, multi-level, and multi-dimensional concept that Kristof (1996) defines as the compatibility of work values between a focal person and organizational entities such as supervisors, interviewers, coworkers, work group, and the entire

organization. Typically, value congruence has mostly been treated as supplementary fit, whereas PO fit can be supplementary, complementary or both.

Summary

Higher education recruitment and selection practices do not take fit into consideration (Perlmutter, 2018), which in the community college setting can inhibit an organization's ability to achieve student success and organizational goals in accordance with the completion agenda (McClenney, 2013). Students are impacted by myriad issues outside the classroom that hinder their ability to be successful. Therefore, it is no longer acceptable to enroll students without regard to whether they will be successful after they arrive on campus. Moreover, community colleges must address, directly and indirectly, the social issues facing students (Roscorla, 2016).

As such, PO fit—value congruence and perceived fit—offer community colleges a way to hire educators who contribute value to the college holistically and beyond content expertise in the classroom. By accounting for PO fit in recruitment and selection practices, community colleges can make more informed hiring decisions about faculty and staff to ensure value congruence and/or perceived fit between educator and organization to improve student and organizational success. This is especially salient for community colleges, whose failure to address the poverty and social issues faced by so many community college students could hinder their ability to achieve institutional goals. Currently, the literature on perceived fit is scarce, and while extant literature on value congruence is prolific, it is weak (Bao et al., 2012) in the areas of measurement, staffing, socialization, and sustained congruence over time. This study aimed to address these weak points by investigating the relationship between PO fit and student success to derive managerial implications and solutions for community colleges in the future.

In this chapter, I presented an introduction to the problem surrounding recruitment and selection practices of faculty, staff, and administrators in higher education at community colleges and how the failure to address hiring practices can impede student and institutional success. I also summarized this study's purpose, significance, and methodology. In Chapter II, I present a literature review to illustrate the interconnectedness between student success, culture, ethical identity, person-organization (PO) fit, and in Chapter III I present a detailed methodology for my study. In Chapters IV and V, I present my findings and conclusion.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

To investigate how PO fit of faculty, staff, and administrators, through value congruence and perceived fit shapes a culture of student success and the ethical identity of an institution, an analysis of the following subtopics is provided: a) a succinct definition of student success that captures various conceptualizations across various institutions, purposes, and audiences, b) student success frameworks in higher education, community colleges, and the operationalized student success framework for this study, c) person-environment (PE) fit and perceived fit as two different paradigms of organizational fit, which are steeped in distinct epistemologies, d) the operationalization of PO fit at the organizational level through the Attraction-Selection-Attrition (ASA) model, e) values and institutional culture in higher education, f) the operationalization of fit, values, and ethics in community colleges through the Ethical Identity Framework, and g) a summary of student success and person-organization (PO) fit.

To locate the relevant literature, I used the following search terms: person-organization fit, person-environment fit, person-culture fit, value congruence, organizational culture, ethics, social learning, student success, the completion agenda, equity and inclusion, higher education, and community colleges. I used search terms independently and combined. Further, I conducted research using the following Hood College library databases: Academic Search Ultimate, ERIC, PsycINFO, and ScienceDirect. In addition, I used Google Scholar.

In searching the literature on PO fit of faculty, staff, and administrators and student success, I was unable to find any literature that directly addressed both topics or connected the two ideas outside of references to faculty, staff, and administrators sharing responsibility for

student success, and the need for culture to support student success work. Because of this, I reviewed literature on PO fit, culture, and student success, separately.

The term “student success” is somewhat elusive, therefore, I will first review the literature on student success to provide a succinct definition that captures the complex nature and scope of the term. Upon defining student success, I will provide a review of student success frameworks in community colleges, and the selected student success driver diagram framework that is operationalized for this study to enact a student success mindset. I will then review the literature on person-organization fit to clarify how individuals fit with an organization through conceptualizations of actual fit—value congruence—and perceived fit. I will also review the Attraction-Selection-Attrition (ASA) model as a framework for operationalizing fit through staffing and socialization to shape organizational culture. Lastly, I will review the literature on values and institutional culture, and the Ethical Identity Framework—focusing on higher education and community colleges—to operationalize how fit shapes and reinforces a community college’s culture through its values and ethics.

Student Success Defined

Kenzi and Kuh (2016) indicate that the term, “student success” is embedded in the higher education lexicon. However, the term “student success” can have various definitions. These various definitions stem from who is using the term for what purpose with what audience (Kinzie & Kuh, 2016). Federal and state policy makers tend to define student success around affordable postsecondary education, reduced time to degree, degree completion, and post-college employment (Kilgore & Wilson, 2017; Kinzie & Kuh, 2016). As a result, most of the

contemporary federal research in higher education is focused on degree completion (St. John et al., 2013).

Shifting gears to an institutional perspective, student success can also refer to student retention (Hagedorn, 2012; Tinto V., 1975; Yorke & Longden, 2004), student persistence to degree completion (Jayakumar & Museus, 2012; Mortensen, 2012), gains in content knowledge, student engagement in high-quality curricular and extracurricular experiences (Astin 1984; Crisp, 2010; Crisp & Cruz, 2009; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Yue et al., 2018), and a student's individual achievements or personal success (Kinzie & Kuh, 2016). Additionally, other definitions of student success focus on mitigating institutionalized racism through improved inclusivity and equity (Jayakumar & Museus, 2012), and closing achievement gaps (Jayakumar & Museus, 2012; Kuh et al., 2006; Yue et al., 2018). Lastly, definitions of student success also focus on students' attainment of their postsecondary goals and aspirations (Kinzie & Kuh, 2016).

While these various meaningful definitions of student success are pervasive and persist, over the last decade, degree completion has become the central issue in higher education and is the student success metric underpinning higher education policy in general, and at community colleges (Jones, 2012). As a result, there is now a level of accountability for educators—faculty, staff, and administrators—that did not exist prior to the completion agenda. The Obama administration introduced the completion agenda in 2009 and is led by federal and state policy makers to significantly increase the graduation and transfer rates of students from U.S. colleges and universities (Kelly & Schneider, 2012; Kilgore & Wilson, 2017). Harbor and Smith (2015) describe the completion agenda as an initiative designed to address stagnation of social mobility

and family incomes, the lagging economic growth of the U.S. behind other nations, and the economic and social well-being of the U.S. and its democracy by way of an educated workforce.

It is important to note that community colleges differ from four-year institutions in that framing student success solely around completion is particularly challenging because not all community college students enter the institution with the intention of earning a certificate or degree (Kilgore & Wilson, 2017). Such is the case for students who transfer from a community college to a four-year school prior to earning a credential, those who are pursuing non-credit workforce development and continuing education courses, and individuals simply enrolling in courses for personal enrichment. To further complicate matters, although outside the scope of this study, it is also important to note that states can tie performance-based funding (PBF) to completion initiatives (Jones, 2012). In other words, there is controversy surrounding funding tied to state goals for completion outcomes like graduation, transfer, or employment, without consideration of institutional goals (Jones, 2012). This exacerbates already strained economic conditions, and this budget reality supports the need to focus institutional attention on key state priorities.

In consideration of the wide array of definitions that have been presented to define student success that capture institutional and state priorities, I will use Kinzie and Kuh's (2016) succinct, and all-encompassing definition—noted earlier—as “increased numbers of diverse student groups participating in high quality educational experiences, earning high-quality credentials (degrees, certifications, certificates)” (p. 3). I will now turn to the literature on student success frameworks developed to assist higher education institutions with achieving student success outcomes.

Student Success Frameworks

There is no shortage of literature on student success in higher education and the literature is much too expansive to cover in its entirety in this literature review. However, I will present several conceptual frameworks that identify various student and institutional elements that are consistently associated with student success. I made a concerted effort to focus on how the literature posits to assist institutions achieve student success by highlighting the complexity and interconnectedness of students' needs, the attitudes of college personnel, collaboration between departments, organizational climate and culture, institutional practices, and governmental policies.

Pascarella and Terenzini (1991; 2005) provide the most widely cited framework based on research of college effects on students such as degree attainment, economic returns, and developmental impact. Astin (1977; 1984; 1985; 1993) produced a significant body of literature that primarily focuses on the theoretical underpinnings of student outcomes related to student involvement in college environments, such as educational programs (curricular and extracurricular), exposure to and interaction with faculty, and the influence of peers. Along similar lines, Pace (1980) conducted research on student effort, which Kuh's (1999; 2008) research later expanded by focusing on student engagement and operationalization to reliably measure and improve student success.

The literature also includes research on more targeted aspects of student success to include the first-year experience in college, factors that influence persistence and retention, and the influence of college environments and student engagement. This research led to the design of

experiences positively linked with student success (Kuh et al., 2010) and serves as the foundation of most student success initiatives in higher education.

An additional substantial body of research and literature focused on racially and ethnically diverse student populations because of mounting concerns about equity gaps in college completion. This work has exposed some culturally-biased shortcomings in previous student persistence theories related to academic and social integration as predictors of success. As a result, momentum is gaining in the development of alternative frameworks for understanding the success of racially diverse college students (Hurtado et al., 2012; Museus, 2013; Museus & Quaye, 2009; Rendon, 2006; Rendon & Muñoz, 2011). Examples include Museus (2013), who developed a model pointing to the influence of campus environments on student success for culturally diverse student populations. Similarly, Hurtado et al. (2012) expanded the student success framework to include a more holistic model that takes into consideration climate, educational practices, and student outcomes.

Along those same lines, the “Inclusive Excellence” framework proposed by the American Association of Colleges and Universities (2015) and “Equity Mindedness” (Bensimon, 2007; Bensimon et al., 2016) focus on fostering student success for all students through educational reform. Specifically, “Inclusive Excellence” is grounded in organizational development theory and “emphasizes shared leadership, responsibility, and accountability in the pursuit of equity, diversity, and excellence” (Kinzie & Kuh, 2016, p. 5). “Equity-mindedness” “abstains from blaming students” (Bensimon et al., 2016, p. 1) for the accumulated disparities resulting from policies and practices creating differences in educational achievement. As an example of how this is operationalized, faculty members are encouraged to consider how their practices,

language, and disciplinary culture contribute to low and inequitable student success outcomes. Moreover, this framework demands training of educators to become equity-minded and knowledgeable about racism in higher education, exclusionary practices, and the impact of power imbalances on opportunities and outcomes for students.

To propel student success research forward, the National Postsecondary Educational Cooperative (NPEC) has commissioned various comprehensive studies on student success aimed at reviewing and synthesizing the literature on student success, articulating inclusive theory-informed perspectives on student success and correlations, identifying limitations of the literature, and proposing recommendations in the forms of policy guidelines, frameworks, and models to advance student success. In particular, Kuh et al. (2006) focused on what practices matter to student success and developed a schematic illustrating the variety of factors and conditions that affect student success. Perna and Thomas (2006) developed a theoretically grounded conceptual model of student success for all students, and identifies ways to reduce gaps across income, class, and racial or ethnic groups through educational, psychological, sociological, and economic theories. The goal of their framework (Perna & Thomas, 2006) is to inform the development, implementation, and evaluation of policies and practices to close gaps in student success. Tinto and Pusser's (2006) situate institutional action within the broader context of federal and state policy, and articulated a model of action for institutions to increase student persistence, and, in turn, student success. With innumerable factors affecting student success, Rendón (2006) responded to Tinto and Pusser's report, cautioning to resist the urge to create a single "meta-model" that would attempt to account for everything related to student success due to diversity of differences students bring with them to college.

Student Success Frameworks in Community Colleges. It is only in the last decade that student success at community colleges, measured by completion, has been a focus. Previously, most research was focused on access and how programs and services supported students with a variety of goals related to their participation (Kinzie & Kuh, 2016). A shift began in 2004 when the Lumina Foundation sponsored the Achieving the Dream (ATD) initiative (Kinzie & Kuh, 2016) to emphasize student success in the form of retention and graduation at community colleges. The ATD initiative is also considered a reform movement and evolved into its own organization. The ATD student success framework focuses on creating a culture of inquiry and data-informed decisions to improve institutional efforts and increase student outcomes (Achieving the Dream, 2019).

There have been several inclusive studies by the Community College Research Council to advance student success work at the community college level. Bailey et al. (2015) developed a student success framework that points out the need for community colleges to engage in a fundamental redesign and broader institutional restructuring in order to significantly increase student completion. In addition, a special issue of the journal *New Directions for Community Colleges* titled, The college completion agenda: practical approaches for reaching the big goal (Phillips & Horowitz, 2014), provides an overview of the research behind policies and practices intended to increase the number of Americans with high-quality credentials and their impact on students.

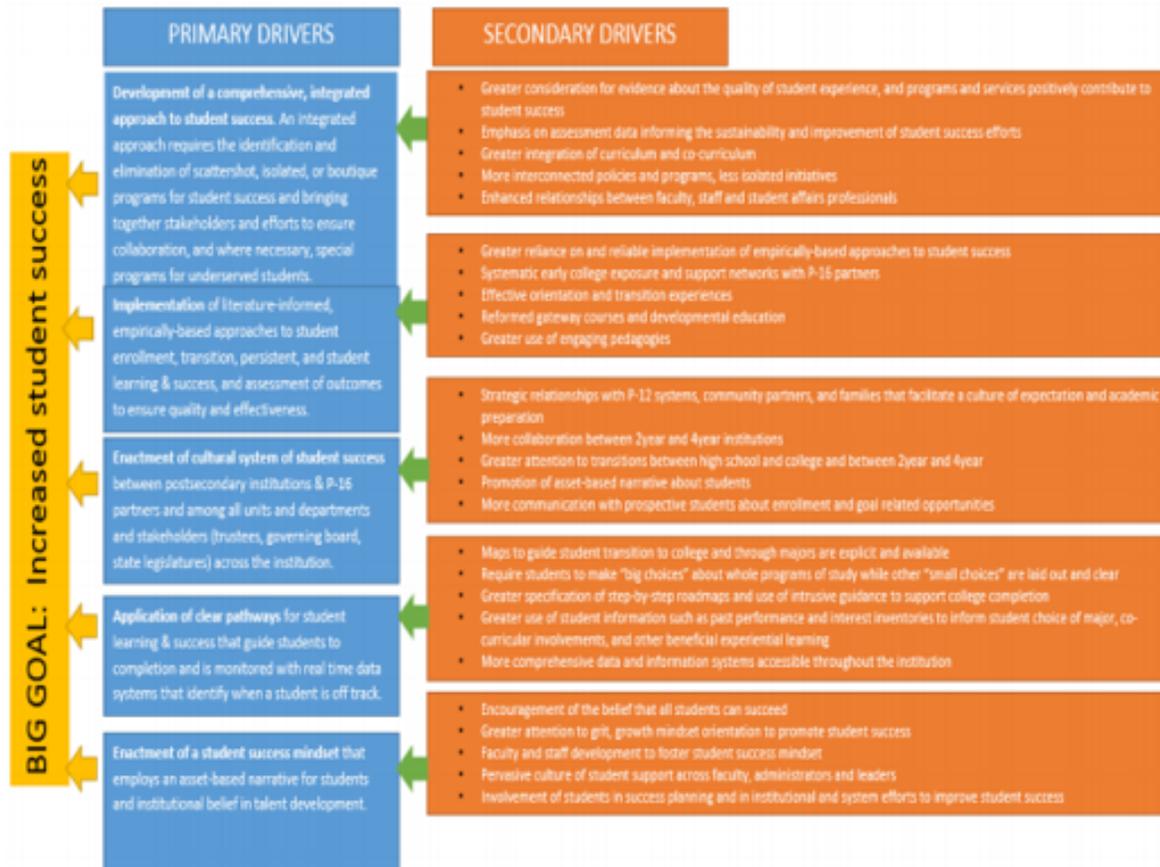
The literature on practices to improve student success is abundant, however the implementation of these practices across institutions and among diverse student populations is inconsistent. The inconsistency in implementation of these practices has been attributed to a lack

of intentionality, supported by targeted efforts, to ensure practices are implemented systematically and equitably (Kinzie & Kuh, 2016). In addition, the absence of integration between curricular and co-curricular learning—in other words, the integration between academic affairs and student affairs—was also highlighted as an issue that limits student learning and success (Keeling, 2004). As a result, Kinzie and Kuh (2016) developed a broad conceptual framework, the Student Success Driver Diagram, to address the disconnect between the theoretically grounded practices and the intentional implementation of proven approaches to improve student success. Because of the comprehensive and holistic nature of their conceptual framework, I have selected the Student Success Driver Diagram (Kinzie & Kuh, 2016) as my theoretical student success framework for the purposes of this study.

Student Success Driver Diagram. This conceptual framework, initiated by Kinzie and Kuh (2016), supports the range of approaches across all postsecondary institutions, includes comprehensive representation of critical structural components for student success, and accounts for how student success will be achieved (Kinzie & Kuh, 2016). Driver diagrams are visual tools that are particularly useful for complex goals in many contexts. The diagram (see Figure 1) shows how student success might be improved by building on knowledge that has been acquired from research, observation, and experience (Bennett & Provost, 2015). Driver diagrams help explain how the factors need to be addressed to stimulate change, and to achieve a specific goal, by illustrating the connection between factors.

Figure 1

Driver diagram for increasing student success



Source: Kinzie, J., & Kuh, G. (2016). *Review of student success frameworks to mobilize higher education*. Indiana: Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research.

According to Bennett and Provost, (2015) the primary and secondary drivers are key leverage points in the system and identify necessary and sufficient elements to achieve the intended goal. The three elements include: structures that comprise the system, processes that represent the work of the system, and operating norms that illustrate the explicit and tacit culture of the system. The next section of the driver diagram has the specific actionable changes that can

be tested to accomplish the stated goal in two parts: specific and tangible change ideas, and abstract change concepts that underlie change ideas. Driver diagrams are considered most useful when depicting theories that can be tested empirically to propose a solution path in response to understandings of a problem by specifying major causal explanations which are hypothesized to produce the goal.

Drawing from improvement science (Langley, et al., 2009), Kinzie and Kuh (2016) developed a driver diagram—a structured logic chart—with “increase student success” as their big goal to determine how to achieve the goal. The Student Success Driver Diagram contains three levels including: a) the description of the big goal “Student Success,” b) the individual drivers necessary to produce the goal, and c) the specific activities or interventions that would improve these factors. Kinzie and Kuh (2016) identified five primary drivers of student success:

1. Development of a comprehensive, integrated approach to student success that identifies and eliminates fragmented, duplicative, and boutique programs for student success, ensures collaborative efforts between stakeholders, and programs for underserved students where necessary (Kinzie & Kuh, 2016).
2. “Implementation of literature-informed, empirically-based approaches to student enrollment, transition, persistent, and student learning and success, and the assessment of outcomes to ensure quality and effectiveness” (Kinzie & Kuh, 2016, p. 23).
3. “Enactment of cultural system of student success between postsecondary institutions and P-16 partners and among all units and departments and stakeholders ... across the institution” (Kinzie & Kuh, 2016, p. 23).

4. “Application of clear pathways for student learning and success that guide students to completion and that is monitored with real time data systems that identify when a student is off track” (Kinzie & Kuh, 2016, p. 23).
5. “Enactment of a student success mindset that employs an asset-based narrative for students and institutional belief in talent development” (Kinzie & Kuh, 2016, p. 23).

Because the focus of my study was on PO fit and the intersection with student success, I focused my attention on identifying the potential points of intersection between PO fit and various primary and secondary drivers of Kinzie and Kuh’s (2016) student success framework. I was particularly interested in a secondary driver of primary driver 1: cooperative, respectful working relationships between faculty, staff, and student affairs professionals, and secondary drivers of primary driver 5, enact a student success mindset. The secondary drivers of primary driver 5 include: a) requiring faculty, staff, and administrators to develop and foster a student success mindset, b) fostering a culture of student support, c) promoting an assets-based narrative, d) emphasizing benefits of co-curricular activities, and e) making underserved student achievement visible and valued (Kinzie & Kuh, 2016). Faculty, staff, and administrators shape their organizational and campus cultures through shared values. Congruence in values determines PO fit. As such, it was important to consider PO fit of faculty, staff, and administrators, as they could foster or hinder primary drivers 1 and 5. For purposes of this study, primary drivers 1 and 5 were relevant to the exploration of the relationship between PO fit and student success. Therefore, I will now provide a review of the literature on organizational fit.

Organizational Fit

Much of the seminal research on fit has been conducted by Kristof-Brown, formerly Kristof. There is a plethora and richness of literature on fit that demonstrates that individuals and organizations are most effective when their values, needs, and interests are congruent. Because organization fit “is one of the most widely used psychological constructs in industrial and work psychology” (Kristof-Brown & Billsberry, 2013, p. 1), the focus of the fit literature in terms of this study with student success involves exploring subjective fit and perceived fit of faculty, staff, and administrators of an ATD community college engaged in student success work.

Although organizational fit has been shown to influence employees’ motivation, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, organizational citizenship behaviors, job performance, and intentions to quit (Andrews et al., 2011; Bao et al., 2012; Dolan, 2016; Farooqui & Nagendra, 2014; Hoffman & Woehr, 2006; Kristof, 1996; Sekiguchi & Huber, 2011; Verquer et al., 2003), there remains a lack of consensus on how to define fit. The wide range of definitions and perspectives attract many scholars to the topic, while at the same time yielding criticism (Kristof-Brown & Billsberry, 2013). Kristof-Brown and Billsberry (2013) state that there are as many conceptualizations of fit as there are scholars who study it.

According to Kristof-Brown and Billsberry (2013), the fit literature indicates that there are two distinct paradigms that dominate the fit landscape and divide researchers. The distinction is made between the person-environment (PE) fit paradigm and the perceived fit paradigm. The former is the foundation of organizational fit research and takes a more interactionist approach to assessing fit. For example, actual fit could be calculated through value congruence between individual and organization. The latter focuses on fit as an internal feeling of “fitting in” or

“feeling like an outsider.” While there have been vigorous debates and strong arguments for which type of fit is more meaningful, Kristof-Brown and Billsberry (2013) claim that no one view is superior to the other.

Researchers of organizational fit view more calculated forms of person-environment (PE) fit and perceived fit as different domains based in distinct epistemologies that should be treated as separate concepts of the fit construct. If approached in this manner, it would reduce the uneasiness with the term “organizational fit.” Regardless of which concept of fit one chooses to use, both paradigms have valid interpretations and measurement approaches (Kristof-Brown & Billsberry, 2013). For this reason, and because I will respond to the call for research that blends fit epistemologies, I will provide an overview of person-environment (PE) fit and perceived fit paradigms.

Person-Environment (PE) Fit Paradigm. PE fit is the cornerstone of all fit theory (Caplan, 1983; French et al., 1974; Pervin, 1987) and takes a positivist (Kristof-Brown & Billsberry, 2013) approach to calculating fit. This is the more interactionist approach in that researchers try to understand and predict employees’ attitudes and behaviors by comparing the internal aspects of a person, such as values, personality, goals, and abilities, to commensurate relevant elements of an external environment (e.g., values, culture, climate, goals, and demands). Within this concept, researchers investigate the interplay between the person and situational factors to calculate a measure of PE fit (Cable & Judge, 1996, 1997; Chatman, 1989; Pervin, 1987; Schneider, 1987). Unlike perceived fit, individuals are never asked to report their feeling or interpretation of how well they fit. They simply report certain data about themselves and/or

the environment, which researchers can use to calculate a measure of fit (Kristof-Brown & Billsberry, 2013).

Within PE fit are two main streams of research, subjective and objective—actual—fit, which rely on different methods of assessment. Subjective fit is assessed when an individual is asked to report regarding internal and external elements, such as to report on their own values and their perceptions of their organization's values (Kristof-Brown & Billsberry, 2013). The critical element is that both assessments for subjective fit originate from the individual whose fit is being measured. On the other hand, objective—or actual fit—relies on different sources to report characteristics of the individual and the characteristics of the environment. Internal dimensions, such as individual core values or personality, are usually self-reported by the individual whose fit is being measured, while the external dimensions, such as organizational values or climate, are reported from a different source. It is important to note that it is possible that the external sources include perceptions, however the observation is considered to be more objective when reported by someone else. It is also important to note that the environment, too, can be measured truly objectively, such as the case would be if reward system elements were used as the environment measure (Kristof-Brown & Billsberry, 2013).

It should also be said that “fit” is used as a noun by researchers of both subjective and objective approaches to imply a tangible concept that can be calculated by the sum of its parts. The notion of both approaches is that the closer the match between the two set of variables, the better the outcomes (Ostroff, 2012). However, there is wide disagreement over what a match means (Edwards et al., 2006; Edwards & Shipp, 2007). In most cases, it is interpreted to mean that when there is perfect alignment between person and environment (i.e., high P – high E fit,

low P – low E fit), or when there is minimal difference between person and environment profiles, positive outcomes should occur. Kristof-Brown and Guay (2011) coined the term “exact correspondence” for when there is perfect alignment.

Early fit studies that used profile similarity indices and other types of difference scores (e.g., Chatman, 1991; O'Reilly, Chatman, & Caldwell, 1991) produced results that appeared to support the prediction of exact correspondence. However, once the research field transitioned to polynomial regression and surface plot analysis as more precise methods of calculating congruence (Edwards J. R., 1993, 1994; Edwards & Parry, 1993), very few studies supported the predictive ability of exact correspondence for optimal outcomes (e.g., Jansen & Kristof-Brown, 2006; Kristof-Brown & Stevens, 2001; Slocombe & Bluedorn, 1999). That said, functional forms of fit relationships typically tended to demonstrate that high levels of person and environment are more strongly associated with positive outcomes than when fit of these entities are at low levels. Furthermore, asymmetrical effects were found for various types of misfit, whereas effects of the environment generally outweigh those of the person (Kristof-Brown & Billsberry, 2013). As analytic methods have evolved to enable closer investigation of the precise functional form of fit relationships, researchers have dispelled the simplistic assumption that congruence is always optimal or that incongruence is always suboptimal. The conflicting result is that fit may take various functional forms depending on the variables being considered (Kristof-Brown & Billsberry, 2013). As an example, my fit research focuses on the variable of organization because selection practices in higher education, like most other organizations, already take the variable of job into account. Further, the literature says values shape culture, and that student success will

only be achieved when faculty, staff, and administrators foster an organizational culture of student success.

PE fit is accepted as the overarching term that allows for three major variations. Foremost, researchers can select the most relevant internal or personal factors for their research questions. Second, they can select the most relevant environmental variables for assessing fit, which has produced different dimensions or types of fit, (i.e., person-vocation (PV) fit, person-job (PJ) fit, person-organization (PO) fit, person-group (PG) fit, and person-supervisor (PS) fit), each with various characteristics on which fit can be assessed (i.e., values, goals, and abilities) (Kristof-Brown & Billsberry, 2013). To illustrate the wealth and diversity of possibilities, Edwards and Shipp (2007) developed a multifaceted model in which all of the various possible dimensions and characteristics intersect to produce nearly infinite possible fit types.

The third variation concerns the flexibility extended to researchers to determine what underlies compatibility on the personal and environmental characteristics of choice. In other words, congruence is approached from a supplementary or complementary perspective, whereas supplementary fit indicates similarity between two entities and complementary fit indicates that one entity completes or “makes whole” the other (Kristof, 1996; Kristof-Brown & Billsberry, 2013). Some researchers choose not to calculate fit at all and focus on the interpretation of the statistical interaction of variables. Notwithstanding the diversity of fit conceptualizations, the idea that an alignment or interaction between internal and external factors shapes individuals’ attitudes and behaviors is what underlies the PE fit paradigm (Kristof-Brown & Billsberry, 2013). With this in mind, one way in which I explore the relationship between PO fit and student

success is by assessing subjective and objective fit—value congruence—between the individual and organization from a supplementary perspective.

The challenge with the PE fit paradigm is the multitude of conceptualizations with little integration of the interconnectedness of findings. While research tends to demonstrate that some type of interaction between person and environment influences outcomes in a positive direction, it provides minimal insight into how people experience the state of fit or misfit (Kristof-Brown & Billsberry, 2013). Such is the case when Chatman (1991) relied on the Organizational Culture Profile (O'Reilly et al., 1991) to report that values congruence led to job satisfaction. The same findings were replicated by Verquer et al. (2003). This was done through a purely interactional lens and did not reveal the experience of fit by individuals. As a result, the second paradigm, perceived fit, is receiving more attention in recent literature (Kristof-Brown & Billsberry, 2013), and also informs how fit was assessed in this study.

Perceived Fit Paradigm. This perspective of fit stems from an interpretivist (Kristof-Brown & Billsberry, 2013) epistemology and is considered a psychological construct that focuses more on the individual's sense of "fitting in" or "feeling like a misfit." Similar to job satisfaction, perceived fit is viewed as something internal or inside a person's mind that influences their thoughts and feelings toward their job or organization (Billsberry et al., 2005; Cooper-Thomas et al., 2004; Kristof-Brown A., 2000; Ravlin & Ritchie, 2006; Wheeler et al., 2007). This type of fit, referred to by Kristof-Brown and Guay (2011) as "general compatibility," is usually measured directly by asking individuals to report the fit that he or she believes exists, such as, "How well do you think you fit in with your team?"

Perceived fit offers the strongest relationships to outcomes like job satisfaction and organizational commitment, and it also underlies individuals' decision making (Kristof-Brown & Zimmerman, 2005; Verquer et al., 2003). However, perceived fit has generated much less research interest than PE fit, and is criticized for being an “attitude” influenced by affect. The enduring presumption has been that perceived fit is a cognitive representation of person-environment interactions, and, thus, when both types of fit are measured, they should be closely related (Kristof-Brown & Billsberry, 2013). To the contrary, most evidence demonstrates that correlations between both types of fit are low to moderate (Edwards et al, 2006). Not much is understood about how these perceptions form or why they influence attitudes and behaviors so strongly (Kristof-Brown & Billsberry, 2013). It is also important to note that while perceived fit stems from an interpretivist approach, much of the work conducted in the perceived fit paradigm has also adopted a post-positivist epistemology. This is to say, researchers are interested not only in how individuals experience fit, but also want to use it as a predictor of outcomes instead of attempting to understand what drives it (Edwards & Billsberry, 2010; Lauver & Kristof-Brown, 2001; Schmitt et al., 2008). In the context of organizational fit, this study investigated the relationship between PO fit and student success. This study blended epistemologies of PE fit—or value congruence—and perceived fit by exploring PO fit as a predictor of a culture of student success and the phenomena underlying the feelings of fit or misfit.

Person-Organization (PO) Fit. Kristof (1996) defined PO fit as the compatibility between people and where they work (Hoffman & Woehr, 2006; Verquer et al., 2003). Fit between people and organizations “occurs when: (a) at least one entity provides what the other needs, or (b) they share similar fundamental characteristics, or (c) both” (Verquer et al., p. 474).

Rather than focus on the fit of a person with a specific job, vocation or group, this definition focuses on fit of the person with the whole organization.

PO fit accounts for two types of relationships that can occur between an individual and an organization: Complementary congruence, where the organization and the individual contribute to the fulfillment of needs of the other, or supplementary congruence, where the organization and the individual share similar characteristics (Verquer et al., 2003). Supplementary fit is the most frequently operationalized perspective. On the organization side, characteristics usually studied include the culture, climate, values, goals, and norms. Whereas on the person side, values and goals are the characteristics most studied (Kristof, 1996). Similarity between organization and person on these characteristics demonstrates supplementary fit.

According to Kristof (1996), value congruence is the most often assessed dimension of PO fit, which considers the similarity between values of the individual and their respective organization (Chatman, 1991). O'Reilly et al. (1991) use the same description to talk about person-culture fit and posited that "Congruency between an individual's values and those of an organization may be at the crux of person-culture fit" (p. 492). Value congruence is a significant form of fit since values are fundamental, relatively enduring (O'Reilly et al., 1991), and elements of organizational culture that guides employees' behavior (Schein E. H., 1992). Student success literature points to a culture of student success as critical to achieve student success outcomes. Thus, to understand the phenomena underlying the relationship between PO fit and student success, I explored how the values of faculty, staff, and administrators shaped the culture of the institution.

Value congruence is proposed to be an important antecedent of behavioral outcomes such as job performance, organizational citizenship behavior, and job turnover (Kristof, 1996; Hoffman & Woehr, 2006), all of which are important to a higher education institution's ability to thrive and meet institutional goals. Furthermore, PO fit may play a moderating and mediating role in ethical culture (Ruiz-Palomino & Martinez-Cañas, 2014), which is especially salient for community colleges facing diminishing resources and mounting financial pressures in an ever-changing landscape of federal requirements—most recently, the completion agenda. When high levels of PO fit are achieved through hiring and socialization, organizations are better able to retain a flexible workforce with the flexibility and organizational commitment required to overcome challenges and maintain a competitive edge (Kristof, 1996). By operationalizing PO fit through the selection practices of new faculty, staff, and administrators, and the socialization of existing college personnel, such as through professional development activities, community colleges could become more agile and improve student success outcomes.

Attraction-Selection-Attrition Framework. Schneider's (1987) attraction-selection-attrition (ASA) framework has been used by researchers to operationalize PO fit. The ASA framework is based on the premise that the attributes of people are the fundamental determinants of organizational behavior. From this perspective, similar people are attracted to and selected by organizations whose goals are like their own. The opposite of attraction is attrition. It is posited that employees whose values do not fit with an organization's values will either be removed by the organization or will leave of their own volition. From a work values perspective, the expectation is that the organization will become homogenous over time.

This model has several implications for the organization. The first implication is survival. The ASA framework indicates that organizations that fail to intentionally fight restriction in the range of the kinds of people they contain, will not recognize the environment has changed or will not be capable of changing at all. Schneider (1987) urges to refrain from seeking new “right types” that do not share inclinations that fit the old “right types” as old-timers will force them out. From a macro, organizational-level perspective, he suggests that a useful set of data could be generated using personality and interest measures administered across the entire organization. Schneider (1987) recommends that newcomers brought in to change the organization should share attributes with those they are expected to change. In this way, structures and processes will change when the behaviors of people change, resulting from different types of people being attracted to, selected by, and staying in the organization.

According to Schneider (1987), the ASA framework provides a unique perspective on organizational climate and organizational culture, keeping in mind that processes and structures emerge in organizations because of the kinds of people in them acting in ways that facilitate the accomplishments of the goals of the founder. First, climate and culture are complimentary topics, where Schneider and Bowen describe climate as how organizations communicate what is important to organizational effectiveness by what it rewards, supports, and expects (Schneider, 1987). Culture, on the other hand, refers to people within the organization sharing common assumptions, values, and beliefs, transmitted through myths and stories (Schein, 1992). Schneider (1987) proposed that the attraction, selection, and retention of particular kinds of people produce similar people, who through interpersonal attraction to each other, will naturally share their views about why things occur the way they do. According to Bolman and Deal (as

cited in Schneider, 1987), because of the human tendency to attribute cause, these attributions manifest the stories and myths by which culture is transmitted.

The ASA model implies that the best way to achieve value congruence is through staffing (Bao et al., 2012). Another possibility to achieve values congruence is through socialization, especially if values are difficult to detect through the recruitment and selection process. However, this method assumes that work values can be changed. There is evidence to suggest that socialization tactics can be used to assimilate employee values to organizational values (Bao et al., 2012), which, in turn, shape an organization's culture (Schein & Schein, 2017). Studies confirm that some types of socialization tactics can increase value congruence or the perception of it. Also, there is evidence to suggest that even if only the perceived fit was changed through socialization, it was enough to influence job attitudes. While several studies have shown that different socialization tactics have different influences, more evidence is needed to understand why and how this is so (Bao et al., 2012). This further reinforces why I assessed PO fit in this study through a blended epistemology of both PE fit and perceived fit paradigms.

Values and Institutional Culture

Because I will assess PO fit between person and organization using value congruence, it is important to understand the values that higher education organizations, and more specifically, community colleges hold dear. While each institution has its own unique values, there are core values that underlie the foundational ethos of higher education institutions. Young (1997) implored faculty, staff, administrators, presidents, and governing boards to reexamine the place and purpose of higher education in society, beginning with the foundation on which higher education was built—that of values and valuing. Values are the foundation of organizational

identity and a core principle of an organization's strategy (Dolan, 2016). According to Judge and Cable (1997), values are subjective judgements and learned, and thus less static than personality. While values are relatively enduring, they can be modified and transformed by socialization experiences (Judge & Cable, 1997). Thus, any misfit between existing faculty, staff, and administrators at an institution could be modified to foster a culture of student success.

Young (1997) examined the relationships between what one values and how one works and lives. He proposed and expounded on seven critical values of higher education: service, truth, freedom, equality, individuation, justice, and community. To advance the values educators prize, he argued that higher education institutions should move from theoretical to applied practice in and out of the classroom to include how each student, faculty member, staff member, and administrator, lives and works on a daily basis (Young, 1997). This reinforces the importance of value congruence between faculty, staff, and administrators and the institutions where they work.

Most all the contemporary literature about values in higher education focuses on the core values of student affairs to include values and guiding principles promoted by the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators (NASPA), the leading student affairs association—founded in 1919. Young (1993) identified the following values to be fundamentally adhered to throughout the history of the student affairs profession: educating the whole student, care for students, service to students and to the university, community, and equality and justice. Interestingly, there seems to be a gap in the literature on values in academic affairs, with limited and fragmented references to academic freedom and autonomy (Scholars at Risk, 2017). Thus,

there is an exclusion of student-centered material in this body of literature. The lack of literature on values in academic affairs highlights an area of research to be further explored.

The seemingly absence of values and guiding principles promoted in academic affairs—primarily the faculty body—hints at an underlying issue potentially impacting value congruence and misfit between faculty and the institutions where they work. This is especially salient since faculty-student interaction is linked to various positive student success outcomes to include increased persistence and completion rates, better grades and test scores, and the development of self-worth, confidence, leadership, critical thinking, and career and graduate school aspiration (Kezar & Maxey, 2014). In other words, value congruence between faculty and their institutions could improve faculty-student interaction, and consequently, student success outcomes.

While higher education in general shares foundational core values, it is important to note that community colleges are distinct in that they are open-access institutions serving a much more diverse student body with even more diverse needs compared to their four-year counterparts. Thus, the values of community colleges are slightly different from four-year institutions. Kabanoff and Daly (2002) analyzed the relationship between supported values and their reflection in public documents. Most community colleges publicly articulate four primary values: open access, their respective mission, student success, and service to community (Anderson et al., 2007; Hegeman et al., 2007). These four values are meant to guide and shape “shared understandings and common professional and institutional ethical identities” (Anderson et al., 2007, p. 19). However, community colleges face the challenge of managing “competing internal values and beliefs in a complex culture comprised of a variety of individuals and subgroups” (Anderson et al., 2007, p. 20). This could result in high levels of value incongruence

and misfit between faculty, staff, and administrators and their institutions, which could undermine a desired culture of student success and the ethical culture necessary to overcome mounting financial pressures.

According to Schein (1992), most mature organizations contain several subcultures, which form their own assumptions and beliefs based on their learned and shared past experiences. Similar to the effect on change from misaligned values between individual and organization (Burnes & Jackson, 2011), subcultures that are aligned or misaligned with the dominant organizational culture can strengthen or undermine an organization (Schein E. H., 1992). Thus, strong subcultures can facilitate or derail change initiatives. With nothing short of major change required to improve student success for all students, it is imperative to seek alignment, not only in values, but also in the subcultures of faculty, staff, administrators, and the institutions they serve.

Ethical Identity Framework

Diminishing resources and mounting financial pressures introduce the potential for increased ethical challenges in higher education. In the community college context, ethical decision-making depends as much on an individual's fit within the institution, as it does on the individual's own views, values, and ethics. The value congruence between the individual, sub-group or department, and institution, can be assessed using the ethical identity framework (Anderson et al., 2009) based on the ethical acculturation model of Handelsman et al. (2005) and Berry's model of acculturation (1980, 2003; Berry & Sam, 1997). Many of the ethical issues in community colleges involve a web of relationships, processes, and obligations across faculty, staff, and administrators, which create the organization's ethical identity (Anderson et. al., 2009).

From the social learning perspective, people can learn by observing and imitating the attitudes, values, and behaviors of other individuals in an organization (Bandura, 1977).

As noted earlier, the four primary core values articulated by most community colleges are open access, comprehensive mission, student success, and service to their community (Anderson et al., 2007). However, institutions and its members are faced with balancing competing issues such as changing student and employee demographics, shifts in curriculum and pedagogy, technological changes, increased competition, aging facilities, mission drift, dwindling budgets, and increased scrutiny and demand for accountability (Cohen & Brawer, 2008). Community college professionals often find themselves torn between trying to fulfill their social contracts, serving as good stewards of resources entrusted to them, and meeting public expectations within an ethical framework (Vaughan, 1992). Meanwhile, the institution is also dealing with competing internal values and beliefs in a complex culture comprised of various individuals and subgroups (Baker & Associates, 1992; Locke & Guglielmino, 2006).

According to Cohen and Brawer (2008), community colleges are multifaceted organizations comprised of many different individuals and subgroups with sometimes conflicting beliefs and goals. While evaluating an organization's culture is complex (Schein & Schein, 2017), in tracing the development of community colleges in the United States it seems that most colleges have reached a stage of institutional maturity where it can be difficult to dissect or change an institution's culture, values, and practices because they are so deeply rooted (Alfred, 2008). In addition, many community colleges are no longer the small, centralized homogenous organizations they once were. They are much larger, often multi-campus institutions, that increasingly rely on contract specialists and part-time employees (Alfred, 2008).

Within the organization, subgroups have evolved their own subcultures based on shared history, prior experiences, and the personal beliefs of its members (Schein E. H., 1992). According to Anderson et al. (2009), this results in competing internal values and beliefs about what is best for the organization and its stakeholders. Thus, it becomes increasingly more important for the organization and its members to have strategies to manage the complexities and challenges within an ethical framework. Anderson et al. (2009) further assert that it is the responsibility of all employees, individuals, and subgroups, within the institution to share common beliefs and values to forge a solid professional and institutional ethical identity that is clearly articulated through the college's mission, vision, values, and actions. The first step is to build an awareness about the organizational complexities and subcultures (Schein & Schein, 2017), in addition to matching the cultural values of the community college with those of the faculty, staff, and administrators who work there (Anderson et al., 2009).

According to Anderson et al. (2007), community colleges have their own culture and subcultures. Individuals do not become part of these cultures automatically, but, instead, adapt or acculturate over time to develop a professional ethical identity (Anderson et al., 2007; Handelsman et al., 2005). The acculturation process involves “cultural maintenance” and “contact and participation” (Berry & Sam, 1997). When individuals enter the organization as employees, they consciously or unconsciously determine what core values and personal ethics they will maintain during their interactions with the college—cultural maintenance—and whether they will embrace or reject the institutional values and organizational ethics—contact and participation (Anderson et al., 2009). To resolve these two tasks, one of four acculturation

strategies manifests: marginalization, separation, assimilation, and integration (Handelsman et al., 2005).

The marginalization strategy—low in maintenance and low in contact and participation—implies that individuals will follow a policy or ethical guideline out of convenience or to stay out of trouble. Typically, limited core values guide their ethical decision making. If ethical policies or processes exist within the organization, they have little interest in adhering to them (Anderson et al., 2009). The separation strategy—high in maintenance and low in contact and participation—is typically selected by individuals with a “well-developed ethical sense” (Handelsman et al., 2005, p. 61). The individual will draw on a personal sense of right and wrong while questioning the values of the institution. The moral challenge is to hold onto one’s core values in the face of others’ disappointment, anger, and political posturing (Anderson, et al. 2009). The assimilation strategy—low in maintenance and high in contact and participation—is selected by individuals who have overly identified with the organization. The individual will rationalize away or ignore their own core values of right and wrong, failing to critically examine the organization’s values and ethics (Anderson et al., 2007). Lastly, the integration strategy—high in maintenance and high in contact and participation—is optimal when individuals can adapt to the organization’s ethics and values while maintaining their own personal code of ethics. Individuals must seek to resolve the tension in a way that fosters integration between themselves and the organization (Handelsman et al., 2005). This is even more critical when an organization’s ethical practices are lacking or fall short. Moreover, this approach promotes the development of a professional ethical identity benefitting the individual and the institution (Anderson et al., 2007).

It is important to note that the acculturation model proposed by Handelsman et al. (2005) is grounded in the assumption that the institution espouses ethical standards that strive for the ethical ideal or are beneficent. Anderson et al. (2007) recommend that individuals avoid the integration strategy when organizational values are lacking or corrupt. College values and personal beliefs must be acknowledged as reasonable ideals to successfully implement the integration strategy (Anderson et al., 2007). In a similar vein, the opposite is possible if a new leader brings core values into an organization that should not be integrated into the institutional culture (Anderson et al., 2007). The literature points to the values of faculty, staff, and administrators not only playing a critical role in fostering of a culture of student success, but also in fostering an ethical culture while doing so.

Summary of Student Success and Fit

In research conducted by the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO) in 2017, administrators at community colleges were asked to share insights to successes and challenges with their completion initiatives. Of the five themes that emerged, three themes identified included changing institutional culture, changing practices, and increasing the level of faculty and staff engagement in student success (Kilgore & Wilson, 2017). In a similar vein, the underpinnings of two of the themes that emerged from the literature on student success that are relevant to this study involve the individuals at the institution responsible for fostering student success. This is to say that everyone at the institution plays a role in student success, and campus culture is shaped by everyone to promote student success.

Shared leadership throughout the organization, and not just from those in positions of authority, is an emerging theme. The literature supports Kinzie and Kuh's (2016) statement that

“the proverbial village is needed to help a student succeed” (p. 17). In addition to one’s family, community, and K-12 teachers, “everyone on the college campus influence[s] success in college” (Kinzie & Kuh, 2016, p. 17). This includes “challenging but supportive relations with faculty, staff, and peers” (Kinzie & Kuh, 2016, p. 17). In addition, the literature on achieving student success also points to culture as a critical ingredient of student success outcomes (Jayakumar & Museus, 2012; Kezar A., 2012; Kezar & Maxey, 2014; Kinzie & Kuh, 2016). Kinzie and Kuh (2016) stated, “an institution’s total learning environment—its context and culture—matter to how student success is defined, addressed, and achieved” (p. 17).

To shape the needed institution-wide culture, a fundamental redesign and restructuring of community colleges must take place (Bailey et al., 2015). McClenney (2013) suggested that it would take nothing short of transformative change to create the culture necessary to improve student outcomes. This is especially true for racially and ethnically diverse students (Jayakumar & Museus, 2012; Kezar A., 2012). The use of a driver diagram acknowledges that change is required to improve a system, and theory is used to articulate the knowledge about how to achieve increased student success. Kinzie and Kuh’s (2016) Student Success Driver Diagram offers a structured representation for how to achieve increased student success by drawing our attention to primary and secondary drivers that are critical components to achieve this goal.

With the goal to foster a culture of student success among faculty, staff, and administrators, it becomes critical for the organization to pay attention to the individuals it attracts, selects, and retains. The ASA framework indicates that the people make the place (Schneider, 1987). Thus, the congruence of values between the organization and individual are necessary to ensure fit during recruitment and initial staffing efforts or through socialization.

This is especially true through the lens of shared leadership. The most important element in the work necessary to transform culture is leadership (Bass & Avolio, 1994). Leadership should be considered at the formal and informal levels to include individuals assigned to be leaders as part of their role in a group, such as professors in the classroom, a manager within the organization, or senior executives, and individuals with no official authority, such as an individual whom a group naturally chooses to follow for any variety of reasons.

Deloitte University Press conducted one of the largest global human capital surveys to identify the top 12 global business challenges in talent management, leadership, and HR. After surveying 2,532 businesses and HR leaders in 94 countries, the results indicated that leaders are needed at all levels of the organization (Deloitte Consulting LLP and Bersin by Deloitte, 2014). Over and above that, “leadership remains the No. 1 talent issue facing organizations around the world” (Deloitte Consulting LLP and Bersin by Deloitte, 2014, p. 25). When every community college employee has the potential to be an informal or formal leader at any given point during their career, it is important to consider person-organization fit during the employee recruitment and selection process.

There is a constant interplay between culture and leadership, where leaders create mechanisms for cultural development and they reinforce norms and behaviors expressed within the boundaries of the culture (Bass & Avolio, 1994). An “institution-wide culture of completion” (Kilgore & Wilson, 2017, p. 5) is a key to success in improving completion rates for students. According to McClenney (2013), the culture of the institution must encourage and support people to engage in candid conversations to confront the tough issues and share ownership of their problems as a way of embracing shared responsibility. It is under these circumstances that

faculty and staff leadership at all levels across the institution can emerge, that courageous conversations can take place, and it becomes possible to communicate a sense of urgency of student success outcomes at the institution and in the local community.

Achieving the Dream (ATD) is the most significant non-governmental reform movement, leading the largest network of community and technical colleges with over 220 higher education institutions across 43 states (Achieving the Dream, 2019). The organization aims to improve institutional outcomes, such as increasing semester-to-semester persistence and degree completion, with an emphasis on academically underprepared students, low-income students, and students of color (Kilgore & Wilson, 2017). According to AACRAO's survey results, only 12% of community colleges with multiple completion initiatives described their faculty as extremely engaged (Kilgore & Wilson, 2017). One of the objectives of ATD is to help institutions create a shared vision through which collaborative work will advance the agenda to develop a strategy for broad and continuous faculty and staff engagement in student success work (McClenney, 2013).

There is prolific literature on the relationship between planned organizational change and organizational culture. Change theorists agree that efforts to induce significant change without addressing an organization's culture will fail (Kouzes & Posner, 1990; Schein E. H., 1992). Schein (1992) further asserts that it is a leader's responsibility to create, manage, and even destroy culture, when necessary. Moreover, Kotter (2002) warned that change that is not embedded in an organization's culture will not endure, and would, instead, revert to its preexisting status. It would seem, that for this reason, ATD encourages college teams to develop plans of action, which follow five guiding principles: a) committed leadership, b) a culture of

inquiry and evidence using data to improve programs and services, c) wide engagement of faculty, staff, governance, and community, d) systemic institutional improvement, and e) equity. Governing boards are charged with creating the culture of inquiry and evidence within which the CEO can engage the institution in courageous conversations about data on student success and equity (McClenney, 2013), to include the critical function of aligning strategic plans, goals, and budget allocations (McClenney, 2013; Vveinhardt & Gulbovaite, 2017) with student success at the core (McClenney, 2013).

According to Anderson et al. (2007), to build an institutional ethical identity, leaders must respect the values of subgroups, and the values and experiences of new employees who make up these subgroups. At the same time, the entire campus community must work with leaders to help harmonize their core values with the foundational principles of community colleges. Clarifying the institution's mission, purpose, and values can accomplish this goal. In addition, the organization should develop a code of ethics that reflects the institution's ethical identity for all internal stakeholders. The college's code should infuse this content into its culture through integration with daily practices, reflected in a philosophical stance. Lastly, formal, and informal activities such as modeling behavior, collaborative collegewide facilitated conversations, budget development, strategic planning, employee orientations, professional development activities, and so forth, will help uphold the institution's ethical identity while providing employees with opportunities for acculturation.

By creating a culture of inquiry and evidence to foster student success, colleges confront their data and evaluate their policies and practices. Most all of the colleges that make strides in student success outcomes appear to have: a) effective processes for planning and budgeting, b)

processes aligned with the vision, priorities, and strategies of a student success agenda, and c) acknowledged the benefit of reallocating existing resources at the institution, such as money, personnel, time, and space (McClenney, 2013). ATD states that with student success at the core of strategic planning and driving budget development, these activities can “propel a college through a transformative process” (McClenney, 2013, p. 11).

This study investigated the relationship between PO fit and student success across faculty, staff, and administrators through the lens of value congruence and perceived fit to shape institutional culture and an ethical identity to enact a student success mindset.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the research design, methodology, and procedures for this study. I used insider action research to allow for fluidity in my methodology during the study. I have organized this chapter as follows: a) description of purpose statement, b) description of the research question, c) description of the guiding research perspective, d) details of the research design, data collection, and procedures of data analysis, and e) discussion of trustworthiness, credibility, and limitations.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this insider action research study of naturalistic inquiry was to identify the individual core values of faculty, staff, and administrators in a higher education organization, and the overall optimal values to foster a culture of student success. Further, it explored the role of ethical identity in fostering a culture of student success, and how PO fit influences a culture of student success. This study investigated PO fit—value congruence and perceived fit—of faculty, staff, and administrators at an Achieving the Dream (ATD) community college, and how value congruence and perceived fit shape its ethical identity and a culture of student success at their institution. To investigate this relationship, I operationalized the attraction-selection-attrition (ASA), institutional ethical identity, and student success driver frameworks.

Research Questions

I sought to answer the following research questions because of empirical and anecdotal evidence in the roles I have held at my institution that individuals who have values aligned with my institution's values—or perceive as much—are more supportive of student success

initiatives, and experience more student success, better job performance, improved job satisfaction, and reduced turnover. Therefore, I explored which values individuals in the institution prized most and which values they perceived to be optimal in fostering a culture of student success. I used person-organization (PO) fit, through the lens of value congruence and perceived fit, to explore and understand the influence of subjective, objective, and perceived fit on the ethical identity of the institution and its culture of student success. My central research questions follow:

1. Which individual core values are prized by faculty, staff, and administrators in a community college?
2. Which are the overall optimal values perceived to foster a culture of student success?
3. What role does an institution's ethical identity play in fostering a culture of student success?
4. How does value congruence between person and organization foster an institution's culture of student success?
5. How does perceived fit of faculty, staff, and administrators foster an institution's culture of student success?

Guiding Research and Perspective

My exploration into PO fit and student success, as well as related literature on culture and institutional ethical identity, suggested that a qualitative action research approach best suited my study. In addition to limited research on perceived fit (Kristof-Brown & Billsberry, 2013), there is also minimal qualitative research on the role of PO fit on student success. However, there is no

shortage of empirical studies that demonstrate the host of positive outcomes that result from interactions between faculty members and students, such as increased persistence and completion rates, better grades and standardized test scores, the development of leadership, critical thinking, sense of worth, career and graduate school aspiration, and self-confidence (Kezar & Maxey, 2014). Furthermore, the positive outcomes associated with frequent and high-quality interaction between faculty members and their students remain relevant across decades, even with the dramatic change of campus and student demographics (Kezar & Maxey, 2014). No other factor plays as strong a role for students of color and first-generation college students (Kezar & Maxey, 2014).

Kristoff-Brown and Billsberry (2016) proposed the usefulness of blending fit epistemologies to find new directions in the organizational fit literature, such as “taking an interpretivist approach to the thorny problem of how the various forms of PE fit (e.g., PJ, PO, PV, and PG) interweave in people’s minds” (p. 7). Kinzie and Kuh (2016) suggest “additional field-based research to discover the additional promising structures and strategies that actually work in different institutions’ settings to advance and sustain gains in educational quality and inclusive excellence” (p. 34) to mobilize higher education for student success. I have selected insider action research (Herr & Anderson, 2015) design in order to gain a rich understanding of the relationship between the PO fit of faculty, staff, and administrators, and a Mid-Atlantic community college to enact a student success mindset.

Action research has gained its greatest acceptance in applied fields such as education because of its advantages of ecological validity (Herr & Anderson, 2015). In other words, action research is a community-based approach in which the constructs and products of this study are

relevant to the institution (Herr & Anderson, 2015). This insider action research study will focus on the perceived fit—through the lens of value congruence—of faculty, staff, and administrators and the role it plays in shaping culture to enact a student success mindset at the institution. In addition, action research has gained a strong and successful foothold in education because researchers working inside the organization can leverage their work to support their professional development and implement organizational change (Herr & Anderson, 2015). The research site was selected because I have worked with the institution, engaged in student success work at the site, and because the institution is an ATD member school committed to creating a culture of evidence and inquiry to foster student success. The theoretical underpinnings of action research in education are grounded in John Dewey’s support for the roles that human experience and active learning play in the generation of new knowledge (Herr & Anderson, 2015). Chapter 4 will extend the knowledge of an interpretivist approach to PO fit through the lens of perceived fit and value congruence and the enactment of a student success mindset.

Insider action research methodology is advantageous for this study because of the legitimization of systematic qualitative approaches (Herr & Anderson, 2015), the improved likelihood of success associated with school-based problem-solving approaches (Herr & Anderson, 2015), the encouragement by Donald Schon for practitioners to tap into tacit professional knowledge (Herr & Anderson, 2015), and the acknowledgement that teachers are actors and researchers in a site (Herr & Anderson, 2015). Reason and Marshall (as cited in Herr & Anderson, 2015) posit that action research is “for me, for us, and for them” (p. 88). Action researchers are both researchers and actors who seek to address a local context and concern, and

are actively involved in the problem-solving process (Herr & Anderson, 2015). As such, the researcher writes with multiple audiences in mind.

According to Herr and Anderson (2015), insider action research requires a commitment to a “spiraling synergism” (p. 87) of action and understanding, as data-gathering and analysis continuously emerge in a fluid process of inquiry. In action research methodology, the action research spiral entails a spiral of self-reflective cycles comprised of an ongoing cycle of plan, act, observe, and reflect—including ongoing literature review and continuously revising the research plan according to emergent themes, ongoing actions, and observations (Herr & Anderson, 2015). Although described as a cycle, these stages often overlap and entail ongoing critical reflection (Herr & Anderson, 2015). The researcher must continuously make methodological decisions in the face of complexity throughout the study to allow the actual research to evolve and be shaped by the realities of the context (Herr & Anderson, 2015). Herr and Anderson (2015) recommend a rich description of the action research process through ongoing research memos (Emerson et al., 2011; Maxwell, 2013) or journaling to capture thinking, decisions, and actions. This process allows for revision of data sets after data gathering is concluded, using procedures common to qualitative inquiry such as data coding (Maxwell, 2013; Saldana, 2009; Weiss, 1994), and discourse and content analysis (Emerson et al., 2011; Maruyama & Ryan, 2014; Maxwell, 2013).

Research Design: Insider Action Research

According to Habermas (1971), there are three distinct knowledge interests for the action researcher pursuing the generation of new knowledge. Technical interest assumes a disinterested stance toward the topic under investigation and focuses on human desire to take over the natural

and social realm, taking on the form of causal explanation and instrumentation, and uses empirical/analytical science and instrumental reason (Herr & Anderson, 2015). Practical interest is more concerned with gaining understanding through interpretation, and uses hermeneutical/interpretive sciences (Herr & Anderson, 2015). Emancipatory interest positions the researcher to release human potential, and, investigate ideology and power within the organization and society, with the ultimate goal of emancipating participants from the compulsions of tradition, precedent, habit, coercion, or self-deception, and uses critical reflective/action sciences (Herr & Anderson, 2015). My insider action research sought to be a rich and descriptive narrative that blends positivist and interpretivist epistemologies, and the three knowledge interests mentioned above, to fill the gaps in qualitative research on PO fit and student success. It also attempted to present a comprehensive description of the phenomenon of enacting a student success mindset at a community college.

I conducted a qualitative insider action research study (Herr & Anderson, 2015) of naturalistic inquiry. My methodology was fluid and continued to develop and shift throughout the action research process as I gained a deeper understanding of the issues under study. In other words, this study was based on a constructivist paradigm (Maruyama & Ryan, 2014), as I collected data and conducted analysis simultaneously (Maxwell, 2013). Specifically, I was interested in examining a concern (PO fit and student success) in a local context (a Mid-Atlantic community college). Since I was interested in the relationship between PO fit and student success, I operationalized the ASA, Ethical Institutional Identity, and Student Success Driver frameworks.

Participants. To capture varying perspectives within faculty, staff, and administrators and maximize my sample size, I used various methods and a laddered approach to secure participants. I promoted the opportunity to participate in this study by inviting faculty, staff, and administrators from all divisions to participate in one or more of the following activities: an anonymous online survey, focus groups, and individual interviews. I announced the opportunity through targeted mass emails to faculty, staff, and administrators. I embedded a web link in the invitation asking individuals for their name and contact information, and to select the activities they would like to participate in. For convenience, I also included a link directly to the online anonymous survey in the email. Moreover, I provided additional opportunities to participate in the various research activities at the end of each focus group and interview. For example, I extended an opportunity to individuals who participated in a focus group to complete the survey and participate in an interview.

By inviting full-time and part-time faculty, staff, and administrators across various departments and disciplines to participate in the study, I captured varying perspectives between faculty, staff and administrators, between full-time and part-time employees, and between personnel from various divisions, departments and disciplines. By capturing diversity within each category of employee, I able to better understand the phenomenon of the relationship between PO fit and student success.

Instrumentation

I collected primary and secondary sources of data to develop a rich and robust understanding of participants' experiences. I collected primary data through an anonymous online cross-sectional survey, three focus groups, and one-on-one semi-structured interviews. I

was unable to find a qualitative instrument to address the central research question. For this reason, I developed the survey, focus group topics, and interview protocol after a thorough review of the PO fit and student success literature, and analysis of secondary data related to the organization. I conducted a content analysis by collecting secondary data through the public domain including the organization's mission, vision, and values statements, website, strategic plans, accreditation reports, press releases, and annual reports. By reviewing these data sources, I gained a deeper understanding of the espoused and enacted values of employees and the institution, and the current culture of student success.

Survey. To begin to understand the relationship between PO fit and student success, I began my study by conducting an online anonymous cross-sectional survey—closed and open-ended questions—for all employees interested in participating in the study. Participants were able to skip items in the online survey if they preferred not to provide a response, with the exception of general participant demographic questions. One goal of using the survey was to increase my sample size and increase the possibility of generating rich data. Another goal was to randomize participants as much as possible and to gain access to individuals I did not know or whom I would not personally approach for various reasons such as micropolitics and bias. In addition, the survey served as an initial contact with prospective participants for focus groups and interviews. The survey responses were used to generate data and descriptive statistics for my research, and to triangulate data collected through focus groups and interviews.

Focus Groups. I conducted three focus groups to collect more detailed information about personal and group feelings, perceptions, and opinions. Each focus group targeted a different employee group: a) faculty, b) staff, and c) administrators. In addition to directly inviting

prospective participants to participate in focus groups through email, I also provided individuals who completed the survey with an opportunity to participate in the focus groups. Focus groups were advantageous for this study because they increased the generation of rich data, especially in consideration of time constraints. The focus groups deepened my knowing and understanding of the culture of student success at the institution and the relationship between PO fit and student success. In addition, the focus groups added a human dimension through observation, whereby it enabled me to deepen my understanding of survey data simultaneously collected, and to verify and clarify survey responses and results among groups of individuals who did and did not participate in the survey or interview. Whereas I needed to be selective in the number of participants I interviewed due to time constraints, the focus groups allowed me to further explore how different individuals, and groups, thought and felt about PO fit and student success. Lastly, data collected from the focus groups and online survey informed decision-making for the remainder of the study and interview questions.

Semi-Structured Interviews. I conducted individual semi-structured interviews of faculty, staff, and administrators that lasted anywhere from 30 – 60 minutes to uncover rich descriptive data on the personal experiences of participants. I investigated my research topic by asking pre-determined flexible, open-ended questions and follow-up questions to probe even deeper into emergent domains and themes of interest. Prior to conducting the interviews, I reviewed institutional documents and data collected through the survey and focus groups to better understand context and inform clarifying interview questions. I designed interview questions to foster a better understanding of the relationship between PO fit and student success. I also used snowball sampling by asking interview participants for referrals for additional

prospective interview participants, and I asked focus group and survey participants to participate in an individual interview.

Documents. I reviewed official documents including strategic plans, annual reports, accreditation reports, board meeting minutes, and mission, vision, and values statements. In addition, I reviewed visual recordings of presidential speeches in YouTube and social media documents such as presidential blogs. By reviewing various documents, I better understood the espoused and enacted values of the organization and its members.

Data Collection and Analysis

I used convenience and snowball sampling to collect data through an anonymous online cross-sectional survey, focus groups, and semi-structured interviews. I sent targeted mass emails to faculty, staff, and administrators to invite their participation in my study. I included a web link in the email to collect participant names, contact info, and confirm the research activities in which they wished to participate. I followed up, individually, with prospective participants to provide focus group dates, to share the survey web link with deadline, and to schedule their participation in a focus group and interview accordingly.

To protect participant identities throughout data collection, I created pseudonyms for interview and focus group participants. Participants who chose to complete the online survey were able to do so anonymously. At survey completion, participants received my contact information and could separately email me their name if they also wished to participate in a focus group or interview. I invited all employees to participate in all research activities regardless of the division with which they identified to include academic affairs, student affairs, administrative and fiscal services, institutional advancement, and the office of the president

because everyone's work is directly or indirectly related to student success, and I wanted my sample to represent the entire range of variation (Maxwell, 2013).

As participants completed their surveys, I monitored and read responses, wrote notes and memos to describe the data, and began to develop tentative ideas about categories and relationships in my data to include preliminary coding, thematic analysis, and creating matrices (Maxwell, 2013). I continued to do this as I simultaneously conducted interviews and focus groups. As I reviewed data from multiple sources to include interviews and focus groups, I conducted open coding and developed organizational coding categories (Maxwell, 2013). For example, I initially organized my survey data by looking for patterns between different categories of employees and similarities or differences in their responses. I also looked for similarities in responses across all participants.

As I observed similarities in participants' responses, I began grouping similar responses together in a table (Anfara et al., 2002) and carefully documented how the responses were similar. In my initial iteration, I began by grouping responses together based on the values that participants directly mentioned or indirectly described relying on to conduct their daily work or the work of others in the context of student success. These values became initial codes. In my next iteration of analysis, I further grouped the context of participants' comments and statements around the coded values. Various subthemes emerged around how participants expressed and relied upon their individual core values, the institution's espoused and practiced values, and optimal values to foster a culture of student success. As themes emerged with each iteration, I observed that the subthemes fell into four larger categories: relationships, structure, process, and

norms. Further, I observed through deeper analysis of the comments and statements, that these four major themes comprised one overarching theme: Employee success leads to student success.

Due to my positionality as an insider, I expected employees with different functions in the college to respond in certain ways. I also suspected there would be similar patterns in responses for different categories of employees. Throughout the study, I remained open to what emerged from the data, and I continued to review and refer to survey, focus group, and interview data as I drew connections during all data collection analysis. I conducted the survey, focus groups, and interviews in November and December of 2019.

I conducted separate focus groups for administrators, faculty, and staff. Because of my insider knowledge, I felt it was critical to separate participants by their role because individuals might be more candid in their responses and provide much more detailed and rich descriptive data if only surrounded by similar peers. Focus groups were advantageous because the interaction among participants led to more and different types of information than individual or group interviews (Kitzinger & Barbour, 1999).

I strived for each focus group to have six to 12 participants to ensure sufficient engagement and to keep conversations manageable (Stewart et al., 2007). I audio recorded and transcribed all focus group activity, so that I could listen to the recordings following the focus group activities and to make observational notes. A note taker accompanied me to capture data that could be missed by the audio recording, such as body language. In addition to writing memos after each focus group activity, I wrote memos throughout the study to stimulate analysis of narrative structure and contextual relationships. In addition, I continued to code collected data into organizational categories and developed substantive and theoretical categories. I developed a

codebook, and conducted data triangulation between data sources, questions, constructs, employee roles, and the institution's divisions (Mathison, 1998; Maxwell, 2013).

I gained even richer descriptive data by conducting semi-structured interviews, which allowed me to ask follow up and clarifying questions related to emergent themes. I conducted semi-structured interviews at the preferred location identified by participants to the best of my ability. All interviews were audio recorded and I took notes during the interviews. In addition, I sent audio recordings to a third-party service for transcription. Following each interview, I wrote a memo and made observational notes. To deepen my understanding of the data, I listened to the audio recordings following the interviews, and I read and analyzed the interview transcripts to code the data, identify themes, and draw connections between all participant data to begin developing a concept map and continue triangulation.

Researcher Positionality

As an administrator in a community college, I am keenly aware of the challenges facing higher education institutions, especially at community colleges, concerning student success—most especially for underserved and underrepresented students. As an emerging senior-level community college administrator, I have engaged in conversations regarding student success and equity and inclusion at my institution. I am deeply committed to improving student outcomes—most especially the success of marginalized students. I wanted to more deeply explore the relationship between PO fit and student success outcomes because of my desire for increased numbers of diverse student groups to participate in high quality educational experiences, and for those students to earn high-quality credentials in the form of degrees, certifications, and certificates (Kinzie & Kuh, 2016).

Because of my leadership role with the institution where I conducted my study, I knew that participants might feel pressured to participate in my study or might choose to provide responses that they believed I wanted to hear. I was also aware that participants might choose not to participate in any of the research activities, or if they did, they might not provide genuine responses to my questions out of fear of retaliation, damage to our relationship, damage to their reputation, or other harm to their reputation or career. In addition to a mindful informed consent, throughout my study, I committed to examining my position of power and its potential influence on my data collection through iterative cycles of reflection and memos. For example, while the online survey was indeed anonymous, I was aware that some participants did not trust that the survey responses were anonymous. This fear could have lead participants to not participate, or if they did participate, to skip questions or provide disingenuous responses. This could be even more so the case with focus group and interview participants due to the lack of anonymity.

I was aware that this would be especially true for participants whom I have supervised and those that perceived that I had an evaluative role over them. I included a statement in my informed consent and verbally reassured participants throughout the research activities that this study was voluntary, and that their participation, lack of participation, withdrawal from the study, or responses during focus group and interview activities would not result in adverse effects to them. I also reaffirmed that they could participate or not participate without penalty and with no impact to the relationship that they had with me as the researcher.

Trustworthiness and Credibility

I chose to conduct insider action research at this site because the institution is actively engaged in student success work as a member of the ATD network. I also selected this site

because of convenience. Because of my intimate work with the institution, I had tacit knowledge about the people, organization, and processes (Maxwell, 2013) which would have been difficult to obtain under any other circumstance. In addition, Weiss (1994) promotes the value of convenience samples when access to a group of people would otherwise be difficult to gain access to. The objective of qualitative research is to better understand participants' social worlds and experiences from their perspectives (Maruyama & Ryan, 2014). As the researcher, I was the primary data collection instrument. I took steps to enhance trustworthiness and credibility by triangulating the data (Maxwell, 2013) between multiple data sources and various participant perspectives. I also engaged in critical reflection by writing memos and journaling throughout the data collection process to actively participate in iterative cycles of plan-act-observe-reflect (Herr & Anderson, 2015). To address my own subjectivity as an insider in my action research, I routinely participated in validation meetings to make meaning of the data (Herr & Anderson, 2015). Lastly, I utilized member-checking throughout the data collection process to ensure accuracy of the interpretation of the data (Herr & Anderson, 2015).

Limitations

“Action research is fundamentally about questioning the status quo and working toward change” (Herr & Anderson, 2015, p. 151). The action researcher assumes risks and has limited power in how the research unfolds, therefore, the researcher will experience a rollercoaster of emotions and persistent pressure (Herr & Anderson, 2015). Moreover, dynamic conservatism will constantly pull insider action researchers back to the status quo consisting of norms, rules, and values. The researcher must be prepared for pushback from unexpected directions and for the institution's dynamic conservatism to respond in a defensive, self-protective manner (Herr &

Anderson, 2015). In addition, insider action research leads the researcher into ethical quandaries that are impossible to anticipate (Herr & Anderson, 2015). As Herr and Anderson (2015) recommend, I was committed to documenting and addressing ethical conundrums as they arose, and, thus, demonstrated my ethical foundation through my research practices.

The nature of qualitative research implies limitations in that the researcher is the primary instrument for decision-making of which data to include or exclude and the interpretation of the data which leads to researcher bias (Maxwell, 2013). Herr and Anderson (2015) state that action researchers must continuously exercise professional judgement. They further assert that only the integrity of the researcher can minimize researcher bias. For this reason, I committed to reflexivity (Maxwell, 2013) and the research spiral (Herr & Anderson, 2015). Moreover, because I conducted insider action research and was susceptible to critical subjectivity, I routinely held validation meetings with critical peers and colleagues to help me more thoroughly understand the data, in addition to member-checking to ensure accuracy of my interpretation of the data (Herr & Anderson, 2015).

It is important to note that I invited all faculty, staff, and administrators of a Mid-Atlantic community college to participate in the study, and I conducted interviews and focus groups with every participant who expressed interest. Therefore, I did not deliberately exclude any participants who desired to participate. To capture various perspectives of a wide range of participants that would not have been possible through interviews and focus groups alone, I also conducted an online anonymous survey. While nearly 300 individuals participated in the survey, it is possible to not have captured all the perspectives present at the institution. In addition, some participants might have perceived the survey content as sensitive. Therefore, I informed survey

participants that they could choose to skip questions. As a result, I might not have captured all perspectives in the data. Further, this study occurred at one Mid-Atlantic community college and the findings are not generalizable. Despite the limitations, this study sheds new insight on PO fit and it draws new connections between PO fit and student success.

Summary

This chapter described the methodological choices for this study. This study employed insider action research and qualitative analysis to describe the relationship between PO fit, institutional culture, ethical identity, and student success. The population included faculty, staff, and administrators at an ATD community college in a Mid-Atlantic state. I obtained data through an online anonymous survey, focus groups, personal interviews, observations of YouTube videos, and document analysis. I coded and analyzed data in aggregate, when possible, to protect the anonymity of the participants. I took additional steps to protect the identity of the participants by using pseudonyms for focus group and interview participants, and the institution.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to identify the individual core values prized most by faculty, staff, and administrators in a higher education organization, identify the overall optimal values to foster a culture of student success, and to explore the connection between ethical identity, value congruence, and perceived fit in fostering a culture of student success. I assessed fit through person-organization (PO) fit, as opposed to other types of fit—such as person-job (PJ), person-vocation (PV), and person-group (PG), by using value-congruence and perceived fit. Further, I explored how the ethical identity of an institution fosters its culture of student success.

Higher education institutions do not account for fit (Perlmutter, 2018) in their recruitment and selection practices. Instead, they take discipline expertise, credentials, and publications into account when hiring faculty, staff, and administrators. In the community college setting, the failure to take fit into account can inhibit an organization's ability to achieve student success and organizational goals in accordance with the completion agenda (McClenney, 2013), which has shifted the community colleges' focus from college access to college completion.

Numerous researchers have documented the myriad issues students face outside the classroom that hinder their ability to be successful. The shift in focus from access to completion reinforces that it is no longer acceptable for institutions to enroll students without consideration of their success after they arrive on campus. Moreover, community colleges must increasingly address, directly and indirectly, the various social issues facing students (Roscorla, 2016) along the completion trajectory. The failure of higher education institutions to address PO fit in their hiring practices could impede student and institutional success.

Community colleges will continue to operate in an increasingly competitive environment with human capital, contestably, its most important asset. According to Edwards (1991), the job performance of employees determines an organization's performance. Likewise, PO fit can be a reasonable predictor of organizational performance because of significant relationships between PO fit and attitudinal and behavioral outcome variables like job satisfaction, organizational commitment, organizational citizenship behaviors, individual performance, and reduced employee turnover (Hoffman & Woehr, 2006). This chapter describes the findings of faculty, staff, and administrators at a Mid-Atlantic community college. This qualitative study included an online anonymous cross-sectional survey of 298 participants, three focus groups with 24 participants, individual interviews with 39 participants, and document analysis. Participants represented faculty, staff, and administrators across every division of the college. The central research questions addressed in the findings are as follows:

1. Which individual core values are prized by faculty, staff, and administrators in a community college?
2. Which are the overall optimal values perceived to foster a culture of student success?
3. What role does an institution's ethical identity play in fostering a culture of student success?
4. How does value congruence between person and organization foster an institution's culture of student success?
5. How does perceived fit between person and organization foster an institution's culture of student success?

As indicated in Chapter 3, various subthemes evolved into four larger themes, which fell into an overarching single theme, through a process of deep thematic analysis utilizing iteration tables (Anfara et al., 2002). Thematic analysis revealed the individual core values most prized by faculty, staff, and administrators at the institution, and the overall optimal values perceived to foster a culture of student success. These themes also described how the institution's ethical identity and the PO fit of individuals at the institution fostered the institution's culture of student success. Further, as I engaged the data and worked through the process of coding responses from open ended interview, focus group, and survey questions, and writing researcher memos, the overarching central theme emerged across the three theoretical and conceptual frameworks: a) attraction-selection-attrition, b) institutional ethical identity, and c) student success driver diagram, and the central theme emerged across the different employee roles: a) faculty, b) staff, and c) administrators. The overarching central theme was that employee success leads to student success.

This chapter is organized in three sections. Section one begins with a summary of the demographics of the participants and the institution. It is followed by a description of the four major themes that evolved: a) relationships, b) structure, c) process, and d) norms, which encapsulate the values of the institution, the institution's ethical identity, and its culture of student success. Section three is a discussion and analysis of the findings related to my five central research questions.

Participant and Institutional Profile Summaries

Research participants in the survey, focus groups, and interviews were full-time and part-time faculty, full-time and part-time staff, and administrators—annually contracted employees in

leadership positions appointed by the president. The participants represented every division of the institution to include academic affairs, student affairs, administrative and fiscal services, institutional advancement and community engagement, and the office of the president. In addition, the length of service of participants at the institution ranged from less than four years to more than 21 years.

Survey. I conducted an online anonymous cross-sectional survey—closed and open-ended questions—in which 298 employees participated. Faculty and staff participation in the survey was level with slightly more than 42% of survey participants selecting faculty as their primary role at the college. Nearly 46% of survey participants selected staff as their primary role at the College. A little more than 10% of survey participants selected administrator as their primary role at the college, while just 1% of participants selected other or chose not to disclose their primary role at the institution.

Survey participants represented academic affairs (45.64%), student affairs (19.46%), administrative and fiscal services (9.06%), and institutional advancement and community engagement (3.69%). The remaining 22.15% of survey participants selected other or chose not to disclose their division. Table 1 shows survey participants’ employee role and division.

Table 1
Survey Participants’ Employee Role and Division

	Academic Affairs		Student Affairs		Administrative and Fiscal Services		Institutional Advancement and Community Engagement		Other		Prefer not to disclose		Total	
	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n
Faculty	55.56%	70	14.29%	18	0.79%	1	0.79%	1	25.40%	32	3.17%	4	42.28%	126
Administrator	43.75%	14	28.13%	9	3.13%	1	9.38%	3	12.50%	4	3.13%	1	10.74%	32
Staff	37.96%	52	21.90%	30	18.25%	25	5.11%	7	13.87%	19	2.92%	4	45.97%	137
Prefer not to disclose	0.00%	0	33.33%	1	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	66.67%	2	1.01%	3
Total	45.64%	136	19.46%	58	9.06%	27	3.69%	11	18.46%	55	3.69%	11	100.00%	298

In addition, the length of service of survey respondents ranged from less than four years of service to more than 21 years with 17.11% of survey participants having worked at the institution for four years or less. A quarter of survey participants have worked at the institution between five and 10 years. Another quarter of survey participants have worked at the institution between 11 and 15 years. Narrowly more than 18% of survey participants have worked at the institution between 16 and 20 years, while 14.09% of survey participants have worked at the institution for more than 20 years. Table 2 shows survey participants' employee role and length of service.

Table 2

Survey Participants' Employee Role and Length of Service

	4 years or less		5 - 10 years		11 - 15 years		16 - 20 years		21+ years		Total	
	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n
Faculty	11.11%	14	28.57%	36	23.81%	30	24.60%	31	11.90%	15	42.28%	126
Administrator	9.38%	3	9.38%	3	37.50%	12	25.00%	8	18.75%	6	10.74%	32
Staff	23.36%	32	26.28%	36	24.09%	33	10.95%	15	15.33%	21	45.97%	137
Prefer not to disclose	66.67%	2	33.33%	1	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	1.01%	3
Total	17.11%	51	25.50%	76	25.17%	75	18.12%	54	14.09%	42	100.00%	298

Focus Groups. I conducted three focus groups, whereby each focus group corresponded to a predetermined employee role. Twenty-four faculty, staff, and administrators participated in the focus groups according to their primary role at the institution. Of the focus group participants nearly a third were male (n=7) and two-thirds were female (n=17). Most focus group participants (75%) worked in the academic affairs division, followed by student affairs (16.67%), and

institutional advancement and community engagement (4.17%), and other/prefer not to disclose (4.17%). Table 3 shows focus group participants' employee role and division.

Table 3

Focus Group Participants' Employee Role and Division

	Academic Affairs		Student Affairs		Institutional Advancement and Community Engagement		Administrative and Fiscal Services		Other (Prefer not to disclose)		Total	
	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n
Faculty	80.00%	8	20.00%	2	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	41.67%	10
Administrator	60.00%	3	20.00%	1	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	20.00%	1	20.83%	5
Staff	77.78%	7	11.11%	1	11.11%	1	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	37.50%	9
Total	75.00%	18	16.67%	4	4.17%	1	0.00%	0	4.17%	1	100.00%	24

Concerning race and ethnicity, most participants (75%) identified as white or Caucasian, followed by 16.67% of participants who identified as black or African-American, and 8.33% of participants who identified as Asian or Asian-American. Regarding length of service, nearly 21% of focus group participants have worked at the institution for four years or less. Similarly, 21% of participants have worked at the institution between five and 10 years. Just over 37% of participants have worked at the institution between 11 and 15 years, while just over 16% of participants have worked at the institution between 15 and 20 years, and only 4% of participants have worked at the institution for more than 21 years. Table 4 shows focus group participant's employee role and Length of Service.

Table 4

Focus Group Participants' Employee Role and Length of Service

	4 years or less		5 - 10 Years		11 - 15 Years		16 - 20 Years		21+ Years		Total	
	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n
Faculty	20.00%	2	30.00%	3	30.00%	3	10.00%	1	10.00%	1	41.67%	10
Administrator	40.00%	2	0.00%	0	40.00%	2	20.00%	1	0.00%	0	20.83%	5
Staff	11.11%	1	22.22%	2	44.44%	4	22.22%	2	0.00%	0	37.50%	9
Total	20.83%	5	20.83%	5	37.50%	9	16.67%	4	4.17%	1	100.00%	24

Interviews. I conducted 39 individual interviews of which nearly 72% were female and 28.21% were male. More than half of interview participants (58.97%) identified as white or Caucasian, followed by participants who identified as black or African-American (25.64%), Asian or Asian-American (7.69%), Hispanic or Latino (5.13%), and American Indian or Alaskan Native (2.56%). Interview participants represented every division at the institution with most participants representing academic affairs (66.67%), distantly followed by student affairs (15.38%), institutional advancement and community engagement (5.13%), administrative and fiscal services (5.13%), and other/prefer not to disclose (7.69%). Table 5 shows interview participants' employee role and division.

Table 5

Interview Participants' Employee Role and Division

	Academic Affairs		Student Affairs		Institutional Advancement and Community Engagement		Administrative and Fiscal Services		Other (Prefer not to disclose)		Total	
	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n
Faculty	80.00%	12	20.00%	3	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	38.46%	15
Staff	73.33%	11	6.67%	1	13.33%	2	0.00%	0	6.67%	1	38.46%	15
Administrator	33.33%	3	22.22%	2	0.00%	0	22.22%	2	22.22%	2	23.08%	9
Total	66.67%	26	15.38%	6	5.13%	2	5.13%	2	7.69%	3	100.00%	39

In addition, interview participants' length of service ranged from four years or less to more than 21 years. Participants with four years or less of service accounted for 20.51% of total interview participants. Participants with between five and 11 years and 12 and 15 years were level with each group accounting for 30.77% of interview participants. Fewer participants had worked at the institution between 16 and 20 years (7.69%) and for more than 20 years (10.26%).

Table 6 shows interview participants' employee role and length of service.

Table 6

Interview Participant's Employee Role and Length of Service

	4 years or less		5 - 10 years		11 - 15 years		16 - 20 years		21+ years		Total	
	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n
Faculty	13.33%	2	26.67%	4	40.00%	6	6.67%	1	13.33%	2	38.46%	15
Staff	26.67%	4	33.33%	5	20.00%	3	13.33%	2	6.67%	1	38.46%	15
Administrator	22.22%	2	33.33%	3	33.33%	3	0.00%	0	11.11%	1	23.08%	9
Total	20.51%	8	30.77%	12	30.77%	12	7.69%	3	10.26%	4	100.00%	39

Mid-Atlantic Region Community College. To protect the identities of participants, their state, and their institution, I have given participants pseudonyms and given the institution the pseudonym TBCC. TBCC is a large accredited ATD institution with multiple campuses in a suburban setting. The institution serves more than 20,000 full-and part-time enrollments with over 20% Pell enrollments (Achieving the Dream, 2019). It is important to note the contextual environment of the college at the time this research was conducted. Most employees of the college belong to either the full-time faculty union, the part-time faculty union, or the bargaining staff union. A much smaller percentage of staff do not have union representation. One year prior to conducting this study, the college physically consolidated their administrative operations across all divisions to a central building off campus. In addition, the college underwent an

academic restructure five years prior to this study and has continued to adjust college operations as deemed appropriate. Also of note, during this study, the college was involved in a lawsuit with faculty related to professorial wages.

As stated in chapter 3, I selected the participating institution because of convenience and its ATD membership status. Individual participants at TBCC were selected through convenience and snowball sampling by mass emailing an invitation to all employees to participate in each of the research activities and requesting referrals for additional participants at the end of each activity. There was no regard for participants' demographics, backgrounds, or expertise. Participants had varying levels of direct and indirect experience with faculty, staff, administrators, and students. While it is known that several participants engaged in a focus group and interview, it is unknown how many participants chose to engage in any combination of the anonymous survey, interview, and focus group.

Relationships

Relationships evolved as one of four themes in the connection between PO fit and student success. Participants equally expressed the importance of developing caring relationships with students and each other as a component of success for themselves and for students.

Genuine and caring relationships between employees and students. Participants' values, such as commitment, creativity, enthusiasm, encouragement, willingness, empathy, and sincerity, tended to drive their motivation and actions in developing relationships with students. Participants often spoke about the importance of developing genuine and caring relationships with students. Further, while participants, had varying definitions of student success, they acknowledged deep and meaningful relationships with students as a critical ingredient to

positively impact students' lives. Participants often referred to their relationships with students in familial ways.

Lola, a staff member, reflected on trust as one of her values and described student success by sharing how she developed trust with students to build relationships. She also distinguished genuine caring relationships with students from superficial relationships with students when individuals are simply looking for a paycheck. She said,

I think it was directly related to their trust in me because they knew that I was there for them. That they could count on me. That they could talk to me and that they really had someone to lean on. I think when you're working with youth, that's a real game changer. If they know that they have someone that they can count on, [who] is going to coach them and push them along. Because they're having all kinds of other issues that they're dealing with, whether it's financial, personal, academic. And, if they know that they can come to someone and that person's going to help them, just get things organized, if they need it, like, 'okay, these are the steps you need to take. I'm here for you. I care for you deeply.' Because, I really cared about my students. [It] felt like they were my kids.... If you're being fake or if you don't want to be there, they immediately know that. And, so, they're not going to visit you. They're not going to come to your meetings. And it's important to have that kind of deeper sense of why are you coming into work every day. If it's just for a paycheck, then that's not going to create student success.

When I asked Trevor, an administrator, to provide an example of a time when he had positively impacted a student's life, he described developing a deep and father-figure like

relationship with a student over several years that has continued even after the student graduated from TBCC. He said,

The first student that pops up in my mind is the young lady I worked with when I was a counselor...for years and years and years.... Some of our students have challenges. They stick around for a while.... So, Essence came, a friend recommended her to me, and we just kept working together for so long. It was almost like a father figure relationship, which is interesting. I mean, you hear people refer to students as their kids. That was one of those situations where it kind of felt like that.... I helped her with advising. But, also outside of advising in terms of...getting to engage with her and know her from a personal standpoint. Helping her through her struggles with math courses and getting that support and tutoring for the course. Helping her with her transition from TBCC to university...walking...side by side along their journey... she was one of the students that I probably had the first opportunity to develop a longstanding relationship with. So much so, that...she's come back to see me. She's gone on to get her master's degree. So...to be a part of that, on the ride with her, was great. I don't even know what I did, you know what I'm saying? But it was just being there, being present. I don't know if it was any one thing I did that made it better other than just being there and being a support.

Belongingness of students through a welcoming and supportive environment. In addition, participants felt that by faculty and staff creating a welcoming environment for students, it helped to generate a sense of belongingness at the institution, which helped to foster genuine relationships with students. Reebee, a staff member, described all the small ways in

which faculty, staff, and administrators could connect with students to generate a sense of belonging and how belongingness influenced student retention. She said,

Starting conversations with students. Getting to know them. Go where they are and talk to them. Sitting next to them when we're in these events and things on campus. Chit chat with them. Ask them questions. That kind of thing. I think that's another way of helping the students feel connected with the college, which I know is a major factor that will influence whether or not students stay. Whether they come back is whether they feel the sense of belonging.

Luciano, a staff member, discussed the role of faculty and staff on student success in distinct ways and introduced another theme that evolved, norms, going beyond the job description. He described faculty's deeper responsibility beyond teaching subject matter, to stimulate and motivate students, and to care for them outside of the classroom. When describing staff's role in the background, he further described the importance of developing a welcoming environment and the impact it makes on employee and student success. This points to the overarching theme, employee success leads to student success, in that employee and student success depend on the same needs, such as relationships. He said,

Faculty are really, really the key. They're the start of everything. They're the nexus of the knowledge, the motivation for learning, and the foundation of the desire of a student to learn.... If they are not really good, a coach can't overcome that. The...faculty member is not only there to impart the knowledge, but...is there to stimulate the student's desire to receive the knowledge and to motivate that student to open up and be able to receive it. The faculty play a very prominent all-important role.

He continued by describing how faculty positively impact students' lives in and out of the classroom by providing quality instruction and quality care for students as individuals. He said,

I know of faculty who care about their students enough that they will do a good job in the classroom and they will talk to the students outside the classroom. It...is reinforced all the time by the quality of not only the instruction, the quality of knowledge that our faculty have...but also the quality of their caring for the individual student. I see evidence of that all the time.

He then transitioned to talk about staff's role in student success. Interestingly, when he began to talk about a warm and welcoming environment, he subtly switched from talking about how students feel to how we feel. He said,

Staff are very important...in the background for the most part.... I've seen it at all institutions I've been at, you know, the receptionist in the dean's office can really be a warm, welcoming, encouraging person to students who come in to see the dean or the chair. And if the office feels like a kind place, that student has a better shot at feeling good about their educational experience. And that is important. How we feel is our first motivation to receive. If we're predisposed by our positive feelings to receive an education by the environment that is created by the staff, that's a good step toward a positive educational experience. And I see that, I see that all the time at this college.

Fabi described her desire to connect and engage with students by sharing how her values of welcoming and compassion, in her work and personal life, influenced her work with students, not just as an instructional faculty, but as a human being. She stated,

I would say the welcoming and the compassion go together in that, on a daily basis, this is how I conduct myself when I'm either in the classroom or having one-on-one conversations with students where I want to be able to offer a welcoming environment. So even when the students come to my office, I'll say to them, ... 'Welcome' as soon as they walk in. 'I'm so glad you're here. Yeah, come on in.' I want them to feel like this is a place where they can come and receive support. They can get their questions answered, they can share with me anything that they feel is appropriate to share. It's how I conduct myself as a human being. But you know, as a teacher, as someone who wants to connect and engage with students, I want to provide a welcoming environment.

The most common ways in which participants reported developing caring relationships with students was through mentorship—official or unofficial, inspiration through expressions of empathy by sharing personal stories of challenges and triumphs, going beyond the perceived scope of their job descriptions, and spending copious amounts of time with students beyond what some might perceive to be reasonable. Bellamy, an administrator, stated that employees at every level can play a role in student success. He described mentor relationships that developed between administrative aides and students. He stated,

Everybody who interacts with a student in their time with the college potentially has a role as to success. I have seen administrative assistants play a huge role helping students get what they need from us...people who took on a type of mentoring role with students...who looked up to the them...who've developed relationships with these students over time and helping to provide guidance and direction.... That's at the level of an administrative aid.... Those are people who deal with students firsthand.... Everybody

here makes a difference to the organization so that everyone potentially has an impact on students and their success.

Reebee, a staff member, reaffirmed that everyone plays a role in student success. She talked about student success by describing her experience getting to know a student on a plane ride. She gave him a pep talk by sharing her own college experience. Her comments also overlapped with the theme of norms, in that she expressed going beyond her job description. She said,

You get to know them in that way and talk to them about their endeavors and their experiences.... I had the chance to share with a student on the last study abroad trip and give him a pep talk as he was about to transfer to a four-year school, about my experiences getting ready for college. Little things like that aren't really a part of my job, but still as an agent of the college, I feel like that's part of student success. I think we all play a role in that. Even if it's not in our job description.

Peter, an instructional faculty, reflected on his steadfast commitment to encouraging and supporting students by describing a deep and long-term relationship he developed with a student whose life he positively impacted. He invested a lot of time in the student. While he admitted that he did not think the student's goals were realistic in the moment, he shared he never once discouraged the student. In the end, the student far exceeded Peter's expectations. Peter shared,

I have one student specifically.... he always wanted to go into the finance field.... He started off at the college, took several classes, wasn't doing well, and then he took my first class and something about the information that we did just ignited him.... We had been working on a lot of things outside the classroom as well. He wanted to get into

[prestigious universities]. I, personally, didn't think that those schools would have accepted him based on what he had going on. I never verbalized that to him though. Because, you have to encourage people.... I definitely encouraged him to apply. To write strong essays.... Surprisingly, he was accepted to [two prestigious universities]. And those were two of the top schools that he was definitely interested in.... That right there sent him a huge boost in confidence in knowing that he can do it. He's doing very well right now at [his university] and I think it is working extremely well for him because he's a first-generation college student.

Peter further reflected on his experience with supporting the student to achieve his goal, in spite of his doubts about the student's ability to do so, and how it reaffirmed the power of encouraging students. He said,

I can't tell you how that experience today is still one of those things. I'm very grateful that I did not discourage him.... Clearly the goal that he had was realistic for him, but, in my perception, it was not...he was so hung up on these schools that I was fearful that if he was rejected, all hell would break loose. That's where my concern for him came in, but I didn't voice it that way. So, one of the things in my perspective, since I knew that this was one of the goals that he really, really wanted, was honing in on that college essay, right? I spent a lot of emphasis that, 'You really need to emphasize why you weren't doing well when you started off in TBCC and what was happening. What caused you to turn yourself around?' And I wrote a letter of recommendation for him as well. And I will say today, the letter of recommendation that I wrote has been the strongest

recommendation I've ever written for any student just because I saw the drive and the passion and the determination to get there. It reminded me that you never put someone down based on what their visions are. You are supportive of them. And if he never got into those schools, I would've been there to support him in the next steps.... But it was a very opening experience to see. I didn't think it was realistic. He thought it was, and he did what he needed to do to make it a reality. So even to this date, I just reflect back ... thank goodness I never said, 'Hey, that's not going to happen.'

Peter still communicates weekly with this student even though the student has since transferred from TBCC to a four-year university. Peter's rich narrative reinforces Luciano's comments that faculty positively impact students' lives in and out of the classroom with quality care and instruction.

Genuine and caring employee relationships between faculty, staff, and administrators. Participants values of respect, autonomy, positivity, support, flexibility, compassion, and trust tended to drive faculty, staff, and administrators' relationships with their peers. Similar to participants' perspectives on the importance of genuine and caring relationships between employees and students, participants equally spoke about the importance of developing genuine and caring relationships with each other. Participants drew explicit connections between their care for each other and their care for students. Jackie, a faculty member, equated her warm and welcoming experiences with a custodian to her warm and welcoming experiences with students to reduce barriers. She said,

I remember when I fractured my tibia plateau and I was in a wheelchair. The custodian here who doesn't speak any English seemed to know when I was coming through the

doors and opened the doors for me every day during the day. He's just an amazing person. And, so, I mean, it's kind of like, his opening the doors for me was just like my turning to open the doors for students or any faculty opening up doors. And I see it all the time.

Amani, a staff member, focused on environments of care for everyone when describing faculty's role in student success. She also discussed tension in the institution. She said, "Have we created environments of care for people? You don't have to be a pushover to show that you care. And I think oftentimes that's where people don't understand." To describe how faculty positively impact student's lives, she talked about her admiration of a faculty member she developed a genuine and caring relationship with because of their shared vision for supporting students. She said,

We have ... so many faculty that advise student organizations, and I'm going to speak on one person, specifically, because I really have grown to admire her.... She's an advisor for two clubs.... And when I tell you, I think she's just so kind...and just gentle, and you can tell she has a genuine love for students. She...said, 'can I schedule a meeting with you?' I'm like, 'Oh boy, what's wrong? Something's going on'. ... I was very open and receptive. She said, 'I don't want anything. I just want to come and sit and talk because you're new. The students are talking about you...and I just wanted to see who you were. I just wanted to say thank you because you share the vision that I have as we support our students.' So, when I say she's just so engaged. Students strategically take her class. Like, I've heard them talking as they were planning their class schedule. It's those kind of teachers, you know? She's just such a joy to work with. She supports students in their

crazy ideas. And, then, for [the students] to sit around and strategize, looking at when she was available to teach a class, and building their schedule around her. That says a lot.

Further, participants described a symbiotic relationship between their success and student success. When I asked Minh, a staff member, how she fit in with the college, she described an alignment between her success and her students' success because of the college's orientation to growth. She responded,

The college is a space that is open to a lot of growth and I think that's where I am in my life. There is an alignment between figuring out ways to help our students be successful. I'm completely invested in that. I'm invested in that as much as I'm invested in the success of myself and my family. Because of the benefits that the college offers, I've been able to send my children here for preschool. My husband completed a degree here in nursing. I am completing a degree next week. As much as I've been able to pour into myself, I've been able to pour into our students.... All of our students have goals and some of them are rooted in career success. For some it's about being an example to their family. Whatever their goals are. I try to tailor what I share with them based off of them being successful for their goals. And that's rooted in the same ambition I have for myself and being successful.

Enrique, an administrator, described his role in student success as getting resources, overseeing programs, and being customer-focused, a tone set at the top by the president. This pointed to the theme of structure, what the president says and does, matters. He then drew a connection between student success and employee success in that both groups have similar

needs. This idea supports the overarching theme that employee success leads to student success.

He said,

It's getting resources. It's overseeing programs. It's also. Do you know how some local governments, not this one, when you talk to them on the phone, they're not nice? They're not customer-focused. Then you talk to other organizations or jurisdictions and they are very friendly. That starts at the top. I think to the degree that I'm building a strong customer-focused community, and that I'm sending the signal, as [our president] sends us all signals, that we ought to be focused on student success to that degree. Then, students feel that in their contact with my unit. Some of that doesn't really have to do with student success, but employee's success in a way. How do we treat each other as employees? That shows when staff answer the phone or interact with the student. It shows the way we treat people in the community, the students will be treated. So, I think treating people well... when leaders treat people well, it shows in their interactions with the community. And I aspire to that.

Belongingness of faculty, staff, and administrators through welcoming and supportive environments. While some participants did not explicitly connect peer relationships to their individual success or student success, participants' descriptions of perceived fit or belongingness at the institution centered around relationships with their peers, and similar to employee relationships with students, their descriptions included mentorship. Bethany, a counseling faculty, attributed her fit with the organization to a welcoming and supportive environment, mentorship, and feeling like she was part of a team. She said,

I think I fit in pretty well. I feel very comfortable here. I have experienced a pretty welcoming environment here at [this] campus. I really can't think of any negative experience I've had. I feel very fortunate that I work for a department that... a lot of us are in sync. We get along. Everybody works hard. We support each other. I feel like we're team players and that's really important to me to be part of a team. I feel very fortunate that we have a great chair, that we have a great dean.... I learned a lot from my mentor and...I still rely on her. She was 100% positive. And you know, it didn't matter if she was busy. She would always help you.... I felt very, very supported.

Similarly, Tobias, an administrator, echoed a warm and supportive environment when describing his fit with the institution and why he chose to work at the college. Like Bethany, he highlighted peer mentorship as a contributing factor to the welcoming and supportive environment. He said,

I feel like I have fit in very well. That is a strength here. And that's something that I knew kind of from the get go. I had a close established mentor before I even started at the college. I had had three interactions with some people in the department and the Dean before I started. I feel that the onboarding process was really good. [The chair was] super supportive when I came in and has been supportive all the way through. I have to say, I've not had a lot of bosses...but I feel that everyone that I have worked for has been really supportive here.

Effective relationships over process for employee and student success. As a result of participants' perceived fit and sense of belonging, participants framed their success and student success around their effectiveness of relationships when they described the college's tendency

for relationships over process to accomplish their tasks and goals. Minh, a staff member, described how she secured available resources for students, that otherwise would remain unknown, by asking the right people. “Sometimes students ask for things that we don't outwardly say are available to them, but, it is available if you ask the right person or if you go at the right time,” she stated. Peter, an instructional faculty, also framed relationships around effectiveness when describing the college’s practiced value of connection. He said,

I...selected connection because in my personal experience at the college, the way that you can be effective is based in the connections that you make...personal connections with faculty, department chairs, deans, whatever the case is. It goes a very long way.

Ralph, an administrator, echoed Peter’s sentiment about connection by describing the importance of relationships to find support and get things done quickly.

I often tell folks...when they're new here...we don't function on process. We function on relationships.... When I need support...I know people that I can contact and they will contact other people and I will get to support.... So, there's a good connection...

Consistency. I'm never having to really compromise what I want to do.... The more people you know, the...faster you can get it done.

Additionally, when participants spoke about peer relationships, there was an undercurrent of the treatment of students as a reflection of how faculty, staff, and administrators treat each other. Trevor, an administrator, described how his values of competence, respect, and trustworthy, influenced his work with students by describing his connection with peers.

The competence, respect and trustworthy, I think, probably, all come hand in hand for me. I want to be respected by my colleagues. I want to be respected by students and I feel

like I'll transfer that respect to my colleagues and to students as well. I see them [students] as adults, so, they are to be respected in that way, and respected as contributing to this community of scholars, if you will, in the educational environment. And... respect, trustworthy and competence, those kind of surface around the same thing for me. I want to be seen as somebody that folks can go to, whether it's professional colleagues or other students. To know that things can be kept in confidence. That I'm working for their benefit and for their success.

Relationship tensions across divisions and employee roles and perceived misfit.

Participants also described strained relationships and tensions between various divisions and between employee roles of faculty, staff, and administrators. Dante, a counseling faculty, shared that there was a general mistrust between faculty and administration that felt due to historical practices. He stated,

My sense from chatting with others over some time, [there] seems to be a general mistrust of administration or a general real divide between administration and faculty or just the higher ups. I don't know the best way to describe it. It feels historical like things have happened or things they've experienced.... It seems to permeate the experience and it seems hard to move on from that...[It] seems to impact new initiatives and ideas and all those things.... That's what I've learned in my short time here.

Jackie, an instructional faculty, talked about the divide between administration and faculty. She touched on the theme of structure, to strengthen or undermine the organization: hierarchy, bureaucracy, and the status quo, to illustrate strained relationships by associating the tension in the institution with the hierarchical feel of the college over a collegial feel. She said,

I think there is a certain divide between administration and faculty.... I think there is a separation between the central building. I'm not sure that everyone there knows what actually goes on in a classroom. It's probably because we're so large. We are huge and [administrators] can't be out teaching classes. I think there's a kind of, and you know, it just happens. People move up in the ranks and then they're no longer with students and whatever. I think just even the building's appearance, by the way, appears like a corporate, and, in fact it's called corporate.... It certainly doesn't look like Harry Potter. And...that corporate feel tends to be hierarchical and less collegial, if that makes sense. I'm not sure that it's any different at Harvard or any other place.... You know, where there is a separation between the administration and what actually goes on in the classroom. I don't want to be negative. I just see there are some divisions that perhaps the administration is not aware of and almost they can't help. Their jobs are different and they can't be in the classroom while they're at [a] council [meeting] or at the state advocating for the college. I mean, they just can't do it all.

Margot, an instructional faculty, identified tension between faculty and administration by highlighting administration's subculture, as a result of the administration's move off campus to a central building.

I do feel like, and perhaps to some extent since administration moved away from the campuses and are not here on a day-to-day basis interfacing with students, there is a separate culture in that building from the folks who spend most of their days interacting with students.

Dana, an instructional faculty, discussed strained relationships and also framed the subculture of administration around the central services building. She spoke about the damaging effects of low expectations of faculty using a metaphor about the impact of low expectations for students. She added that she was concerned about the impact on faculty retention and how the best faculty was not hired to replace the faculty who separated from the institution. She stated,

I hate that building. The first time I ever came to central services...I showed up and they made me show my ID and then I had to wait in the waiting room...before I was allowed to go through a door. She had to come get me and I was so incredibly freaking offended.... I thought, 'How dare you treat your faculty this way? How dare you!' The whole idea of, 'You, faculty, are riffraff and we're behind these beautiful glass doors that you can't get through to me,' is so emblematic of what's wrong.... I don't feel like it used to be that way and it doesn't feel like it needs to be that way.... I think, sometimes administrators...treat us like the lowest common denominator. They're looking at the worst of us and thinking, 'how can we force the worst faculty to be better?' But then they end up doing the same thing to the best faculty and turning us off. Just silly things like you must have five office hours a week now because we don't trust that you're giving your students enough office hours.... It's insulting to faculty. It's adversarial.... You should never run an organization by playing to the worst of the people. You always need to play to the best of the people.... That's how I treat my classes.... If I spent my classes focusing on the people who might cheat, I would never get an opportunity to teach the great students.... There's a saying, 'people will live down to your expectations.' If you expect people to be crappy, they will be crappy.... I've seen some of our best faculty

leave because they can't stand it. And we're not replacing them with the best faculty.... I think that's kind of hurting the school.

In response to how she fits at the college, Amani, a staff member, like Jackie, also touched on the theme of structure, to strengthen or undermine the organization: hierarchy, bureaucracy, and the status quo, when she reflected on how relationships and bureaucracy played into the recruitment and selection process. She described participating in professional development opportunities to network with peers and to better understand the culture of the institution, which she described as political. She said,

When I first started here at TBCC, I enrolled in [a leadership program].... It was about an opportunity to network with others and really get an understanding of—I was totally bought in with the mission of the college—the things that were happening. I began to see people appear to be a little disgruntled and I didn't totally understand. So, I wanted to understand the culture of everything.... I knew that I had a lot of experience, but I also know relationships are very important.... To the point where it impedes the selection of maybe a qualified candidate.... Higher education can be very political. I was just trying to understand what was happening.... I'm still questioning that even three years later about the bureaucracy.

Structure

Structure evolved as a theme when participants described their fit with the college and the culture of student success at the institution. Participants even identified order, control, power, and structure as practiced values of the institution. There was consensus among participants that the president sets the tone for the organization. However, participants also shared that there was

a disconnect between the top and bottom of the organization. Participants framed the institutions' practiced values of commitment, academic freedom, innovation, welcoming, and diversity around conservatism, hierarchy, bureaucracy, politics, and the status quo. Participants' experiences working within the college's structure reinforced and weakened the institution's espoused values of excellence, integrity, innovation, and diversity.

What the president says and does, matters. Participants look to the president of the institution not only to set the tone of the organization and to lead the organization, but participants also mentioned they were attracted to the institution because of the president and the institution's reputation. Moreover, participants spoke about their attraction and desire to work at the institution because of the president's messaging and taking the president's words to heart. Amani, a staff member, described her attraction to work at TBCC because of an online video she encountered of the president speaking about the achievement gap, student success for underserved students, and the importance of non-academic supports. She said,

I came across a YouTube presentation of [the president] talking about [an achievement gap initiative] and I was just wowed. I would just continue to research her and I started researching the school and I was like, 'this is where I want to be,' because it focused on some things that were near and dear to my heart, students that were underserved, specifically, those from low socioeconomic backgrounds, international students. And, then, the focus just was like echoing student success, which, that's when it started surfacing about nonacademic supports and the needs for students. And, in all of my career, I had not seen a leader speak to that nature. It was always academic based. So, I was really attracted to TBCC for those reasons.

Participants also looked to the president to establish and reinforce the institution's vision, set the ethical tone of the institution, and drive a culture of success for students and employees. Eva, an instructional faculty, described the institution's conservatism by sharing how dissonance in what the president says and what the organization actually practices has negatively impacted the culture of the institution. Further, she also reinforced that employees need what students need. Love. She stated,

I know [the president] speaks some radical words, but we aren't doing any of the things that she says we have. We certainly are not radically inclusive. And, ironically, we're told to love the students. We got no love from the administration for anybody here.... What's interesting is the college likes to create an image that we're bold and we're risk-taking and we're doing these things. But, in fact, we're very conservative. Like if you look at the cultural change, I don't see it improving. Actually, it's gotten worse and that's a result of that.... There's a great disparity between the talk about student success and the practice of student success.

Well intentioned is not the same as walking the talk. Participants shared that the institution is well intentioned. They further expressed that the institution talks the talk, but does not walk the walk. Additionally, participants attributed not walking the talk to a misalignment in the institution's values and practices, thus, subtly questioning the institution's espoused value of integrity. When I asked Desiree, a counseling faculty, to describe the college's culture of student success, she succinctly offered one sentence, "We are well-intentioned." Luis, an administrator, described the organization as not walking the talk enough. While he praised the president, for

laying out the model of student success, he expressed concern that it does not trickle down to permeate the organization. He said,

That's one area, if I had to take issue with something, is I don't think we walk the talk enough. We espouse student success at the highest level of the organization. I think [the president] does an excellent job of laying out the model of what you're supposed to do. Where do we leave that level and come down? I just don't see it translating and permeating the organization [how it] ought to be..... So, I take issue with how we practice student success. We espouse it very well. I just think we ought to do a better job as it filters down the organization.

Bellamy, an administrator, attributed the institutions' failure to walk the talk to institutional practices not aligned with its values. He reluctantly echoed Luis and Eva's sentiment about the institution's culture of student success. He stated,

Here's one where I can get in trouble and where are our practices don't always align with our values. I think we talk a very good amount about student success. We say some very impressive things, especially among administrators. But, on the ground, I see a very different picture sometimes.

To strengthen or undermine the organization: Hierarchy, bureaucracy, and the status quo. Additionally, participants spoke about excessive bureaucracy and politics at the institution. While participants mostly described the negative aspects of the bureaucracy, there also seemed to be an acknowledgement that the hierarchical structure, bureaucracy, and disruption to the status quo could be a good or bad thing. The positive elements of bureaucracy

were associated with managing processes for a large organization. Moreover, participants expressed there was room to improve the bureaucracy and culture of the institution.

When I asked Amani how she fit at the college, she said, “I think the culture is very hard to understand. The bureaucracy is like no other.” Peter, an instructional faculty, identified structure as one of the college’s practiced values. He said,

I think within the organization is when I think about structure.... I'm thinking about hierarchy of how things work and operate.... There's a clear defining structure of how things should work. Typically, if you deviate from that structure, at least in my experience, folks aren't too happy.

Peter identified order as another practiced value of the college and discussed order in terms similar to hierarchy. He connected order and structure to capture disruption to the status quo. He stated,

I think order and structure kind of go hand in hand. But, in terms of order, there's a process of how things should be done. A formalized process if you will. And when things go out of that order, things become out of sync, if you will, disrupting the status quo. It might not necessarily be a great thing. In some cases it may be. For the most part, I think there's a lot of order and structure to the way things are done on the campus.

Darlene, an instructional faculty, described the hierarchy at TBCC by focusing on how communication travels up the chain of command.

There's a focus on a hierarchy...who can talk to who chain of command. ... You take things up with your chair, and then the chair has to take things up with the dean, and then the dean takes it up with the president, and that can be good, bad or indifferent depending

on how true to what you've said to your chair might be communicated through four or five different people. I think there's a lot of opportunity for things to go wrong.

Jerome, an administrator, reflected on the positive aspects of bureaucracy, specialization, when an organization becomes very big. However, he added that there was room for improvement in processes for students and the culture of the institution.

Clarity and ease are necessary processes as soon as anything starts to grow. It needs to specialize. Instead of having one place where everything gets done, you get multiple places that each specialize in different things being done.... Most people have negative connotations about bureaucracy. I would differ with that. I would say that it's a positive thing to specialize because you're more efficient. You get better answers and better things done. No one person can be an expert in everything. The key comes in how you make it all work together. I do think we've got potential to improve how we make things work together. The clarity and the ease for students.... I don't think we've reached anywhere near what we need to do in creating the culture we want.

Susanna, a staff member, reflected on student success by expressing the need for a greater sense of community between employees and the need to learn from one another. She also touched on the theme of process, by expressing challenges with communicating resources through the large organization, and the theme of relationships, by expressing a need to become closer with each other. She said,

I think for true student success, we have to have faculty and staff work closely together.... I understand this is an issue at many colleges.... Perhaps, if...faculty and staff [at] various levels to just even get to know one another and how we could work

together as opposed to faculty, to Dean, to chair, to administrator.... I would love to know more faculty and what they're doing and to let them know I have resources for them.... I need to know what they're doing so I can promote it. But they don't know that I even exist. They're so wide of an audience. How can I get them to know I exist? We're such a large school. I think there's opportunities missed on how we could get to be [a] closer community within our own school. If we got closer, I think we could learn more from one another about engaging students and have more student success.

To strengthen or undermine the organization: Conservatism, risk-aversion, and the status quo. Participants described conservatism and risk aversion when framing dissonance with the college's espoused value of innovation. While participants expressed that the institution promoted innovation through various initiatives and robust options for professional development, participants also felt that the institution was very conservative, risk averse, and tended to succumb to the status quo. Natasha, a staff member, described her lack of fit at the institution due to being a risk-taker, addressing poor performance issues through accountability, and clashing with the conservatism at the institution. She also touched on the theme of norms, expressing high standards for herself and others. In response to how she fits at the institution, she stated,

I don't know that I do fit in with the college. I think that I am an introvert who tends to be very direct and is not terribly touchy feely. I think the college is more koombaya and touchy feely. I also believe in saying no. I believe no as a complete sentence. I think the college has a very difficult time with doing that. I hold people accountable to include myself. I think the college has a hard time with that. I address poor performance issues. I think the college has a really difficult time with that. Generally speaking, I don't feel like

I fit. Also, I am a risk taker. I like to push the envelope if it's not a very clear and firm violation of a provision, a contract, a grant or rule. I'm asking questions around why we can't do a thing, and the college is very, very, very, very conservative in that respect. I am also interested in creating new and innovative ways to accomplish tasks, and the college is very much about conserving outdated processes or even committed to simply doing things the way that they've been done because that's the way that they've always been done.

Ralph, an administrator, identified innovation as a practiced value of the college and a byproduct of autonomy. However, he described how conservatism squashed innovation at the institution. Ralph said,

Innovation and conservativeness are sort of flips of the same coin. Because of the autonomy, we talk a lot about innovation, and I have found [the college] very supportive of any innovation that I think of doing. I see different groups going to do things. As far as I can tell, it's all aligned to student success. There are pockets of it [innovation]. On the flip of that is *we are so conservative* [emphasis added], that being innovative, gets squashed a lot because of just fear of moving forward. Of taking the step. Making a decision. There is a certain need for everything having to be black and white. And no acceptance to the gray. And when there's gray, and there's a lot of it, especially in compliance, you just have to make a decision. You will never get in trouble by doing nothing. You know? So, it's that balance. I see a lot of innovation. I see a lot of conservativeness that reigns that in, in different spots. In different aspects.

To strengthen the organization: Professional development. Participants were attracted to and valued the robust professional development opportunities offered by the institution. They further expressed a desire for required learning to improve their effectiveness. Professional development opportunities reinforced the college's practiced value of growth, identified by participants, to support the espoused value of innovation. In addition, participants identified professional development as a solution to resolve misfit at the institution. Reebee, a staff member, expressed that professional development opportunities attracted her to the institution because she is a lifelong learner. She further expressed how she felt like she fit well with the institution because of the opportunities to grow and thrive. She stated,

I am very big on professional development. I consider myself a lifelong learner.... I started looking for places where not only I would enjoy the work that I do, but I could also grow professionally.... I think TBCC does a very good job of supporting, facilitating, and encouraging professional development.... I feel like I belong here. I felt that way even when I came from my very first interview. That's more of just sort of the feeling I get just socially. It's like, 'Oh, I can get along with people.' But even beyond that, I think just sort of the structures in place and a lot of the things the college offers. I feel like this is a place where I can thrive. This is a place where I can engage. This is a place where I can be creative and do some of my best work. I always feel like no matter what's going on at the college, it's almost like you're walking across a field where the ground is fertile and there's always something you can plant and grow.

Abigail, an instructional faculty, expressed concern around insufficient professional development requirements for faculty. She advocated for opportunities to explore more deeply

how faculty are teaching, whom they are teaching, and how students best learn. Further, she implored the institution to improve the effectiveness of faculty. She stated,

My second huge, huge, huge concern is I don't understand why faculty development is not required after year three. That it's left to us and our own devices to sign up for stuff.... There are practices I have that are probably very ineffective. I think we really have to take a hard look at how we're teaching and who we're teaching and how they best learn. I don't have the answers. I just know that we need more professional development.... When...the dean asked, 'how many of you would like more information on mental health and how to deal with students?' I was thrilled that three quarters of the hands went up. That was great. We need this stuff. Since enrollment is down and continues to be down.... Let's take advantage of this. Let's release people from one class.... Give us four classes and release [us one class] and require certain things to be done with that time to improve our abilities or effectiveness.... Increase our empathy. Improve our effectiveness.

Ralph described the culture of the college by framing innovation around the cultural fit and misfit of pockets of faculty according to their willingness to change. He also expressed the critical role of professional development to resolve misfit.

I think the culture of the college is really focused on students, and to be more innovative in our classrooms. There may be a subset of faculty, and, I think this occurs at all institutions, who've been teaching for 20, 30 years and they have one year of teaching experience 30 times. And that doesn't fit. It's sufficient, maybe. I think the majority of

faculty fit quite well because there is a lot of autonomy and their intrinsic desires match up quite well. And, there's probably a small subset that don't fit just because they don't want to change.... Most faculty are walking through that door trying to do their best every day. I think the majority of faculty do that. That's what we want. I think if there isn't fit, then professional development. Exposure. Getting them out of the classroom. Interacting with other faculty. Because, I've always found...once a faculty member looks and sees something else occurring in somebody else's classroom that's being productive and effective, it's hard for them to resist. Who's going to say, 'no, I don't want to be as good as that.'

It has always been my approach to faculty development that teaming, take[ing] time. There's the innovators. They're going to embrace everything. There's a group of folks that watch the innovators and see if [the innovators] make it through the first year or two, and [they will] see what works and then they will adopt. Then, there is another group that's highly resistant for whatever reason. And not everybody's going to change. But I find that the majority of faculty, when they have time to reflect, and to see and observe other teachers...they're more than happy to embrace, provided they can balance the workload that it would take to alter instruction or change.... Not everybody needs to teach the same by no means. But, I've always found that the more you observe others teaching, just a self-reflection either reinforces what you're already doing or you're pulling in bits and pieces of other things. It's good when faculty can explore in the classrooms.

To strengthen the organization: Diversity of faculty, staff, and administrators.

Participants reaffirmed that the institution practiced the espoused value of diversity. Participants

framed diversity around a welcoming environment. However, participants distinguished between the effectual diversity of students and the lack of diversity among faculty, staff, and administrators. Participants expressed desire for a more diverse workforce. Moreover, participants felt that recruitment of a diverse workforce that reflected the college's diverse student population would improve employee and student success.

Shelby, an instructional faculty, reflected on her own diversity traits to express concern about the lack of diversity in her discipline's department. She stated,

I often wonder about the degree to which my age, my gender, my color, the way that I speak, all of those kinds of characteristics of personal identity, either facilitate or may be a barrier to students approaching me. Especially, in a school like TBCC, where we just have so many students from so many different backgrounds. I wonder if they sometimes find that off putting.... I am increasingly aware of, and bothered by, what I feel is the lack of faculty diversity in my department.

Nuria, a staff member, echoed Shelby's concern, by highlighting the lack of diversity among faculty, staff, and administrators and the impact on student success.

I think that we don't necessarily have a staff, faculty or administrative body that reflects the racial, sexual identity, religious identity of all learners. From past studies I've read, that can help lead to student success, when they can go to somebody who can identify with them.

Susanna, a staff member, expressed that the term diversity had lost its meaning at the institution and wondered how the institution could embody this espoused value. She stated,

I think the school places a huge emphasis on diversity, but it almost seems like a buzzword these days. I'm wondering if there's a way to show it differently. Because I know it's a core value, but as a staff member, I hear it and it sort of lost its initial meaning. I don't know what it means anymore in our value system other than we welcome everyone. I think for student success you need to demonstrate more ways than summits, panelists, and speakers that we're diverse. How do we demonstrate that? Because I hear it all the time, but I think it's lost a lot of meaning.

Process

As previously mentioned, participants expressed that the institution functions on relationships instead of process, which assists or inhibits participants' and students' success due to employees' inability to adequately and timely serve students or complete their tasks and goals. Participants' experiences communicating, accessing, and disseminating information and resources throughout the college weakened the institution's espoused value of stewardship. Tobias, an administrator, talked about the institution's practiced value of individuality by describing the advantages and disadvantages of a person-based organization as opposed to a process-based institution. He stated,

I don't know if I have the right one word...but it's something about individuality. One of the things that happens in this institution is that it's very person-based as opposed to role-based or process-based. If I need to get certain things done, I need to know who to talk to and that person will get it pushed through, even if it's not necessarily their title or not necessarily the organization chart. Those individualities matter a lot here. Both in good and bad ways. There are some ways where that is fantastic. I know that there are certain

people that I can call and this will get done. It does mean that if you're outside the system, there's not a clear process for that. I remember being frustrated with that at the beginning. Now, somebody who's an insider and being here for a while, there's a lot of advantages to it. It's hard to kind of undo. But I will point out too, that part of that is because there are some really good people who work in this institution, and those people are the ones who I think do their job plus some others', which is helpful and supportive. But it does make it hard for people new to the organization or people trying to follow a process to always get where they need to go.

To strengthen or undermine the organization: Communication. A subtheme of communication evolved. Participants described a disconnect in communication between what the institution espoused and practiced, which levels of the organization had access to critical information, and how messaging ineffectively moved through the organization. When asked to describe the college's culture of student success, Greta, a staff member, described a disconnect in communication between the top of the organization and the actual practices. Further, she touched on the theme, structure, by describing the rigidity of the organization and the impact on the institution's responsiveness to students' needs. She stated,

I think it's two levels. I think that a lot of the top level and the surface level, [there] is a real focus on student success. On students achieving grades and degrees and all of that.... But I think that there's a disconnect. It's the second layer, or the under layer, of people not willing to change their work practices and how they do their jobs to meet the students' needs, and that's completely understandable. But it speaks to a rigidity which is not really a 21st century attribute. It's not a modern attribute to be this rigid. I think that

one of the interesting things about academia is that in some ways, things take a long time to change. We work on an annual scale. You ... have goalposts throughout the year that only happen once a year. If you want to change something, you have to wait on a year to see it. Or you might have to wait, you know, a student will take two to six years to complete their time here. And, it's long term changes. But that doesn't mean that we shouldn't change something that's directly impacting things like opening hours and things like how you turn in forms. That kind of minutia should just be changed on the dime.

Amani, a staff member, touched on the themes of structure and relationships to describe communication challenges in the organization that impact student success. She discussed how the hierarchical nature of the organization compromises care, respect, transparency, communication, and buy-in for student success. She said,

I'll tell you what it is. I don't know if it's a higher ed thing or just a TBCC thing, but...the level of care, respect, transparency, information, need-to-know is all based on where you sit in the hierarchy of the college.... There's just some things that can't [only] be shared at the [senior leadership level]. I'm only speaking from my experience within this division. Hierarchies are created based on your title. The simplest things are not shared.... [The senior] leadership should be carrying [the president's] message to their direct reports. Then, their direct reports should be sharing the information within their respective offices. I have no idea...what [the vision and goals] are, but I'm sure [the senior vice president] shared them. The information is not being transferred. I think the separation of power leads to miscommunication and...that leads people to feel like

they're not respected because you have no buy-in of what's happening. How can you be all in for student success when nobody talks to you about what's happening?

Moreover, participants expressed concerns about transparency, how communication trickled down, silos of information, and collaboration across divisions and employee roles. Bethany, a counseling faculty, expressed a desire for more collaboration and talked about her positive experience with collaboration between instructional faculty and counseling faculty. She stated,

I...like when we collaborate with others. With academic faculty, instructional faculty.

When our department reaches out or instructional faculty reaches out to us, and we work together. I think that's one thing we're doing well is when we collaborate with other departments.

Amani, a staff member, highlighted tension between divisions by expressing concern about individuals who cite academic freedom when perceived not to be in keeping with the institution's norms. In addition, she discussed disorganization and lack of transparency as some of the practiced values of the institution. She, further, touched on the theme of structure, and described how trust is compromised due to a mismatch between the president's messaging and what the institution espouses, as opposed to what is actually happening at the institution. In response to why she selected academic freedom as a practiced value of the institution, she replied, 'I think oftentimes, on the academic side of the house, people hide behind that and justify poor behavior or why something happened.' She, then, proceeded to discuss why she selected disorganization and lack of transparency as practiced values of the organization,

There is a breakdown in the hierarchy of the reporting lines. I am very well versed on [the president's] mission. Her stance about certain things. I spent a lot of time researching this school. But when you get down to the people that are on the front line, that message is not carried down. Somewhere in line is a breakdown.... I sit and listen to [the president] and I've had intimate conversations with her about things. I often want to ask [her], 'Who tells you the truth?' Because what she's saying does not match what's happening in the offices. Like, 'Who tells you the truth?' ... Oftentimes, when you are in positions of power and influence, people are very hesitant to tell you the bad. Everybody wants to talk about what's good and what's happening and not be realistic.... She's preaching one thing, but something else is happening. That's where the lack of trust comes in.

Darlene, an instructional faculty, framed challenges with communication silos in the organization around the themes of relationships and structure. She described tension within employee roles, departments and divisions, and communication gaps in the hierarchy of the organization. She stated,

There's kind of a schism between administration and faculty, and even in faculty in other departments. It's almost like each department is its own silo and there doesn't seem to be a lot of talking across the lines between divisions.... I think...sometimes with administration, there's not a lot of crossing of those silos. Everybody knows everybody within the silo, but it can be difficult to figure out who does what, and et cetera.... In terms of communication...I've noticed that things often get stopped at the chair level.... What would be helpful, at least for me, is...to somehow get out of the silos that TBCC is

in right now.... Everything is in a silo and there's not a whole lot of communication. So, somehow...to work toward better communication among people who do different things.

Peter, an instructional faculty, affirmed that while the institution sets a strong tone for student success, not everyone buys in, and thus, a potential for misfit. He also framed communication challenges around the theme of structure by discussing how the tone at the top does not trickle down to generate buy-in or resolve fit issues in the institution. He stated,

There's a strong tone that we want to foster a successful environment, create resources to enhance all the students' learning, and to ensure that they succeed. I think the one thing for our college that they need to be cognizant of is how do we ensure that that message is disseminated downwards, and accepted downwards to get that buy-in.... Planting the seed takes a while...fostering an environment where faculty is okay with change.

Because I think a lot of it may be resistance to change. 'Why do I have to get in the classroom and change the way I teach? Why do I now have to care about what the student is going through?' or whatever the case is. I think fostering an agile environment where faculty is open and willing to enhance, embrace and change, that goes a long way. I think a lot of that comes from the top. How do you get buy-in from the head all the way down to the Dean? To the department chairs? Because when faculty is looking at their next level up, and that next level is either unsure about what student success really means, or don't buy-in, or is not advocating for a student's success, then that sends a reverse message of what the college is trying to do at the top. You may have some departments... over here full force, but because of the leadership that you have on this other side that... may send a different message to the faculty in that particular department. I think the tone

really needs to come from the top. How do you get buy-in with your department chairs, your deans, the vice presidents, and so on within the organization?

Monica, an instructional faculty and staff member, described the institution's strengths and challenges with the values she identified as being practiced by the institution: accomplishment, communication, empathy, innovation, and transparency. She touched on the overarching theme of employee success leads to student success by indicating happy faculty lead to happy students. She provided a rich narrative of student success by describing a web of interaction across the themes of relationships, structure, and process. She discussed the college's strong reputation, strained relationships at the institution between different employee roles, backdoor deals and the need for more communication and transparency, and fear of reprisal around innovation. She said,

I think the college is really trying to be the best it can be. It's very focused on accomplishing things. They are determined to make those numbers look better. Graduate more students and so on. We're ranked very highly among community colleges. We have a lot to offer.

I think communication is a problem at the college.... An email does not mean you've actually communicated that information. I think we're trying to make that better, but I don't know if that's really successful.... I'm not involved in faculty things these days as much as I used to be, but I know they're not happy. I think that's really sad because the college does not communicate that it values its faculty and it's like we worship students above all else, then comes the staff, and then comes the faculty. Who's doing the work

with the students? Who's on the front lines dealing with the students' problems day in and day out, and spending their weekends grading papers and all of that? I really think that faculty get a bum rap around here. I think it's really sad because we've got Ivy league professionals. We've got people who are PhDs who would rather be here working with students directly and working directly for student success rather than being off at a higher paying research university where they could have more prestige. The faculty are here for the students, and I don't think that the college does a good job of communicating that.

I mentioned empathy.... It's not there [for faculty]. It's there for students for sure. We have so many programs and so much stuff going on for student success. It's great. That's something the college does very, very well. What the college does not do well is understand that if you have happy faculty, you're going to have happy students.

Transparency is kind of in the same vein. It's not always clear how decisions are made. I have been privy to conversations that show that when it is convenient, the college is willing to ignore processes, policies and procedures that are in place. That willingness to kind of do things behind closed doors. That creates suspicion. I've been privy to things where, indeed, there's a reason to be suspicious. I would love to see the college develop its transparency more, and it's respect for policies and procedures more. I think they're trying, but there still is that culture of stuff happening behind closed doors, which is troublesome.

In terms of innovation, I think that's another strength of the college. We're willing to always try new things, especially, when we're going to help students. I think that we

could do better if there was more transparency and a stronger feeling of trust at the college. We could do even more than we already do with innovation. We have the potential and we have really smart people. We have potential that is not realized because of lack of trust [and] fear of reprisal.

Equitable access and stewardship of resources. Participants expressed concern over the equitable access and distribution of resources for employees and students. Concerns included the distribution of resources between employees and students, which groups of students benefitted most from resources, which groups of students were ignored or under resourced, and how the institution could be more intentional stewards of resources. Challenges with equitable access and distribution of resources weakened the institution's espoused value of stewardship.

Eva, instructional faculty, felt that resources should be redirected from administrators to students. She stated, "You know, I would say that the money that's invested in the administration, for example, going to conferences or hosting these day long events, should really be moving down to the students." Harriet, a staff member, expressed concerns about a small subset of students continuously benefitting from resources opposed to other students. She said,

I feel like the same students are getting the benefits of a lot of what we do. The ones who are doing the Student Senate and they're involved in this and involved in that. That's a really small group...that gets volunteered to do all this cool stuff... In terms of equity, I don't think that everybody is getting the advantage of all of the things that we have.

Catalina, an administrator, expressed that the institution focused on some groups of students while ignoring others and was concerned about alienating students. She stated,

I think that, institutionally, we're still focusing on certain groups of students while ignoring others. Both from a time perspective and a financial resources perspective. Case in point. I've interacted with some over-50 students who didn't get nearly resourced the way that a 24-year-old would get resourced and really felt alienated in the process.

When asked about the potential of community college students, Ralph, an administrator, framed student potential around various groups of students with distinct needs of support and resources. He discussed inequities in the distribution of resources and expressed a need for the institution to be more intentional in getting the right services to the right student at the right time. He stated,

I think in thirds. The third of our students who can compete with anybody, send them to Harvard and Princeton. They have the capability. They've got the background and support structures. Everything they need to be successful at those schools and four-year schools. They don't need a lot from us. Oftentimes, they're the takers of all of our services. We might need to find a way around that to where our services are being more directed, intentionally directed to the folks who need it.

There's the middle, which is not really the third, it's just a bigger middle, where these students are very capable. They have a lot of support. They're missing different pieces, whether it's structural, whether it's family, whether it's physical, whether it's emotional, but a little bit of focused attention, and they can be very successful.

Then, there's the lower group that has many, many challenges that we really do try to attend to. Those are probably where it's most challenging [and require the] most time and

effort.... We have programs that fit all of those chunks.... We have the ability to lift up every single student in those areas.... We have the services. We have the intent. Could we have more? Yes.

How would we do that? We need more funding. We need more grants. We need more personnel. Will we ever get that? I'm not sure anybody's ever going to get fully staffed. We're in an environment now where we will not get more manpower. We will not get more personnel. We have to find ways of using technology for getting the right services to the right student at the right time rather than here's a whole variety of services. Pick what you need. We know who picks the services. It's the ones that probably need it the least. I think we do really well with what we have, and to do better, we need to probably work differently. Structure ourselves differently. Use more technology. Be more intentional.

Resource management. Additionally, participants talked about a plethora of valuable resources for students and employees. However, participants, expressed challenges around awareness of resources. Further, even with awareness of resources, participants expressed challenges around finding, accessing, and sharing resources due to a gap in practice and communication. Specifically, participants discussed the need for a central repository of resources. Paolo, a staff member, affirmed the abundance of available resources and discussed solutions to improve awareness and sharing of resources for faculty, staff, and students, to include professional development. He stated,

There are so many resources that are available. But, to a certain extent, not only the students, but, especially, part-time faculty who's not on campus all the time, may not be aware of the various resources that are available. A concerted effort to share the various resources that are available would definitely help those part-time faculty who are not here all the time or during the majority of the day. Just having a newsletter would probably not be enough. Having some regular workshops geared towards all the resources being shared. Not only with the students, but the faculty and the staff. Targeted towards each of these three populations.

Natasha, a staff member, highlighted a connection between staff success and student success, and expressed that staff and students need access to coaching and support. She stated, Educated staff, make for better navigators for students as they are traversing through their community college experience. I think making very clear career pathways making [sure]...students and staff have access to the same sort of coaching and support. Creating a seamless ecosystem for service delivery.

Furthermore, participants empathized with students and described experiencing similar emotions and feelings as the students, such as confusion, frustration, and overwhelm. Participants framed resource management challenges around communication silos, spill over to students, dependency on relationships, and the need for a central repository. Abigail, an instructional faculty, shared how she learned about myriad available resources, in spite of the communication silos. She even expressed there might be too many resources to keep track of. She stated,

I'm getting to talk to people I don't normally talk to. It's how siloed we are. How there's a program happening here that addresses this, and a program happening there, and there's some special event here, and a special event there, and a special event there. That's one concern I have. I'd like to think somebody at the top has the big picture, but I'm not so sure. I don't question the intention. Maybe it's best to have all these little popcorn things going. I don't know. There's a lot going on and it's almost too much.

During the staff focus group, Natasha described how the inability to access resources contributed to employees' frustration. She reaffirmed a symbiotic relationship between the experience of employees and students. Further, describing how employees' feelings of frustration spills over to students. She stated,

Slowly resentment is building [in individuals] front facing with students. The expectation that what this person has experienced is not going to spill over to the student experience is a ridiculous one. I think we can't separate those two things. To the degree that we can create a very seamless environment where people can access the resources in the same way, I think that impacts student success very directly.

Nuria piggy backed on Natasha's remarks and expressed that the frustration is the same for employees and students. She stated, "If it's a struggle for us as staff or faculty to find this information. Goodness me, how on earth are our students meant to? I mean, just think about the website for goodness sake." Minh concurred, "That's where we're missing the mark." Harriet added,

I've been here for over 10 years and I'm still learning about things that we do here. I'm still amazed at the things that are going on down these...bright corridors.... I'm really impressed with the work that we're doing, but I'm still learning after 10 years. I don't know if a Google search kind of engine would help. But, it's true for our students that they don't necessarily know where to go. They don't know what we have available. Don't know where to start looking. Don't know to ask. Don't know who to ask. And as far as... what we actually do, and what we see, and what our brand and all of that is, to think about those in terms of values...[Do] we practice what [we] preach or not.

The administrator focus group expressed a similar sentiment about the confusion employees and students experienced when learning about, accessing, and communicating the volume of resources that exist at the institution. Camille described a disconnect in the organization that leads to duplication and confusion. She said,

We have a lot of great things that we are doing. What I see is a lot of things are decentralized. We don't have a lot of synergy. We're doing things in pockets, and sometimes that confuses students. Some things we are possibly even replicating. But, if we work together, we could probably do more because we could scale it up.... We do a lot of great things, but where are we missing the mark, is we are a little disconnected. It makes it very confusing for students a lot of times.

Tobias concurred with Camille. Further, he expressed that while the institution provided many valuable resources, he had difficulty keeping track. He framed his concern around the

theme, relationships, and the potential for the dependency on relationships to be insufficient to adequately provide students with timely and accurate information. He stated,

I would agree 100%. I will add that it's not just confusing for students. *It's confusing for me* [emphasis added]! I cannot keep track. Like, I mean I don't know how students could possibly keep track. Looking at the student holistically is so important and I think we're heading in that direction. We're not there yet.... I think we do very well in the classes. I think [we] do an excellent job...feeding students. The learning centers to support with like accounting and stuff, I think we do great jobs with that. But, I think if a student walks in and says, 'Where can I get help with accounting? Where can I get some food? Where can I sign up for my computer science class?' I'm not sure there's a person that could answer all three of those questions.... There's not a good place to send them. We don't have a repository of lists for everything on the internet. For each one of those, I just think, who's the person that I happen to know that I could send them to, or if I happen to know the right code word to kind of put in the website. I just think it's really hard to know what the support services are and you almost always have to ask for them. That's what I think we're struggling with. How to make sure the students know what's out there when we offer such a cacophony of these things. There's just so many. It's really hard to get that message to students.

Equitable access to resources operationalized. In addition to resource management, participants described a gap in the operationalization of equitable access to resources. Participants agreed that while many resources existed at the organization for students and

employees, the availability of resources were constrained to traditional business hours.

Participants expressed concerns that students and employees functioning at the institution during the evenings and weekends were significantly impacted by this constraint.

Karen, a staff member, succinctly expressed that services and support were not truly available when needed. She stated, “We do have a lot of services. We have a lot of support. But not so much in the weekends. Not so much in the evening.” Similarly, Anastasia, a staff member, reaffirmed karen’s sentiment and framed the accessibility of resources for employees and students around equity and inclusion. She stated,

The college is finally realizing, in one small way, that it is not a nine to five, Monday through Friday organization. Because with the equity and inclusion, some of the summits, and when we had Workday training...they actually remembered that there are employees that work the late shift.... But, services are still geared for nine to five, Monday through Friday. So, the GED students, or the students who are taking WDCE, and they [need] a textbook, they're coming in the evening or they're coming on Saturday, and I'm sitting in and going, ‘I'm so sorry. The bookstore is not open on Saturdays’ or, ‘It's not open at seven o'clock when you're here to pick up your textbooks.’

Gaps in practices, and employee and student success. Participants also talked about gaps in practices and resources to either mitigate or eliminate undesired behavior or the individuals behind the behavior. Bethany, a counseling faculty, expressed frustration with employees who do the minimum, which touched on the theme of norms, going beyond the job

description. She expressed uncertainty with the process to remove these employees from the organization, and worried about the impact on students. She said,

I can think of so many positive things to say about TBCC. A lot of times when I'm helping students and they're asking for advice about classes to take and professors, I always say, 90% of our teachers are amazing and excellent. But, obviously, there's always the few that are not good and I don't know that we can do anything about this. I don't know why they just don't retire or whatever. It doesn't just have to be the people that teach. It could be other people too. I don't know why they just do their job. Do the minimum and then leave. Somebody has to take that class. Someone is in that class. It's unfortunate that that person is not getting the great experience that 90% of our students get. That's frustrating for me. I even sometimes talk to chairs like, 'Do you know this student is saying this?' and 'I've heard this and that.' And they're like, 'We know. Tell them, the students, to come to us or put it in the course evaluations.' That professor is there again the next year or next semester. That would be my biggest frustration.

Bellamy, an administrator, described unevenness in quality across part-time faculty due to limited access to resources, professional development, and information. He stated,

We get a lot of variability. Don't get me wrong, we have some excellent faculty. I've been really impressed with the quality of our faculty. But, I think we have some unevenness that, at any rate, we should be honest about.... That's not their fault. It's because they have different access to resources, to professional development, to information. I think that creates some challenges.

When describing the role of faculty in student success, Nuria, a staff member, focused on the influence of faculty fit and misfit on student attraction and retention, in addition to their power to inspire students. She touched on the theme of norms, high standards and expectations, and on the theme of structure, to describe the institution's risk aversion and how the status quo influences human resource processes related to removing faculty who have the potential to do more harm than good. She stated,

The right faculty play a great role. The wrong faculty can play an absolutely awful role. I think we need to listen more to the student voices rather than the faculty's. 'Oh, I know what I'm doing. Oh, I've been doing this for 20 years. I'm fabulous at this.' But if I'm constantly getting evaluations back that are saying the same thing over and over again, then faculty will be let go after evaluation. That's the joy of not having part-time faculty in a union. They're on contracts, and, it is said in the contract.

I think that faculty have a big influence in whether learners will return, in how successful learners will be, and, also, whether learners will tell friends and family members, "Oh, I went to TBCC, I did this course. It was awesome because of this faculty member.'

Because the faculty had that direct interaction with learners. They're the ones who the learners will likely remember. If they're the wrong ones, then that bad experience is going to equate to, 'I'm not going to go back to TBCC. I'm going to transfer over to [another] college,' and that's revenue out of the window. It's because we allowed the wrong faculty to remain in place. I think that this is where [we should be] unafraid to take risks and to

be unapologetic in getting rid of people if they're not performing to the standard that our learners require and should receive.

But the right faculty can make all the difference in the world. They're the ones who can inspire learners. They are the ones who can instill in them a sense of yes you can. They're the ones who can provide a window to endless opportunities. I like to think that the majority of faculty at TBCC are like that. But I think that if they're not, and they don't fit into the organization's culture, and they're not on board with what it is we are trying to do, why do we keep them around? I think sometimes we're [so] afraid of what may come from releasing somebody, that we just select the status quo. Remain intact. That can do more harm than good sometimes.

Tobias, an administrator, expressed that the institution did not have an effective process to provide options to employees who do not fit with the organization or who engage in undesirable behavior. He further expressed that working around these types of individuals was part of the culture of the institution. He said,

We as an institution don't have a good process for kind of dealing with those people who aren't being as supportive of what they could be. We can all name people that we work around, as opposed to talking about how to help them, or transitioning [them] to something else. We have a culture where it's okay to work around people who you think aren't doing what they need to be doing.

Norms

There was a consensus among participants that everyone is responsible for student success. However, participants acknowledged that faculty, staff, and administrators did not always choose to play an active role in student success. Participants framed the culture of student success around high standards and expectations for students and employees. In particular, employees are expected to go beyond their perceived job description. This sentiment is often self-imposed, imposed by peers, perceived to be imposed by the institution, or any combination of these. However, even for individuals who believe it is necessary to go beyond the job description in time and effort to achieve student success, participants expressed concern that this norm is unsustainable. Participants' experiences sustaining the required or expected level of service to students weakens the institution's espoused value of sustainability.

The choice to play a role in student success. Participants were in agreement that all faculty, staff, and administrators at every level of the organization, and in every division, play a role in student success. Maria, a staff member, described the interdependent role of faculty and staff in providing students with support, and a culture of student success, as a bridge. She stated,

In my mind, staff are the infrastructure. They're sort of all of the links of the bridge for student success. The faculty are more the pathway there. If you're envisioning a bridge, the staff are sort of, I don't know the terminology, the staff are the structure. The faculty would be the planks of wood across the bridge. They have the direct contact, right underneath the students, keeping them moving along the path. But the staff sort of provide all of the infrastructure for the faculty to be able to do that.... Counseling and advising...kind of push them [along].

While there was consensus that everyone played a role in student success, Amani, a staff member, described how individuals did not always necessarily understand their role in student success. She touched on the themes of structure and process by describing the president's effectiveness in setting the vision, but the communication challenges through the hierarchy.

Amani said,

I think the vision is very clear as far as [the president] being a leader and I can only speak within the division in which I serve. It's very clear as far as [my senior vice president] leading [my division]. At the deans is where it gets shaky. I think for those that don't have the insight to say like, 'I believe that this is important. So, let me think of some things that I can do in the space where I'm sitting to create a culture of student success.' ... For those people that are in professions where they're tasked to death.... I'm sure they don't understand where they fit in student success...here at TBCC. But, then, I'm also sure that they have not had the opportunity to share or discuss how they fit in or even been told how they fit in. At the top level it's very clear. But I think when you fine tune and drill down, that's where the challenge is. And it's my thought and premise that if you work at a college, regardless if you are pulling the trash or whatever you're doing, everybody has a play in the success of students and helping people understand why that's important. I don't believe conversations are being had at that level to say, 'Okay, [department], let me help you understand how you fit into the student success model.' ... or... 'You're serving students, but let me help you see the bigger picture.' I don't think it's talked about in that way.

With the acknowledgement that all faculty, staff, and administrators play a role in student success even if they did not necessarily understand their role, there was also an acknowledgement that not everyone wanted to play a role in fostering a culture of student success, according to the institution's norms. Participants described individuals who chose to actively play a role in student success as going above the minimum. When I asked Desiree, a counseling faculty, about the role faculty play in student success, she touched on the theme of relationships, and succinctly responded, "A tremendous one if they choose to.... I'm talking about instructional faculty and counseling faculty. One can choose to stick to one's discipline, but that's at the most minimum level if you're going to be effective in this environment." In response to the role staff play in student success, she responded,

Same. If they choose to. I mean, it's a matter of choice. It's a matter of having managerial support to say that that's okay. I mean, lots of people have stacks of granola bars or bottles of water or fruit or whatever. It is something easy for a student to grab beyond the food pantry, as an example.

Peter, an instructional faculty, echoed Desiree's sentiment about the choice to play a role in student success. He touched on the themes of relationships and process to describe how faculty buy in or do not buy in to the culture of student success, and how faculty communicate and connect with students. In response what role faculty play in student success, Peter stated,

The role that they play is what they want. A lot of times, some faculty don't want a role. As some faculty say, 'I come to teach. The onus is on the students that they do what they need to do to get the grade that they need.' I don't necessarily buy into that, specifically. Especially, at a community college because that's the whole aspect of why these

community colleges exist. A lot of students that we see might be first generation students, or may not have the support structure at home, or not know how to navigate the college environment.... I think the faculty, through their actions, through conversations that they have in the classroom with the students, and out of the classroom with the students, they have a huge responsibility for the message that they're sending the students. Even when things get hard in hard subject matters. 'How do you communicate with students on the matter? Is it encouraging or is it one of those methods where it's like, the onus is on you?' I do think the approach that you use goes a very long way and has an impact on the students, that the faculty may or may not realize. I do think faculty have a huge responsibility, all faculty, to buy into that.

High standards and expectations for faculty, staff, administrators, and students.

When describing the culture of student success, participants spoke about the importance of high standards and expectations for students and themselves. For students, participants talked about high standards and expectations as a critical ingredient for student growth and success in school and life. When referring to themselves, participants described high standards and expectations as a product of pride in the quality of their work to ensure excellence for themselves, students, and the institution.

Hannah, an instructional faculty, talked about her value of responsibility to describe how she holds students accountable in the classroom to reinforce skills they will need in the real world, while also being flexible in consideration of their demands outside the classroom. She said,

With students, 'It's your responsibility to get things in on time.' There will be some consequences, not too harsh consequences, because we don't want to discourage students. But, we also need to teach them responsibility. I like to do a lot of flexible deadlines so that students can choose when they're turning something in. But, there is an eventual due date when it has to be turned in, to teach them responsibility, [so they] can manage their schedule.... We need to teach our students responsibility to just to deal with the real world of deadlines and projects. But, we also need to be flexible and not look at students as irresponsible just because they don't turn something in on time, because they often have other responsibilities in life that are sometimes more important like a family, or they're caregivers to somebody else... or they're working to put food on the table, or they're hungry. [Teaching] responsibility doesn't just have to be in the classroom. We can teach responsibility for students outside of what they're doing [in the classroom] in their real lives as well.

In response to what role she played in student success, Fabi, an instructional faculty, talked about expectations from the perspective of challenging her students. Like Hannah, she mentioned taking into consideration the complexities affecting students' lives without sacrificing standards. She said,

We impact [students] in terms of inspiring them, engaging them, and challenging them in what it's like to take a course in higher education. My thing with the students is always like, this is different than high school. And it should be. I feel strongly that, I expect the same from my students as if I were teaching at [a four-year university] or anywhere else.

Why wouldn't I? You know what I mean? Now, that doesn't mean that I don't take into consideration some of the complexities of our student population, but I refuse to dumb down what I'm doing. I don't think that's fair. And I think, frankly, it's insulting to our students. It may mean that they are challenged more or that they need more support structures. I think that as an institution of higher education, which we are, that should be the expectation.

Trevor, an administrator, described his role in fostering student success by focusing on responsibility, behavior standards, and expectations of academic integrity. He stated,

I think helping students to be successful, is to understand the standards of behavior, and the standards of expectation and the academic environment. Particularly thinking about academic misconduct and academic integrity. Making sure our students understand the responsibility to be a student of integrity and doing work that is of their own.

Jerome, an administrator, reflected on his time as instructional faculty, and described how he held students and himself accountable to high standards. He stated,

I always believed in having very high standards for students. I would put on the screen...what my standards were for them. It would be things like doing the assigned readings when they're assigned, doing the homework, coming to see me during office hours. 'When you have a question,' not letting something sit. Being honest and not engaging anything that would be considered academic dishonesty and that type of thing. After that, and some encouraging words, 'I want you all to get A's,' and it was going to be a lot of work to do that, then say, 'So here are the standards for me.' They would

always include that, 'You will get your graded quiz, test, or exam back from me the next time that we meet. Laboratory reports would be returned at the next lab meeting. I will always come prepared to,' you know, fill the time that we have with what I hope will be engaging information...and so forth. Then, I have the two lists up and say, 'All right, do we need to add, change, subtract, modify, anything that's up here?' I think students always appreciated that honesty about what's going to happen in the class and the opportunity to communicate to them. A lot of people are shy in the very first day of class, but, occasionally, somebody would speak up. Whether they did or not, what I wanted to communicate to them was, 'I am going to hold you to a very high standard, but I'm also going to hold myself to a higher standard.'

Going beyond the job description. Discussions about student success centered around explicit and implicit self-imposed and institution-imposed norms. In addition, when participants described the ways in which they themselves or their peers helped to ensure student success, they shared examples of going beyond the scope of the job description. Natalie, a staff member, described the role of faculty in student success. She expressed that her faculty fulfilled the college's mission, went above and beyond the call of duty, and were committed to their students' success. She said,

I think that all my faculty fulfill the mission of TBCC in educating their students and being there for them when they have questions or they need help. They always go above and beyond what they really need to do. If a student says, 'I can't make your office hours,' then they will have a time where the student can come in and can discuss whatever the situation is. The...majority of them all have PhDs. They're very committed

in what they do in the way of educating the students. They want them all to succeed and be able to move on to a four-year college.

When I asked Harriet, a staff member, about the fit of faculty and staff at the college that she had witnessed positively impacting students at the institution, she described instructional and counseling faculty members who took on more than their expected roles. She also expressed that the faculty members took risks, embodied the institutional culture by accepting students where they are, guiding them, and going above and beyond their job descriptions. She stated,

The faculty member really took on more than was her normal role. She went way beyond what was expected. Kind of took a risk. It was a big risk. It was a bold move to pull this off. I think had she not been supported by the college...it would have been much harder. But, I think the college supports her in doing that because they support us. We go above and beyond the call of duty. And in the case of...the transfer counselor... it's accepting the students where they are. [Providing] them with guidance that they need and referrals. A lot of people here have...a wealth of institutional knowledge, so that they can go outside their lane to help students find the resources or the answers that they need. Maybe that's kind of a theme. It's like going outside whatever your narrow boundaries are in terms of like your main job. But I think that's how she embodies what I guess is...our institutional culture.

Hannah, an instructional faculty, when talking about the role of staff in student success, described how her administrative aid went above and beyond her job description to do things out of the goodness of her heart. She said,

Our administrative aid is the most amazing administrative aid ever. She is in charge of the food pantry. Her patience with students. Her genuine wanting to help students.... We'll have at least 10 students a day come in asking for food and there's a food cart outside. But they know she has more food and that she can get them the good stuff because she goes shopping, and she supplies the closet.... She's not getting paid extra for doing this. This is out of the goodness of her heart.... She will stop and help a student. She is welcoming to everybody. She is just there for our students, in any way they need, to support them. If a student has a question, and I'm in an office hour, but the question is for another faculty, she'll send them to me to try to get the student's question answered. She won't stop until the student has the answer to a question or at least a next step for who they need to contact or what they need to do. She is amazing. Absolutely. And I know others that are similar, that are going above and beyond for their students, and making the connections that they need, places to go, what signatures they might need, and how to get that access. Because that can be a barrier for many students. Just not knowing, 'Where do I go next? Where's that building?' They're very helpful with that.

The sustainability of beyond the job description. Some participants, even those who steadfastly believed that fostering a culture of student success demanded exceeding the boundaries of the job description and time constraints, expressed concern about this norm. Participants' concerns centered around the institution's expectations, pressure, and the sustainability of routinely acting outside the scope of their job description, spending too much time with students, and the expectation to do more with less for a growing number of students amid resource constraints.

Minh, a staff member, expressed concern about personnel shortages and overworked employees' ability to sustain the norm of going above and beyond for students. She said,

As a body of employees, we're contracting and so we're seeing a lot of vacancies that leave staff and employees overworked and overburdened. While Dr. B should be a model, and in some cases, is a model for employees around the college, that's getting more and more difficult to do because people are doing one and a half, two jobs, consistently for years.

Karen, a staff member, described the difficulty of meeting the president's expectations and the institutional norms without significant costs to one's personal well-being due to severe time and resource constraints. She stated,

The expectation coming from the president is meet them where they are. Love your students to success. When do I have the time for that? If I have such a course load or such a caseload, if I'm a counselor, when do I have the time to do that? I need to be able to eat and sleep and do my regular life too. There's like this expectation that you're going to give 110% to a thousand students at the same time. But you know, that doesn't really, you can't physically do that all the time.... The staffing is getting cut down so much, the staffing, faculty, you know, positions get eliminated but you don't really think about what that impact is on people. And they're not necessarily going to tell you. They're not going to tell you if you're in a forum type setting. But if you hear them every day, if you sit at a desk near them, you know what they're dealing with.

Danielle, an administrator, echoed Minh and Karen's sentiments and expressed the need for work-life balance.

Many of us are working too hard with too many demands with not enough time to take care of ourselves. I have a [direct] report that I learn from constantly and we have repeated conversations, because she's big on work life balance. When she considers other opportunities, and she uses me as a mentor to consult with, she comes to me and says, 'So how good is that unit on work life balance?' And this is somebody who works extraordinarily hard and produces at an extraordinary level. So, we're not talking about, 'Hi, I'm going to shortchange my job.' But *some kind of balance* [emphasis added].

Individual Core Values Prized by Faculty, Staff, and Administrators in a Community College and Overall Optimal Values Perceived to Foster a Culture of Student Success: Research Questions 1 and 2

The individual core values prized most by faculty, staff, and administrators at this Mid-Atlantic community college were the core values participants identified for themselves. Their individual core values coincided with the values they identified as optimal for fostering a culture of student success. Further, the values identified as core values for oneself and optimal values for others to achieve ideal fit with the institution aligned with the institution's espoused values.

Interestingly, participants did not always use the same exact words to identify their core values, the optimal values for others to achieve fit, the institution's espoused values, and/or the institution's practiced values. Thus, I grouped words together according to participants' lexical semantics and pragmatics. In other words, where one participant might use the word empathy as a value for influencing their work with students, that same participant, might identify

compassion as a value when describing positive relationships with their peers. Further, the same participant might frame experiences working at the institution around how individuals were willing to be understanding during challenging circumstances. I used word associations such as absolute and lexical synonymy and context to form groups of values. Participants identified eight groups of values to describe their core values, optimal values for fit and student success, and the institution's practiced values. When participants discussed the institution's practiced values, they discussed the presence or absence of the value.

In addition to documenting the values that interview participants identified as core values, optimal values for fit, and the institution's practiced values, I also coded the interview and focus group transcripts for values operationalized. I documented which participants identified and/or operationalized which values as they described the culture of student success at the institution. I then triangulated interview and focus group data with survey data. After data analysis and synthesis of the four themes identified: a) relationships, b) structure, c) process, and d) norms, I selected the overarching value in each value group that most accurately and comprehensively captured the complex interdependency between the themes that bridged PO fit and student success. The overarching values most prized by faculty, staff, and administrators were: accountability, autonomy, enthusiasm, empowerment, willingness, empathy, truth, and equity and inclusion. Participants determined that these values led to optimal fit between faculty, staff, administrators, and the institution, and, also led to a culture of student success. Figure 2 illustrates the grouped values identified by interview and focus group participants.

Figure 2

Participant-Identified Values

Data Source	Employee Role	Total Participants	Accountability	Academic freedom	Enthusiasm	Cooperation	Adaptability	Acceptance	Ethical	Community
			Commitment	freedom	Fun	Empowerment	Agility	Balance	Genuine	Diversity
			Competence	Autonomy	Gratitude	Encouragement	Flexibility	Compassion	Honest(y)	Equity and inclusion
			Dedication	Boldness	Love	Help	Openness	Empathy	Integrity	Friendly
			Focus	Contribution	Passion	Support	Willingness	Patience	Sincerity	Social justice
			Fortitude	Creativity	Positive			Understanding	Spirituality	Student population served
			Full attention	Growth	Vigor				Trust	Tolerance
			Hard work	Improvement					Truth	Welcoming
			Honor	Individuality						
			Integrity	Innovation						
			Ownership	Knowledge						
			Persistence	Progress						
			Reliable	Transformation						
			Respect							
			Results-oriented							
Interview	Administrator	9	8	9	8	6	6	8	9	9
Interview	Faculty	15	13	13	12	12	9	13	14	14
Interview	Staff	15	15	15	14	14	12	14	15	15
Total Interview Participants		39	36	37	34	32	27	35	38	38
Focus Group	Administrator	5	1	2	3	5	0	3	4	3
Focus Group	Faculty	10	5	5	6	8	2	6	9	10
Focus Group	Staff	9	4	3	5	0	1	6	8	8
Total Focus Group Participants		24	10	10	14	13	3	15	21	21

Note. Participant-Identified Values include individual core values and optimal values for fostering a culture of student success, as participants identified and operationalized the same values in both contexts. Grouped together are values with similar meaning. The overarching value for each group is in bold typeface. Hereafter, the values in bold typeface will be referred to as participant-identified optimal (PIO) values. The numbers represent the number of interview and focus group participants who identified and/or operationalized values in each value group.

The institution’s espoused values are: excellence, integrity, innovation, diversity, stewardship, and sustainability. Figure 3 illustrates the alignment of the institution’s values with participant identified values.

Figure 3

Alignment of Institutional and Participant-Identified Values

Participant-Identified Values	Accountability Commitment Competence Dedication Focus Fortitude Full attention Hard work Honor Integrity Ownership Persistence Reliable Respect Results-oriented	Academic freedom Autonomy Boldness Contribution Creativity Growth Improvement Individuality Innovation Knowledge Progress Transformation	Enthusiasm Fun Gratitude Love Passion Positive Vigor	Cooperation Empowerment Encouragement Help Support	Adaptability Agility Flexibility Openness Willingness	Acceptance Balance Compassion Empathy Patience Understanding	Ethical Genuine Honest(y) Integrity Sincerity Spirituality Trust Truth	Community Diversity Equity and inclusion Friendly Social justice Student population served Tolerance Welcoming
Institutional Values (Espoused)	Excellence <i>Integrity</i> Stewardship	Innovation				Sustainability	<i>Integrity</i>	Diversity

Note. Participant-identified values include self-identified core values, values for optimal PO fit—PIO Values, and values practiced or not practiced by the institution, to foster a culture of student success. Each institutional value is the espoused value taken from the institution’s values statement. Each institutional value aligns with a participant identified value. The value, integrity, is italicized and listed twice because the institution’s meaning for this value is unknown and could match participants’ meaning or not.

The Role an Institution’s Ethical Identity Plays in Fostering a Culture of Student Success: Research Question 3

How participants experienced the alignment of their core values with the institutional espoused and practiced values, shaped the ethical identity of the institution. Participants experienced a feeling of misfit when there was a misalignment in values between the institution and individual. This was even more so the case when optimal values were not practiced by the institution and/or the institution’s practiced values were not aligned with the institution’s espoused values. In cases of misalignment, participants did not feel that a culture of student success was being fostered, whereas participants felt that a culture of student success was

fostered when the values between the organization and individual aligned. Luciano, a staff member, described how the tone was set at the top of the organization by the president with the expectation of sharing good individual and institutional values that should trickle down through all levels of the organization. He stated,

I always say the tone is set at the top.... The person at the top of the organization... should...freely state their...personal human values, [and] their values for the organization. Assuming they're good values the organization will, hopefully, absorb some of those values and hit in a direction that's in compliance with those values. Now, I know that can take time. And that's why it's good for a leader to stay at a school like this. Our leader, [our president], is amazing.... She's made quite an impact on the institution.... What I see indicates that the school has absorbed and reflects a lot of her values. So, the person at the top sets the tone. They don't necessarily re-establish all the values, but over time of reiterating those values and creating alliances and so forth. Whatever powerful leaders do. I think that's a good thing for them to espouse those values publicly. Encourage other people to be the same.

Hopefully, those people who don't share those values, will either just shut up and do their work or come around. But at least get out of the way. They have the ability, the negatives, to be obstructionist. [It] is mitigated in large part by the overwhelming sentiment of the culture to do the right thing. So, you've got those people always in the background, and always fomenting their negativity. You've got them there. They don't have to have a big voice. They can be in the background as much as possible....

Certainly, some trends toward caring, toward equity through inclusive engagement. Some tendency toward that is good and positive, however it's encouraged.

In addition to how participants experienced the alignment of their core values with the institutional espoused and practiced values, was how they experienced the participant-identified optimal (PIO) values through operationalization. Whichever values the organization practiced, reflected in the operationalization of values. And the operationalization of values, reflected the practiced values of the organization. The operationalization of the organization's practiced values shaped the ethical identity of the institution. Thus, if participants did not practice the participant-identified optimal (PIO) values, they were not operationalized, and participants could experience misfit—their own or that of others. Peter, an instructional faculty, provided a rich narrative and described how subcultures could dominate organizational culture and negatively influence student success initiatives. He illustrated how a faculty member who embodied optimal values and the espoused institutional values, experienced a misalignment of values between those values and the practiced values in his department, which led to simultaneous fit and misfit of the faculty member within the organization. He also illustrated the potential for ethical implications. After asking Peter to provide an example of faculty who positively impacted students' lives, I asked him to discuss how well that individual fit with the organization. He responded,

The one faculty...I don't think he fit in well with the department as a whole. When we look at all [the] campuses, I think he gets push back. I think his personality is, 'I don't care. That's what we're here for.' Some of the other faculty may have the air of the

departmental chair or the dean. Because sometimes it's those little politics that you have to play. He doesn't play those political games. He's just like, 'I'm here to teach. I'm here to make sure the students succeed.' That's where his focus point is. But even though he doesn't fit in directly with that culture, he does insert himself and take a stand when it's needed.

If he didn't have that personality, then I don't think he would be here at the college. Because I truly think he truly cares about the student needs and so on.... As I think about his dynamics and how he worked with the other faculty and just the culture.... He does not fit in with that tone, but I think he's okay with that. And he's okay to cause a disruption when necessary if it's in the impact of the student.

Overall, when I look and network with other departments, that culture [at the top] may have been adapted, but I don't think that culture [exists with my department].... When you think about the college's values overall, because...when I look at what the president is doing, and all of the initiatives that's happening, you would think that this stuff would roll down hill. But there are, at least in my subgroup, there are a lot of folks who are, I don't want to say openly against it, but kind of resistant to some of these initiatives for student success. Or they *act* [emphasis added] like they are on board, but, in reality, they are not on board.

And with the one faculty I'm thinking about...he would fit the culture.... He would fit the culture of the overall tone at the top of what the college is trying to achieve. But the majority within the department do not want to subscribe to that culture. So, there's some

resistance there. Now, they might be theoretically forced to or made to participate in certain initiatives. But...if you don't have the full buy-in of the faculty, then those initiatives, the success, only goes so far.

When the institution's policies, practices, and decisions, through the operationalization of participant-identified optimal (PIO) values, aligned with espoused and practiced values and principles, participants experienced fit. In response to the question to describe when participants best felt like they fit at the institution, a survey respondent stated, "When decisions made align with our stated values and principles. When our walk aligns with our talk." The institution's failure to practice espoused values perpetuated misfit between individuals and the organization and compromised the institution's ethical identity. A survey respondent described their misfit with the organization due to the institution not practicing its espoused value of accountability in response to concerns about ethics violations. Further, the survey respondent chose to remain silent on subsequent violations, which influenced the ethical culture perpetuated at the institution. The respondent stated,

The college claims to care about ethical behavior and accountability, but when I have brought up personal experiences with college employees that violate these principles, I have been ignored, shunned, and excluded. I no longer bring up violations or issues, or even instances where I feel uncomfortable, because none of the situations have improved when I have spoken up.

Participants expressed that while some faculty, staff, and administrators will always do the right thing, or always not do the right thing, a vast majority depend on the institution to set

the tone, or moral compass, of the organization. A survey respondent said, “The College's stated and actual objectives differ. This is unfortunate. 10% of people will always do the right thing, while 10% will always not do the right thing. The 80% majority look for the College to provide a moral compass and consistency in what is stated and done.”

Faculty, staff, and administrators overwhelmingly supported the espoused values of the institution. Of the 250 survey participants who responded to the statement, “I support the stated values of the college,” 74.8% of survey respondents indicated that they strongly agreed and 19.2% indicated that they somewhat agreed. However, while there was strong support for the espoused values, 250 survey respondents indicated that they took the espoused values to heart to a lesser degree (66.4% strongly agree, 23.6% somewhat agree). Out of 250 survey respondents, most agreed that their core values were similar to the institution’s espoused values (61.6% strongly agree, 29.2% somewhat agree). However, there was significant variation as to whether the institution’s espoused values matched its practiced values, as seen in Table 7.

Table 7

The stated values of the college match the practiced values of the college.

	Strongly agree		Somewhat agree		Neither agree nor disagree		Somewhat disagree		Strongly disagree		Total	
	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n
Faculty	12.37%	12	35.05%	34	14.43%	14	24.74%	24	13.40%	13	41.28%	97
Administrator	14.29%	4	60.71%	17	17.86%	5	3.57%	1	3.57%	1	11.91%	28
Staff	18.52%	20	49.07%	53	8.33%	9	18.52%	20	5.56%	6	45.96%	108
Prefer not to disclose	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	50.00%	1	0.00%	0	50.00%	1	0.85%	2
Total	15.32%	36	44.26%	104	12.34%	29	19.15%	45	8.94%	21	100.00%	235

Unlike participants’ support of the institution’s espoused values, they were less supportive of its practiced values. Table 8 illustrates that support of the institution’s practiced values was highly fragmented.

Table 8

I support the practiced values of the college.

	Strongly agree		Somewhat agree		Neither agree nor disagree		Somewhat disagree		Strongly disagree		Total	
	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n
Faculty	30.93%	30	24.74%	24	16.49%	16	17.53%	17	10.31%	10	41.10%	97
Administrator	37.93%	11	37.93%	11	17.24%	5	6.90%	2	0.00%	0	12.29%	29
Staff	44.44%	48	23.15%	25	12.04%	13	15.74%	17	4.63%	5	45.76%	108
Prefer not to disclose	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	50.00%	1	0.00%	0	50.00%	1	0.85%	2
Total	37.71%	89	25.42%	60	14.83%	35	15.25%	36	6.78%	16	100.00%	236

Participants' agreement was equally varied about the similarity of their values with the institution's practiced values, as illustrated in Table 9.

Table 9

My personal values are very similar to the college's practiced values.

	Strongly agree		Somewhat agree		Neither agree nor disagree		Somewhat disagree		Strongly disagree		Total	
	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n
Faculty	24.74%	24	29.90%	29	14.43%	14	15.46%	15	15.46%	15	41.10%	97
Administrator	20.69%	6	41.38%	12	24.14%	7	10.34%	3	3.45%	1	12.29%	29
Staff	37.96%	41	24.07%	26	11.11%	12	18.52%	20	8.33%	9	45.76%	108
Prefer not to disclose	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	50.00%	1	0.00%	0	50.00%	1	0.85%	2
Total	30.08%	71	28.39%	67	14.41%	34	16.10%	38	11.02%	26	100.00%	236

Table 10 illustrates that participants had varying levels of agreement regarding not supporting the values of the institution due to the practiced values not aligning with the espoused values.

Table 10

The values practiced at the college do not match the stated values, therefore, I do not support the college's values.

	Strongly agree		Somewhat agree		Neither agree nor disagree		Somewhat disagree		Strongly disagree		Total	
	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n
Faculty	12.50%	12	17.71%	17	36.46%	35	10.42%	10	22.92%	22	41.03%	96
Administrator	0.00%	0	3.57%	1	17.86%	5	39.29%	11	39.29%	11	11.97%	28
Staff	10.19%	11	10.19%	11	30.56%	33	22.22%	24	26.85%	29	46.15%	108
Prefer not to disclose	50.00%	1	0.00%	0	50.00%	1	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.85%	2
Total	10.26%	24	12.39%	29	31.62%	74	19.23%	45	26.50%	62	100.00%	234

While most participants agreed that their values guided their ethical decision making (90.17% strongly agree, 7.26% somewhat agree), they were in varied agreement about compromising their principles to conform to the college's expectations, as illustrated in Table 11.

Table 11

I find that, sometimes, I must compromise personal principles to conform to the college's expectations.

	Strongly agree		Somewhat agree		Neither agree nor disagree		Somewhat disagree		Strongly disagree		Total	
	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n
Faculty	13.40%	13	23.71%	23	22.68%	22	14.43%	14	25.77%	25	41.10%	97
Administrator	10.34%	3	20.69%	6	13.79%	4	3.45%	1	51.72%	15	12.29%	29
Staff	13.89%	15	29.63%	32	17.59%	19	17.59%	19	21.30%	23	45.76%	108
Prefer not to disclose	50.00%	1	0.00%	0	50.00%	1	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.85%	2
Total	13.56%	32	25.85%	61	19.49%	46	14.41%	34	26.69%	63	100.00%	236

Interview and focus group participants expressed that the institution did not walk the talk to foster a culture of student success. Table 12 illustrates that most survey participants agreed that there was a mismatch between what some individuals say and do to support student success.

Table 12

There is a mismatch between what some people say and what they do to support student success.

	Strongly agree		Somewhat agree		Neither agree nor disagree		Somewhat disagree		Strongly disagree		Total	
	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n
Faculty	32.98%	31	42.55%	40	14.89%	14	6.38%	6	3.19%	3	40.87%	94
Administrator	28.57%	8	39.29%	11	14.29%	4	10.71%	3	7.14%	2	12.17%	28
Staff	33.64%	36	35.51%	38	17.76%	19	6.54%	7	6.54%	7	46.52%	107
Prefer not to disclose	100.00%	1	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.43%	1
Total	33.04%	76	38.70%	89	16.09%	37	6.96%	16	5.22%	12	100.00%	230

When faculty, staff, and administrators compared their values and ethics to institutional values and ethics, of the 226 survey respondents, 53.54% expressed that their values and ethics were higher than institutional values and ethics, while 44.69% expressed that their values and ethics were high and matched institutional values and ethics. A few participants expressed that

their values and ethics were low and matched institutional values and ethics (1.92%), as well as expressed that their values and ethics were lower than institutional values and ethics (1.92%). In other words, according to Barry's model of acculturation to determine ethical identity, 53.54% of employees experienced separation, while 44.69% experienced integration. Significantly fewer employees experienced assimilation and marginalization. Seventy-two survey participants chose to skip this question. The ethical identity of the institution, seemed to play a moderating and mediating role in the institution's culture of employee and student success.

How Value Congruence Between Person and Organization Fosters and Institution's Culture of Student Success: Research Question 4

Interview participants were asked to identify their values and the institution's practiced values. From a subjective fit perspective, it was seldom that participants core values perfectly aligned with the institutionally practiced values they identified, which the data illustrated in Table 9 supports. From an objective fit perspective, when I compared participant's core values to the institution's espoused values, it was seldom that participants identified the institution's espoused values as their own core values. However, as previously mentioned, due to lexical semantics and pragmatics, there was arguably value congruence for most participants. As previously mentioned, out of 250 survey respondents, most agreed that their core values were similar to the institution's espoused values (61.6% strongly agree, 29.2% somewhat agree). As such, participants who experienced value congruence between their core values and the institution's practiced values reported subjective fit. Similarly, participants whose core values aligned with the institution's espoused values, reported objective fit. A survey respondent stated,

I feel as though my values match the stated values and mission of the college. I love working with students and support diversity. I love that I have the opportunity to help shape the academic and professional aspects of students' lives and that what they learn from their experiences in my program help them grow in their personal lives as well. I also enjoy the professional development opportunities and encouragement to help all employees with better understanding the mission, vision, and values of the College and how to demonstrate these areas [and] serve students and the community.

When the institution did not practice and uphold espoused values and the participant-identified optimal values of fit, participants reported subjective and objective misfit, whether their own or that of others. In other words, in the case of objective fit, if a participant's core values aligned with the institution's espoused values to achieve objective fit, the participant would report misfit due to the institution not practicing said value. A survey respondent attributed feeling misfit with the institution when administrators did not practice its espoused values. When asked to describe a time when the participant felt disconnected from the college, the survey respondent stated, "I don't believe the administration of the college practices the values of the college as stated. In particular, integrity and excellence are both sacrificed to advance personal goals of decision-makers at the expense of other employees and students."

Along the same vein, another survey respondent stated that they felt a disconnect when the institution did not practice its espoused value of accountability or the optimal value of truth through genuine care of students. The respondent also attributed a disconnect to when the institution did not model behavior. This speaks to the theme of structure and not walking the talk. In addition, the respondent supposed the institution's failure to practice these values could be

related to the theme of norms as a failure to go beyond the job description, due to overwhelm in responsibilities. Furthermore, they touched on the theme of relationships in that how employees are treated spilled over to students. The respondent attempted to reconcile misalignment by practicing empowerment, a participant-identified optimal value of fit,. Additionally, they described how the institution attempted to resolve value misalignments through professional development. The respondent said,

I sometimes feel a disconnect with accountability, modeling appropriate behaviors for students, and the care for students and their futures. Overall, I feel as though the College has great intentions, but it can be difficult to get everyone on board in terms of attitudes towards their work and towards students, especially students who need additional support (English language learners, disabilities, minorities, learning differences). Students have sometimes shared, or I have witnessed, unfair treatment and/or lack of care towards students in various ways at the College. Maybe workers are overwhelmed with responsibilities as well. In these cases, I empower students through advocacy. TBCC tends to address this through professional development, conferences, etc.

In addition, when participants' core values were misaligned with the espoused or practiced values of subcultures or the organization's overall institutional culture, participants reported misfit with the institution. It is important to note that even if a participant's core values aligned with the institution's practiced values or espoused values, through subjective and objective fit, the participant could still experience misfit because of how values were operationalized within the four themes: relationships, structure, process, and norms. How values were operationalized shaped the culture of employee and student success.

How Perceived Fit of Faculty, Staff, and Administrators Fosters an Institution's Culture of Student Success: Research Question 5

In addition to asking interview participants to identify their core values and the institution's practiced values, I asked individuals how they fit with the institution. As previously mentioned, from a subjective fit perspective, it was seldom that participants core values aligned with the institutional practiced values they identified, as illustrated in Table 7. Nonetheless, participants reported perceived fit with the institution so long as the institution practiced its espoused and participant-identified optimal values of fit. In other words, when participant's core values and the institution's practiced values were similar, they reported perceived fit. Similarly, from an objective fit perspective, when I compared participant's core values to the institution's espoused values, it was seldom that participants identified the institution's espoused values as their own core values. However, as previously mentioned, due to lexical semantics and pragmatics, there was arguably value congruence for some participants. As previously mentioned, most survey participants agreed that their core values were similar to the institution's espoused values (61.6% strongly agree, 29.2% somewhat agree). So long as the institution practiced its espoused values and optimal values of fit, interview participants also reported perceived fit with the institution. Table 13 illustrates that most survey respondents thought they were a good fit with the college.

Table 13

I am a good fit for the college.

	Strongly agree		Somewhat agree		Neither agree nor disagree		Somewhat disagree		Strongly disagree		Total	
	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n
Faculty	67.01%	65	21.65%	21	8.25%	8	1.03%	1	2.06%	2	41.10%	97
Administrator	65.52%	19	24.14%	7	6.90%	2	3.45%	1	0.00%	0	12.29%	29
Staff	55.56%	60	35.19%	38	2.78%	3	5.56%	6	0.93%	1	45.76%	108
Prefer not to disclose	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	100.00%	2	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.85%	2
Total	61.02%	144	27.97%	66	6.36%	15	3.39%	8	1.27%	3	100.00%	236

While the institution's espoused values did not encompass all of the participant-identified optimal values of fit, participants operationalized both espoused and participant-identified optimal values of fit within in the four themes: relationships, structure, process, and norms, to foster a culture of student success. Moreover, participants desired the operationalization of these values for students and themselves. Participants described faculty, staff, and administrators needing the same things that students needed. This pointed to the overarching theme that employee success led to student success.

Tobias, an administrator, framed his core values around students and peers needing the same thing. He used similar, but distinct values depending on if he was referring to students or peers.

I saw the word welcoming here and friendly. If I was taking this as a value toward students, I might have chosen welcoming. But I think friendliness is important in the sense that it's too easy for, especially, students to come here. But I think it's true of staff and faculty and others too. They're looking for someone who can just be someone that they can talk to. And not necessarily the supervisor. Not necessarily their peer. Just some

outlet. I think a productive school environment gives everyone a chance to be who they are and enter here welcome.... I do think it is crucial. That first day interaction in class and that first-time interaction on the staff side is crucial.... You're never going to make a first impression twice and all of that.... The interactions that we have with the students when they first step foot on campus set the tone for a long time.

Trevor, an administrator, described his fit with the institution. He succinctly discussed his value, autonomy, which is not an institutionally espoused value, and how employees and students shared similar needs, which led to success for employees and students. He stated, "I think that autonomy to create and do things is an important value for me and my work. I think that translates to students, as well, and their success."

Participants determined the perceived fit of their peers in the same way they determined their perceived fit. Danielle, an administrator, framed the exceptional fit of a colleague around needs and how it created magic. She likened the colleague's experience to the magic that happened with students when their needs were met. She described the importance of a holistic approach. She stated,

I was talking to my [colleague] and I said, funny, I just got off the phone with blah, blah, blah. And she just looked at me and said, 'I love my people.' And I'm like, 'Thank God you are in this job.' And it's funny because she had a totally different job at the college and she said, 'It was time for me to start to do something different and to address my passion.' She was really good at what she used to do. But it's even a better fit because she's so passionate. To see when that works. That's just magical. And it's the same kind of magic when the student needs something and it just happens to be available.... I think

one of the things that we're at least consciously beginning to look at and trying to address, although resources on every front are an issue, is looking at the student holistically, that it's bigger than just going to class.

Participants expressed that when there was alignment in PO fit across a participant's core values, espoused values, optimal values, and, thus, perceived fit, it fostered a culture of student success. Nuria, a staff member, described how achieving fit between her department's faculty and the organization built a culture of student success. She framed the narrative around shared values operationalized through norms, like going beyond the job description. She said,

My faculty are phenomenal. Seriously. My faculty do it every day. It's a culture that we've built to positively impact the lives of our learners each and every day. Something as simple as an instructor who met with a learner outside of class time, who had an interview coming up...so they could do mock interviews with them to help them succeed.... I have faculty members who aren't afraid to tell people when things aren't working, but also aren't afraid to go above and beyond to help learners out. I think because I have picked the right faculty member from the beginning, I see it as being success for all learners.... It is just a norm for us, which is nice. That happens when you pick the right people, who have the same values and desires as you do for the learners within your program. Because if they're not the right fit, they need to quit.

Participants agreed that misfit occurred through lack of subjective, objective, and perceived fit due to an individual's core values not aligning with the institution's espoused or participant-identified optimal values of fit. However, they also expressed that misfit could, in fact, occur in cases of values alignment also. How values were operationalized at the institution

according to relationships, structure, process, and norms, also determined fit. The operationalization of values shaped the culture of the institution. This could occur when the institution did not practice its espoused values and the participant-identified optimal values of fit. For example, innovation is one of the institution's espoused values. Most participants agreed that innovation was compromised due to conservatism at the institution. In other words, the institution did not truly practice innovation. As a result, in the case of innovation, participants might very well fit from the perspective of value congruence through objective fit. Yet, through the operationalization of this espoused value, participants reported their perceived misfit and the misfit of innovative peers. Ralph, an administrator, described how innovators did not fit at the institution. He stated,

Innovators often don't fit unless you have an innovative environment and you're allowed to make mistakes.... We're innovative, but we're also ultra conservative on compliance. There's a mixed message.... Go innovate. Don't get in trouble.... I don't know where the boundaries for failure are here. We're starting to talk about it.... There's still a lot of caution.

Luciano echoed Ralph's sentiment about the potential misfit of innovators at the college and the disruption to the status quo by describing a recent personal experience with a colleague he admired, who should have fit based on exhibiting the institution's espoused values and participant-identified optimal values of fit. When sharing what qualities and values of faculty and staff he thought would be the ideal fit with the college, he stated,

That's a tough one. Because you want to say that the very most talented creative strong people would be the right ones. But that's a hard one. Because who would fit with the college often has to do with who's willing to fit. Who's willing to make personal concessions and personal compromises. And for some people that's easier than others. I'm sure it's better in some situations than it is in others, or, shall I say, some areas of the college are more accepting than others of radical creativity.

There's two tracks I have going on. One is, 'What would be the qualities that would produce a person who's ideal in that role?' And the other track would be, 'What would be the person who has the qualities that would best meet those ideals and fit within the college?' And that's a tough one because my perception and my conclusions about that are somewhat tainted by a recent experience where a person that I know, who was a really strong and creative [individual] was not treated well because of that strength and creativity.... Their talents and skills were not welcomed and without going too deeply into it, let's just say that they weren't appropriately appreciated, nor were they treated well.

So, I know there are instances where very talented people can have problems.... But the qualities that I would look for would be the qualities that this person had, which were high intelligence, extreme caring for others, creativity, acute keen perception of others, and of the systems around them. A complete heartfelt desire to do the best thing for everyone. To add to that, of course the knowledge, skills and abilities required in the job.

That's a given. But all those other qualities, I would say, is what I would want to see in any person in any job in an institution of higher education.

Summary

Faculty, staff, and administrators relied on their core values to drive their daily work. The individual core values participants prized, coincided with the optimal values they identified to foster a culture of student success. In cases where participants' core values were not exactly the same as the institution's values, according to subjective or objective fit, participants could, indeed, experience PO fit if values were congruent. Moreover, participants identified optimal values of fit between faculty, staff, and administrators and the institution. When participants and the institution practiced similar values to include PIO values, optimal PO fit occurred. In other words, optimal PO fit occurred when participants' core values were similar to, and aligned with, the institution's espoused and practiced values, and PIO values. These values are:

- Accountability
- Autonomy
- Enthusiasm
- Empowerment
- Willingness
- Empathy
- Truth
- Equity and Inclusion

Four major themes evolved during factor analysis for how values were operationalized at the institution:

- Relationships
- Structure
- Process
- Norms

Six subthemes evolved for how relationships were operationalized at the institution:

- Genuine and caring relationships between employees and students
- Belongingness of students through a welcoming and supportive environment
- Genuine and caring employee relationships between faculty, staff, and administrators
- Belongingness of faculty, staff, and administrators through welcoming and supportive environments
- Effective relationships over process for employee and student success
- Relationship tensions across divisions and employee roles and perceived misfit

Six subthemes evolved for how structure was operationalized at the institution:

- What the president says and does matters
- Well-intentioned is not the same as walking the talk
- To strengthen or undermine the organization: Hierarchy, bureaucracy, and the status quo
- To strengthen or undermine the organization: Conservatism, risk-aversion, and the status quo
- To strengthen the organization: Professional development
- To strengthen the organization: Diversity of faculty, staff, and administrators

Five subthemes evolved for how process was operationalized at the institution:

- To strengthen or undermine the organization: Communication
- Equitable access and stewardship of resources
 - Resource management
 - Equitable access to resources operationalized
- Gaps in practices: Employee and student access

Four subthemes evolved for how norms were operationalized at the institution:

- The choice to play a role in student success
- High expectations and standards for faculty, staff, administrators, and students
- Going beyond the job description
 - The sustainability of beyond the job description

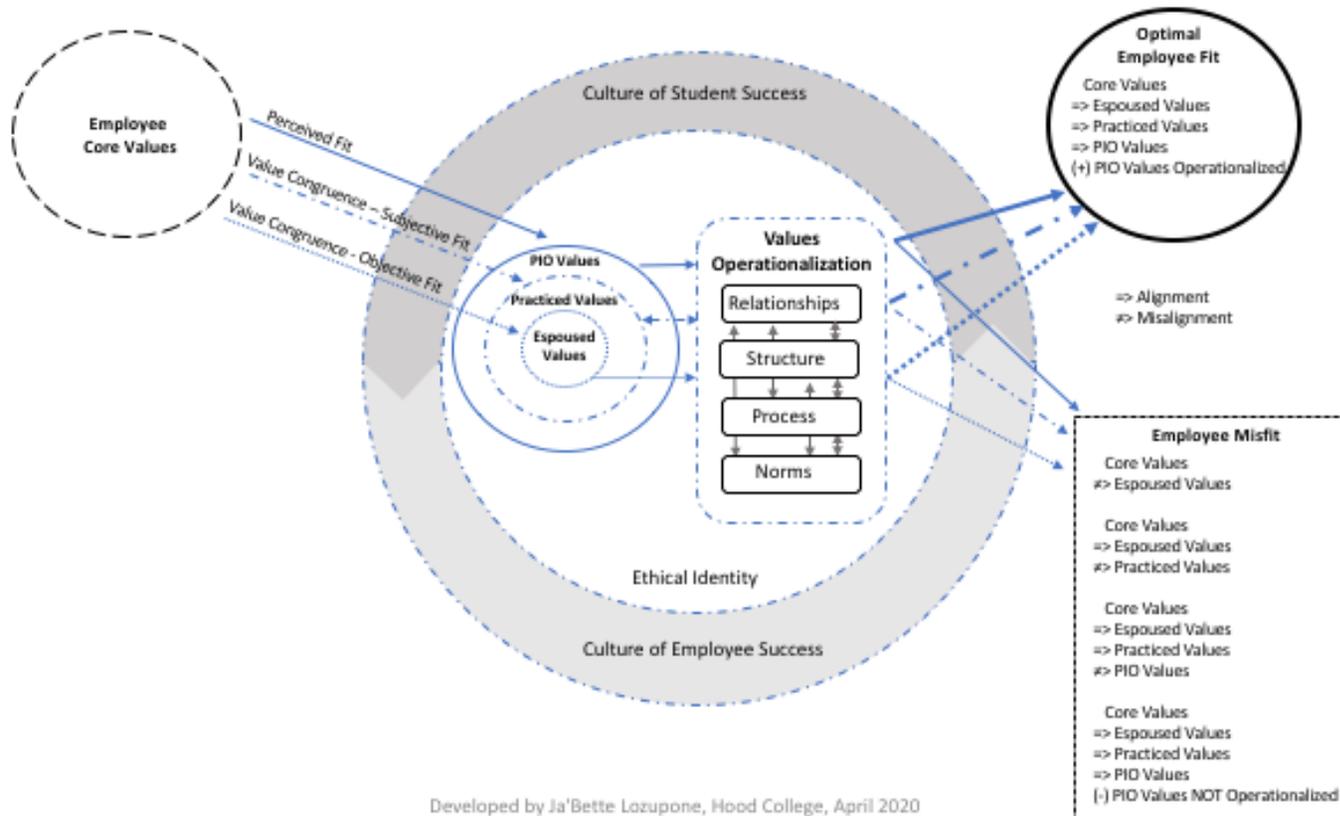
Participants experienced PO fit and misfit through subjective, objective, and perceived fit. When participants experienced subjective, objective, and/or perceived fit, it was not solely due not only to an alignment of individual core values with institutional espoused and practiced values, and participant-identified optimal (PIO) values of fit. Instead, optimal fit occurred when there was alignment between all values—individual core, institutional espoused and practiced, and PIO values—and the PIO values were operationalized. When participants experienced misfit, it was due to a misalignment between individual core values and the institutional espoused and/or practiced values, and/or PIO values, and the PIO values not being operationalized. Values alignment and misalignment, and the operationalization of said values, shaped the ethical identity of the institution, which translated to participants' feelings of fit or misfit. When participants experienced optimal fit at the college, it fostered a culture of employee

and student success. Thus, a symbiotic relationship exists between the institution's ethical identity, the culture of employee success, and the culture of student success, as illustrated in Figure 4.

Figure 4

Conceptual Framework of PO Fit, Ethical Identity, and Student Success

Operationalizing Participant-Identified Optimal (PIO) Values for an Ethical Culture of Employee and Student Success



Although participants could achieve subjective, objective, and/or perceived fit with the dominant culture of the institution through values alignment, they could simultaneously experience misfit or compromised principles with subcultures at the organization due to values misalignment and the misaligned values being operationalized. Ultimately, the perception of fit or misfit depended on how values were operationalized within the four themes and various subthemes. While some degree of fit could occur in instances of misalignments, optimal fit only occurred when all values were aligned, to include individual core, institutional espoused and practiced, and PIO values, in addition to the PIO values being operationalized. How values were operationalized reflected the values practiced at the institution and shaped the institution's culture of employee and student success. As a result, the ethical identity of the institution seemed to play a moderating and mediating role in the institution's culture of employee and student success.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Like most organizations, the community college's major expense is the cost of labor. With a high likelihood that community colleges will continue to confront budget constraints and experience significant challenges with revenue generation in the future, the use of PO fit has important implications for selection practices at community colleges, and how they invest their limited resources into initial staffing and professional development efforts. An opportunity exists to leverage PO fit as an important antecedent of job satisfaction, organizational commitment, organizational citizenship behaviors, and performance to positively impact student success outcomes in alignment with institutional goals in an ethical manner.

As such, PO fit—value congruence and perceived fit—offer community colleges a way to hire educators who contribute value to the college holistically and beyond content expertise in or out of the classroom. By accounting for PO fit in recruitment and selection practices, community colleges can make more informed hiring decisions about faculty, staff, and administrators to improve value congruence and/or perceived fit between educator and organization to enhance student and organizational success. With the responsibility increasingly falling to community colleges to address the poverty and social issues faced by so many community college students, recruiting and selecting faculty, staff, and administrators with optimal organization fit could bolster its ability to achieve institutional goals.

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the individual core values prized by faculty, staff, and administrators at a community college, and the overall optimal values to foster a culture of student success. Further, this study explore the role of ethical identity in fostering a

culture of student success and how PO fit fosters a culture of student success. Value congruence—subjective and objective fit—and perceived fit were used to assess person-organization fit. The central research questions were as follows:

1. Which individual core values are prized by faculty, staff, and administrators in a community college?
2. Which are the overall optimal values perceived to foster a culture of student success?
3. What role does an institution's ethical identity play in fostering a culture of student success?
4. How does value congruence between person and organization foster an institution's culture of student success?
5. How does perceived fit of faculty, staff, and administrators foster an institution's culture of student success?

In order to explore which individual core values individuals in the organization prized most, and which values they perceived to be optimal in fostering a culture of student success, I used person-organization (PO) fit, through the lens of value congruence and perceived fit, to explore and understand the influence of subjective, objective, and perceived fit on the ethical identity of the institution and its culture of student success. I conducted my research with faculty, staff, and administrators at a Mid-Atlantic community college where I collected anonymous survey data from 298 participants, interviewed 39 participants, and facilitated three focus groups in which 24 members participated. Further, I examined the institution's mission, vision, and values statements, strategic plans, websites, and social media.

Major Findings and the Literature

The major findings of this study reflected in the first and second central research questions suggested that the individual core values faculty, staff, and administrators prized most, aligned with the values they identified as optimal values to foster a culture of student success. While participants used different words to communicate their values, I grouped harmonious words together with similar meaning and context, and identified an overarching value for each of the values' groupings. Faculty, staff, and administrators identified eight overarching optimal values: accountability, autonomy, enthusiasm, empowerment, willingness, empathy, truth, and equity and inclusion. The participant-identified optimal (PIO) values identified to foster a culture of student success, and the contextualization of the PIO values by participants, are supported in the literature. Young (1997) proposed and expounded on seven critical values of higher education: service, truth, freedom, equality, individuation, justice, and community. Further, NASPA, the leading student affairs association, has adhered to and promoted the following values and principles, identified by Young (1993): educating the whole student, care for students, service to students and to the university, community, and equality and justice. More specifically to community colleges, Kabanoff and Daly (2002) identified four primary values reflected in community college documents: open access, their respective mission, student success, and service to community. Arguably, the values identified in the literature, even if not specifically mentioned by participants, align with the values' groupings. Moreover, participants provided rich descriptions which contextualized NASPA's principles and the values identified by Young (1993; 1997), and the primary values articulated in community college documents identified by Kabanoff and Daly (2002).

The major findings of this study reflected in the third, fourth, and fifth central research questions suggested that how participants experienced the alignment of their core values across the institutional espoused, practiced, and participant-identified optimal (PIO) values, through the operationalization of values across an interconnected and interdependent web of relationships, structure, process, and norms, shaped the ethical identity of the institution and its cultures of employee and student success. The organization's practiced values determined which values were operationalized, and which values were operationalized determined the practiced values of the institution. Thus, the operationalization of practiced values reflected in the ethical identity of the institution, the culture of employee success, and the culture of student success. In other words, a symbiotic relationship exists between values, ethical identity, and the cultures of employee and student success. As a result, the alignment and misalignment with an individual's core values and the institutional espoused, practiced, and PIO values, result in various subcultures and ethical identities, which can align or misalign with the dominant organizational culture of employee and student success. As I will discuss, this was supported in the literature.

Ethical identity. According to Anderson et al. (2009), community colleges confront various ethical issues that involve a web of relationships, processes, and obligations across faculty, staff, and administrators, which creates the organization's ethical identity. As faculty, staff, and administrators find themselves navigating how to balance competing issues such as changing student and employee demographics, curriculum and pedagogical shifts, mission drift, increased competition, technological changes, dwindling budgets, and increased scrutiny and demand for accountability (Cohen & Brawer, 2008), they increasingly find themselves torn

between trying to fulfill social contracts, serving as good stewards of resources, and meeting public expectations within an ethical framework (Vaughan, 1992).

Moreover, most mature organizations contain any number of subcultures, which form their own assumptions and beliefs based on learned and shared past experiences (Schein, 1992). Bandura (1977) stated that people learn by observing and imitating the attitudes, values, and behaviors of other individuals in an organization. Thus, community colleges find themselves managing “competing internal values and beliefs in a complex culture comprised of a variety of individuals and subgroups” (Anderson et al., 2007, p. 20) that can stem from misaligned values between individual and organization. Because subcultures evolve within the organization due to shared history, prior experience, and the personal beliefs of its members (Schein, 1992), resulting in competing internal values and beliefs about what is best for the organization and its stakeholders (Anderson et al., 2009), subcultures that are in alignment or misalignment with the dominant organizational culture can strengthen or undermine an organization (Schein, 1992).

Incorporating PO fit into the recruitment and selection practices of higher education institutions by promoting PIO values and their operationalization could be a strategy to manage organizational complexities and challenges within an ethical framework to foster a culture of employee and student success. Anderson et al. (2009) assert that it is the responsibility of all employees, individuals, and subgroups within the institution to share common beliefs and values to forge a solid professional and institutional ethical identity that is clearly articulated by the college’s mission, vision, values, and actions. In other words, the findings of this study are broadly in line with the literature in that higher education institutions should recruit and select individuals whose individual core values align with the institutional espoused values, practiced

values, and PIO values. Further, I found that the institution should operationalize the PIO values through relationships, structure, process, and norms. According to the literature, the cultural values of the faculty, staff, and administrators within the institution must match the cultural values of the community college (Anderson et al., 2009). Schein and Schein (2017) state that the first step is to build an awareness about the organizational complexities and subcultures. One way to do this can be socialization efforts, such as professional development, which is in line with one of the subthemes that emerged from my analysis.

It is suggested that over time, faculty, staff, and administrators can adapt or acculturate to develop the institution's desired professional ethical identity (Anderson et al., 2007; Handelsman et al., 2005) through cultural maintenance and contact and participation (Berry & Sam, 1997). Individuals within the organization consciously or unconsciously determine what core values and personal ethics they will maintain during their interactions with the college—cultural maintenance—and whether they will embrace or reject the institutional values and organizational ethics—contact and participation (Anderson et al., 2009), using one of four acculturation strategies: marginalization, separation, assimilation, and integration (Handelsman et al., 2005). Ideally, the integration strategy—high in maintenance and high in contact and participation—is optimal and will occur when individuals can adapt to the organization's ethics and values while maintaining their own personal code of ethics. This involves individuals resolving tension in a way that fosters integration between themselves and the organization (Handelsman et al., 2005). This is especially more critical when an organization's ethical practices are lacking or fall short, and when the institution desires to mitigate the spread of undesirable subcultures.

It is important to note that the acculturation model, proposed by Handelsman et al. (2005), is grounded in the assumption that the institution espouses ethical standards that strive for the ethical ideal or are beneficent. As such, the identification and operationalization of PIO values is supported in the literature because it strives for values and ethical ideals that are identified and accepted by the institution to foster employee and student success. Anderson et al. (2007) stated that faculty, staff, and administrators must acknowledge college values and personal beliefs as reasonable ideals to successfully implement the integration strategy (Anderson et al., 2007). The findings indicate that a majority of individuals at the institution are experiencing separation. Thus, an opportunity exists to improve the ethical identity of the institution. The findings suggest that leveraging PIO values and their operationalization may promote integration. Therefore, the use and operationalization of PIO values with the implementation of the integration strategy may promote the development of a professional ethical identity benefitting the individuals and the institution (Anderson et al., 2007).

Value congruence and perceived fit. This study attempted to blend fit epistemologies to explore how different fit constructs—value congruence and perceived fit—fostered a culture of student success.

Perceived fit. While the literature on perceived fit is scarce, it is suggested that perceived fit offers the strongest relationships to outcomes like job satisfaction and organizational commitment, and it also underlies individuals' decision making (Kristof-Brown & Zimmerman, 2005; Verquer et al., 2003). Further, perceived fit focuses more on the individual's sense of "fitting in" or "feeling like a misfit," thus, using a more interpretivist approach (Kristof-Brown & Billsberry, 2013). When I asked individuals how they fit at the organization, they framed their

description of fit around alignment between individual core values and institutional espoused and practiced values. Moreover, individuals framed their fit around unique experiences with how the organization operationalized individual core values, institutional espoused and practiced values, across relationships, structure, process, and norms. Thus, it was the operationalization of values that seemed to influence perceived fit. This is somewhat supported in the literature in that perceived fit is viewed as something internal or inside a person's mind that influences their thoughts and feelings toward their job or organization (Billsberry et al., 2005; Cooper-Thomas et al., 2004; Kristof-Brown A., 2000; Ravlin & Ritchie, 2006; Wheeler et al., 2007). However, the literature does not suggest what that something might be. The results of this study may offer some insight.

By framing participants' fit around organizational goals and outcomes, which in this study was fostering a culture of student success, I asked participants questions to understand what the something might be that influences their perceived fit. Additionally, I compared their perceived fit to their subjective and objective fit through value congruence to identify value alignments and misalignments to better understand the relationship between the three types of fit. In addition to asking individuals how they fit with the organization, I asked them about:

- Their attraction to the organization
- Their individual core values and how those values influenced their work
- How their fit changed over time and why
- The values practiced by the institution and personal experiences to support the practiced values they identified
- Their role in student success

- How they personally positively impact students' lives
- Descriptions and examples of how faculty and staff positively impact students' lives, and how well those individuals fit in the organization
- Descriptions of the values and qualities of faculty and staff that would foster a culture of student success and lead to ideal fit with the organization

In these rich narratives and descriptions, participants identified and described optimal values of fit to positively impact students' lives and foster a culture of student success. The findings suggest that perceived fit occurs when individuals' core values align with the organization's participant-identified optimal (PIO) values. Moreover, the findings suggest that it is the operationalization of PIO values that affirms individuals' perceived fit with the organization. Thus, it seems that PIO values must be operationalized for perceived fit to occur, regardless of value congruence. In other words, whether value congruence exists or not between the individual and the organization, a violation of PIO values during operationalization across relationships, structure, process, or norms may heighten or diminish feelings of fit or misfit of individuals with subcultures or the dominant organizational culture. The literature supports that correlations between both types of fit are low to moderate (Edwards et al., 2006), and that not much is understood about how these perceptions form or why they influence attitudes and behaviors so strongly (Kristof-Brown & Billsberry, 2013). The findings suggest that an organization's failure to operationalize PIO values, or stated another way, a violation of any PIO value during operationalization, may cause cognitive dissonance and feelings of misfit for individuals, regardless of value congruence. In response to calls for additional research on perceived fit, these findings may provide insight into how individuals experience fit, improve

understanding about how to drive fit, and how to use fit as a predictor of outcomes (Edwards & Billsberry, 2010; Lauver & Kristof-Brown, 2001; Schmitt, Oswald, Friede et al., 2008).

Value congruence. Seldom did employees' core values match the institutional espoused or practiced values. However, upon further investigation, the words individuals used to describe their individual core values held similar meanings to values espoused by the organization, and the values practiced by the organization. As a result, the findings suggested that when individuals' core values aligned with espoused values, theoretically achieving objective fit, it was possible for the individual to report fit or misfit according to subjective fit or perceived fit. In other words, individuals with objective fit reported misfit when they experienced the organization's practiced values contradict institutional espoused values and/or the organization's violation of participant-identified optimal (PIO) values. Similarly, individuals who achieved subjective fit could also report misfit according to experiencing the organization's practiced values contradict espoused values or if a violation of PIO values occurred. This is supported by literature in that "actual fit only has an impact on someone if that person perceives that the fit exists" (Kristof-Brown & Jansen, 2007, p. 133). The findings of this study suggest that how individuals perceive fit to exist may be related to alignment of individual core values with PIO values and the operationalization of PIO values in the organization across relationships, structure, process and norms.

Like perceived fit, value congruence is an important antecedent of behavioral outcomes such as job performance, organizational citizenship behavior, and job turnover (Kristof, 1996; Hoffman & Woehr, 2006). These outcomes are not only critical to a higher education institution's ability to thrive and meet institutional goals, but also to foster a culture of employee

and student success. Moreover, the findings from this study suggest that a symbiotic relationship exists between values and ethical identity, which is supported by the literature, as PO fit may play a moderating and mediating role in ethical culture (Ruiz-Palomino & Martinez-Cañas, 2014). This is especially relevant to community colleges as they face diminishing resources and mounting financial pressures in an ever-changing landscape of federal requirements—most notably, the completion agenda. According to Kristof (1996), when high levels of PO fit are achieved through hiring and socialization, organizations are better able to retain a flexible workforce with the flexibility and organizational commitment required to overcome challenges and maintain a competitive edge (Kristof, 1996). The findings suggest that leveraging the operationalization of PIO values to incorporate PO fit into selection practices of new faculty, staff, and administrators, and to socialize existing college personnel, through professional development activities, could improve the agility of community colleges and improve student success outcomes by fostering an ethical culture of employee and student success.

The findings suggest that individuals value professional development, and that the organization supports it. According to Bao et al. (2012), studies confirm that some types of socialization tactics can increase value congruence or the perception of it. There is also evidence to suggest that even if only individuals' perception of fit changes through socialization, it is enough to influence job attitudes. Thus, leveraging PIO values through professional development opportunities and encouraging the operationalization of those values at every level of the organization may mitigate subcultures misaligned with the desired culture of student and employee success.

Student success. Kinzie and Kuh (2016) state, “an institution’s total learning environment—its context and culture—matter to how student success is defined, addressed, and achieved” (p. 17). Arguably, the institution’s total learning environment reflects how values are operationalized across the four major themes that emerged from my analysis: relationships, structure, process, and norms. These findings are generally compatible with Kinzie and Kuh’s (2016) Student Success Driver Diagram, which identifies primary and secondary drivers that include three elements: structures that comprise the system, processes that represent the work of the system, and operating norms that illustrate the explicit and tacit culture of the system. Bennett and Provost (2015), indicate that the primary and secondary drivers are key leverage points in the driver diagram and identify necessary and sufficient elements to achieve an intended goal.

Because the focus of my study was on PO fit and the intersection with student success, I focused my attention on identifying the potential points of intersection between PO fit and various primary and secondary drivers of the Student Success Driver Diagram. I was particularly interested in a secondary driver of primary driver 1: cooperative, respectful working relationships between faculty, staff, and student affairs professionals, and the secondary drivers of primary driver 5, enact a student success mindset. The secondary drivers of primary driver 5 include: a) requiring faculty, staff, and administrators to develop and foster a student success mindset, b) fostering a culture of student support, c) promoting an assets-based narrative, d) emphasizing benefits of co-curricular activities, and e) making underserved student achievement visible and valued (Kinzie & Kuh, 2016). Although the findings are generally compatible with the student success driver diagram, a distinction is that the findings of this study may point to PO

fit of faculty, staff, and administrators as a precursor to accomplishing the primary and secondary drivers of the student success driver diagram. In other words, the ability to accomplish the primary and secondary drivers may depend on the PO fit of the individuals responsible for accomplishing the student success work. Faculty, staff, and administrators shape their organizational and campus cultures through shared values, and congruence in values determines PO fit. The findings of this study suggest that the shared values determined to foster a culture of student success at this Mid-Atlantic community college, when operationalized, were the participant-identified optimal (PIO) values: accountability, autonomy, enthusiasm, empowerment, willingness, empathy, truth, and equity and inclusion.

The findings are consistent with previous research and suggest that the operationalization of the PIO values across relationships, structure, process, and norms shaped the ethical identity of the institution and its cultures of employee and student success. The literature on achieving student success points to culture as a critical ingredient of student success outcomes (Jayakumar & Museus, 2012; Kezar A., 2012; Kezar & Maxey, 2014; Kinzie & Kuh, 2016). In addition, the ASA framework indicates that it is the people within the organization that make the place (Schneider, 1987). Thus, the findings affirm that the alignment and operationalization of PIO values can improve value congruence and perceived fit during staffing or socialization, through professional development activities. Moreover, while the focus of the student success driver diagram is not on the faculty, staff, and administrators responsible for operationalizing student success work, the findings suggest that the optimal PO fit of these individuals would enhance primary and secondary drivers through improved working relationships and collaboration across divisions and employee roles, increasing co-curricular activities, fostering a culture of student

support, willingness to adapt a growth mindset orientation for employees and students, willingness to make underserved students' achievements visible and valued, and encouraging an assets-based narrative for students and employees.

Furthermore, the findings are consistent with seminal research in care ethics in education by Nel Noddings (1988) that not only should schools consciously seek to educate people for moral life, but that the best way to accomplish this aim is through conducting work in a moral way. Through a relational ethic, or ethic of caring, individuals act out of love and natural inclination, which energizes the giver and receiver. Natural caring is both the source and terminus of ethical caring. The possibility of a caring occasion arises in every human encounter, thus moral education involves modeling, dialogue, practice, and confirmation. Faculty, staff, and administrators should not only model admirable patterns of intellectual activity, but also desirable ways of interacting with people. Teaching moments are used as caring occasions.

Relationships, structure, process, and norms. According to the ASA framework (Schneider, 1987), the attributes of people are the fundamental determinants of organizational behavior. While it is suggested that employees whose values do not fit with an organization's values will either be removed by the organization or will leave of their own volition (Schneider, 1987), the findings of this study are somewhat at odds and suggest that subcultures with distinct values and ethical identities can also emerge and remain in the organization with the potential to compromise an institution's dominant ethical identity and dominant cultures of employee and student success. While individuals expressed concerns about employees with optimal fit leaving the institution, they also expressed concerns about the impact of individuals remaining in the organization who did not fit.

While Schneider (1987) urges to refrain from seeking new “right types” that do not share inclinations that fit the old “right types,” as old-timers will force them out, he suggests generating a useful set of data, such as personality and interest measures administered across the entire organization so that newcomers brought in to change the organization share attributes with those they are expected to change. The literature is in harmony with the findings that consensus exists among faculty, staff, and administrators around participant-identified optimal (PIO) values to foster a culture of employee and student success. Thus, the alignment and operationalization of PIO values across relationships, structure, process and norms may provide a way to foster the desired climate and culture of the institution, and even facilitate an adjustment when the behaviors of people change, resulting from different types of people being attracted to, selected by, and staying in the organization (Schneider, 1987).

According to Schneider (1987), processes and structures emerge in organizations because of the kinds of people in them acting in ways that facilitate the accomplishments of the goals of the founder. Further, the organizational climate is determined by how organizations communicate what is important to organizational effectiveness by what it rewards, supports, and expects (Schneider, 1987). In a similar vein, culture refers to people within the organization sharing common assumptions, values, and beliefs, transmitted through myths and stories (Schein, 1992). The literature supports that the alignment and operationalization of participant-identified optimal (PIO) values across relationships, structure, process, and norms reflected in decision-making, policies and procedures, may be a way to promote and sustain a culture and climate that fosters employee and student success in an ethical environment.

Relationships. Relationships evolved as one of four themes in the connection between PO fit and student success. Individuals equally expressed the importance of developing caring relationships with students and each other as a component of success for themselves and for students. In addition, individuals pointed to the importance of belongingness and welcoming and supportive environments for students and employees. Individuals drew connections between their care for each other and care for students and pointed to mentorships as a critical ingredient in employee and student success. The findings are consistent with student success literature concerning student needs in the way of engaging and supportive relationships, belongingness, mentorship, and so forth (Jayakumar & Museus, 2012; Kezar A., 2012; Kezar & Maxey, 2014; Kinzie & Kuh, 2016). The findings suggest that the importance of effective relationships cannot be over stated, as relationships over process seem to foster or hinder employee and student success, and influence how individuals perceived fit and a sense of belonging. Moreover, tension and strained relationships can lead to perceived misfit. Notwithstanding that the findings apply to faculty, staff, and students, this finding is consistent with student success literature with respect to students. Interestingly, the literature also holds up when applied to the success of faculty, staff, and administrators, of which the success of students may reflect. Given the findings, it seems that the student success literature is not only relevant as a prescription for student success, but may also serve as an off-label prescription for the success of faculty, staff, and administrators.

Structure. The structure of the organization was another theme to emerge from my analysis when participants described their fit with the college and the culture of student success at the institution. Consistent with the literature that leaders can significantly influence the ethical culture and climate of organizations (Jordan et al., 2013; Kelly et al., 2004; Treviño et al., 2003;

Treviño, Hartman, & Brown, 2000) and influence the thinking of other senior or high-level members of the organization (Jordan et al., 2013), individuals were in consensus that the president sets the tone for the organization and drives its culture. Further, the findings suggest that any disconnect between the top and bottom of the organization, such as the organization not walking the talk, leads to feelings of misfit and compromises employee and student success. This is consistent with the literature that executive-leader's behavior influences and impacts follower behavior across different levels of the organization (van Gils et al., 2015) and that that lack of value congruence or perceived misfit is an important antecedent of behavioral outcomes (Kristof, 1996; Kristof-Brown & Zimmerman, 2005; Hoffman & Woehr, 2006; Verquer et al., 2003).

Additionally, the findings suggest that professional development and recruitment of diverse individuals that reflect the student body may mitigate challenges presented by the status quo of the organization by improving PO fit and fostering cultures of employee and student success. Professional development, as a tactic to socialize individuals to improve PO fit, is supported by the literature to improve behavior outcomes and job satisfaction (Bao et al., 2012; Kristof, 1996). The literature suggests that a diverse faculty and staff body has various benefits and can positively impact students by exposing them to different cultures, improving relatability to foster relationships with faculty, staff, and peers, and identifying role models in positions of knowledge, social and political importance, who look like them (Collins & Kirtsonis, 2006). In addition, the literature supports the pursuit of equity and diversity through shared leadership, responsibility, and accountability (Kinzie & Kuh, 2016) at all levels of the organization and across divisions.

Process. The other theme to emerge from my analysis, process, is closely related to the theme of relationships. Further, several subthemes emerged: a) communication, b) equitable access and stewardship of resources, and c) gaps in practices and employee and student success. I found that individuals perceived misfit when values are not consistently communicated through the various levels of the organization. My findings are to some extent, at odds with the literature. According to Mayer et al. (2009), the positive effects of executive-level ethical leadership trickle down to lower level employees within an organization through the ethical leadership practiced by supervisors. However, the findings suggest that if PIO values are misaligned or if PIO values are not operationalized, subcultures may form within the organization and possibly prevent the transmittance of values. Thus, the subculture may interrupt the flow of the executive leader's values throughout the organization.

Similarly, the literature suggests that leaders influence their followers through social learning processes, which influence the ethicality of the organization's leaders, and, in turn, cascades to followers at lower levels of the organization (Mayer et al., 2009). The findings suggest that when subcultures form, conflicting values may perpetuate throughout the institution and lead individuals to perceive simultaneous fit and misfit, which can compromise employee and student success. While the findings were consistent with the literature in that the executive-leader's behavior influences and impacts follower behavior across different levels of the organization (van Gils et al., 2015), the findings suggest that subcultures at any level of the organization may be very disruptive. The literature supported that strong subcultures can facilitate or derail change initiatives (Burnes & Jackson, 2011; Locke & Guglielmino, 2006) Schein, 1992). The findings suggest that areas of opportunity may exist to develop practices to

mitigate subcultures when socialization, through professional development, is not an effective strategy.

In addition, the findings suggest that when employees and students do not have equitable access to resources, it may compromise employee and student success. These findings are consistent with the research on accumulated disparities resulting from policies and practices that result in differences in educational achievement (Bensimon et al., 2016). However, as previously mentioned, my findings suggest that the strategies prescribed to foster student success may also apply to the individuals doing the student success work to promote their effectiveness and success.

Norms. The fourth theme to emerge from my analysis was norms. The findings suggest a consensus among individuals that everyone on a college campus is responsible for student success. However, while these findings might appear to be consistent with the literature that shared leadership and the proverbial village are necessary to achieve student success (Kinzie & Kuh, 2016), the findings suggest that individuals with free will may still need to choose to play an active role in student success. The difference between individuals who choose to play or not play a role in student success might be related to values misalignments or subcultures in the organization. In addition, the findings suggest that high standards and expectations for faculty, staff, and students may lead to employee and student success. The findings are consistent with the research that setting high and clear expectations with conviction that expectations will be met (Kuh G. D., 2008) leads to student success. This includes support structures in place to allow students to meet standards without watering down curricula. As previously mentioned, the findings suggest that it may be that the strategies prescribed for student success may have the

same effect when prescribed for employee success. Moreover, the findings suggest that a critical expectation of faculty and staff may be a sustainable approach to go beyond the job description.

Implications

My study offers suggestive evidence that optimal PO fit between faculty, staff, and administrators with the higher education institutions they serve can foster an ethical culture of employee and student success. More importantly, it demonstrates that through the operationalization of participant-identified optimal (PIO) values across relationships, structure, process, and norms that robust collaboration and effective decision-making can take place within the institution to develop equity-minded policies and procedures that are efficient and promote the institution's ethical identity, facilitate institutional goals and outcomes in accordance with the completion agenda, and foster welcoming and supportive environments where faculty, staff, administrators and students can achieve their goals. In other words, an institution must embed its values in its operations at every level of the organization to ensure that it practices the values it espouses, and attracts and retains faculty, staff, and administrators who embody shared values. An ethical culture of student success can only occur where an ethical culture of employee success exists.

Practical Implications. There are various practical implications for incorporating PO fit into selection, socialization, and managerial practices.

- The identification of participant-identified optimal (PIO) values toward a common goal suggest that an organization can work harmoniously in a culture where an individual's core values align with institutional espoused and practiced values, PIO values, and, further, where those PIO values are operationalized

across relationships, structure, process, and norms. This process of embedding the institution's values in its operations across all levels of the organization represents the institutionalization of values. By involving the entire organization in the inventory of PIO values, the organization will know what it stands for and buy into the culture it wants to foster. As such, organizations can be more intentional in their hiring practices and professional development efforts to target individuals with optimal fit during initial staffing and to improve the fit of individuals already existing within the institution by leveraging professional development activities to promote shared values between faculty, staff, administrators and the institution.

- Creating awareness around PO fit, PIO values, and their usefulness to lead organizational transformation, improve organizational effectiveness, and foster desirable cultures can help mitigate the negative connotations associated with using fit as an exclusionary practice during hiring and selection practices.
- To promote cultural transformation, once PIO values have been identified in an organization and a commitment made to operationalizing PIO values by embedding these values into organizational policies, procedures, and expectations, operations should be routinely audited to promote accountability and to ensure that PIO values are upheld in the institution's daily practices. Moreover, PIO values should be reflected in the organization's vision, mission, values, credo, and actions.
- In the face of diminishing resources and climbing labor costs, obtaining optimal PO fit between faculty, staff, and administrators with the institutions they serve—

during selection practices—offers higher education institutions an opportunity to, more soundly, invest in high quality faculty, staff and administrators who offer students and their colleagues valuable contributions beyond simply content expertise in the classroom or in their official administrative capacity. Empirical evidence supports that optimal person-organization (PO) fit results in positive job attitudes, improved performance, higher organizational commitment, increased organizational citizenship behaviors, more satisfaction, a favorable ethical climate, and reduced turnover (Andrews et al., 2011; Bao et al., 2012; Dolan, 2016; Farooqui & Nagendra, 2014; Hoffman & Woehr, 2006; Sekiguchi & Huber, 2011; Tull & Medrano, 2007.; Weinstein, 2017). One way to do this is to incorporate an assessment of desired cultural fit during the interview process, such as asking interview questions where candidates demonstrate how they live and breath their core values into their daily work around real-life examples from the unique higher education institution to which they are applying. The hiring committee or employer can then assess the fit of the candidate with the organization.

- After an organization identifies its PIO values, the organization should embrace, promote, and operationalize PIO values across relationships, structure, process, and norms according to mutually agreed upon expectations with faculty, staff, and administrators, to reaffirm the organization is continually clear on who the organization is and what the organization stands for. By embedding PIO values into the institution's operations at every level, the institution can achieve

accountability in upholding optimal shared values to ensure the institution walks its talk at all levels of the organization.

- Employee success leads to student success. Individuals cannot give what they do not have. Advancing a holistic approach to employee success by institutionalizing values promotes high standards and clear expectations with appropriate support structures, transparent and honest communication at every level of the organization, collaboration, equity-minded access to resources, and a diverse employee body. When an institution embeds its values into every corner of its operations at every level, the institution improves the achievement of its objectives, goals, and outcomes. Student success will reflect employee outcomes and success.
- Given the centrality of the population, administrative aides play a critical role in supporting faculty, staff, administrators, and students. This population will benefit from additional investment to leverage and share their expertise, innovate, lead more initiatives, and collaborate more robustly with faculty, staff, and administrators at all levels of the organization.
- Institutions should take clear and deliberate action to institutionalize its values. It is only through accountability that an institution can safeguard, promote, and sustain its ethical identity and culture of employee success to foster an ethical culture of student success.

Implications for future research. There are various implications for future research.

- Student success research has primarily focused on what students need. However, the suggestive evidence of this study points to a need for more focus on serving the individuals who serve the students. Faculty, staff, and administrators yearned for what much of the student success literature prescribes to cultivate student success. Further research into prescribing student success practices for employee success could provide insight into how to build a holistic shared culture of institutional success.
- Possible areas for future research of PIO values could be quantitative, qualitative, and mixed method studies to explore differences and similarities between types of organizations and across industries. Similarly, the differences and similarities of PIO values around the same goal across organizations can point to industry similarities. Further research could explore the use of PIO values to maximize organizational effectiveness, identify an organization's gaps to target change, or identify an individual's gaps within an organization to target change. Additionally, PIO values could be assessed at various points in time at the same organization to explore signals and/or the need for cultural transformation.
- Additional research that blends fit epistemologies to explore strength of fit resulting from alignments and misalignments between objective, subjective, and perceived fit when PIO values are operationalized could help to understand the influence on practiced values, ethical identity, and organizational culture. In addition, the investigation of PO fit alignments and misalignments with PIO

values from a supplementary and complementary perspective can improve understanding of the relationship between PIO values, practiced values, and espoused values and its effects on PIO values operationalization, ethical identity, and culture.

- Without further research into the area of mindset related to growth mindset and enacting a student success mindset, it will not be possible to know whether alignment between PIO values and individual core values influence an individual's choice to play an active role in student success. Further, it would be beneficial to explore leveraging PIO values to alter the organizational mindset, direct organizational learning, foster a culture of open communication, and promote knowledge sharing within the organization.

Conclusions

Without employee success there can be no student success. Faculty, staff, administrators, and students are all searching for the same things. Simply, we are searching for the things that unite us in the human experience. We all desire to be loved and cared for, treated with kindness and respect, and supported on our academic, professional, and personal journeys. We yearn to belong and feel connected to the individuals whom we spend our time with. We want to self-actualize and realize our full potential, even if uncertain about what our potential beholds. And so, faculty, staff, administrators, and students, alike, find themselves on a college campus. They take turns as teachers and students, ever eager to contribute and make discoveries about themselves and the world, to improve, in perpetuity, their pursuit of happiness and livelihood, be it career, family, or community.

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APPENDIX A PARTICIPANT INVITATION LETTER

Dear College Community,

I would like to invite you to participate in research I am passionate about: fit and values in higher education in the context of student success. This research project is approved by the Montgomery College Institutional Review Board (IRB). I am interested in learning about the relationship between person-organization fit and student success. Would you like to participate?

The benefits to you would be:

1. Informing the research on person-organization fit
2. Contributing to the research on student success
3. Sharing your own experiences and thoughts about person-organization fit and student success, and
4. Discussing experiences with colleagues

There are no anticipated risks to you as a participant in this research, nor are there any risks to you should you choose not to participate. This study is voluntary and you can withdraw from the study at any time with no impact to your relationship with the investigator, without penalty, and will not experience any adverse effects as a result of your participation, lack of participation, or responses during the focus group or interview activities. If you agree to be in this study, I invite you to do the following, which involves the approximate time commitment for each in parenthesis:

- a. Complete an online Survey Monkey survey (15-30 minutes)
- b. Participate in an audio-recorded focus group during your lunch hour (45 minutes)
- c. Participate in an individual, audio-recorded interview at a time and location of your choosing (45 – 60 minutes)

Although I cannot compensate you monetarily, I will express my sincere gratitude and appreciation, and provide plenty of snacks and water. I hope you will find the time in your extremely busy schedule to tell me about your experiences and thoughts on person-organization fit and student success.

If you would like to participate, you can reply to this email with your preference:

_____ I wish to participate fully in all of the above data activities.

_____ I wish to participate, but cannot or do not want to do all of the above. I will do the following:

- _____ Survey Monkey Survey
- _____ Focus Group
- _____ Interview

Or you can respond online with your preferences using this [link](#).

To proceed now with completing the anonymous Survey Monkey survey, please use this [link](#) before November 18, 2019.

With appreciation,

Ja'Bette Lozupone
Doctoral Candidate,
Hood College
Cohort 2020

APPENDIX B INFORMED CONSENT

HOOD COLLEGE INFORMED CONSENT FORM

The Relationship Between Person-Organization (PO) Fit and Student Success

1. INTRODUCTION

You are invited to be a participant in a research study about person-organization (PO) fit of faculty, staff, and administrators in higher education and student success. You were selected as a possible participant because of your role in the organization. Please read this document and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to be in the study. Participants in this study must be at least 18 years old. The study is being conducted by Principal Investigator Ja'Bette Lozupone, doctoral candidate at Hood College.

While survey participants will be anonymous, it is possible that individuals I supervise might choose to participate in a focus group or interview. As an administrator with a leadership role at the College, it is possible that individuals whom I supervise, and even those that I do not have an evaluative role over may feel pressured to participate or respond to questions in a way that they perceive I would desire. **Participation in this study is voluntary, participants may withdraw at any time without penalty, and participants will not experience any adverse effects as a result of their participation, lack of participation, or responses during the focus group or interview activities.**

2. BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

I am conducting a qualitative study investigating the values and perceived fit of faculty, staff, and administrators in higher education in the context of student success. I will be using pseudonyms for all interviewees and not naming the organization in the study. The interviews will take less than 60 minutes and will ask about student success, values, organizational culture, and perceived fit. I will make every effort to ensure confidentiality as described in this consent form for all study participants. This research is being conducted in partial fulfillment of requirements for the doctorate in organizational leadership.

3. DURATION

The length of time you will be involved with this study is for one or more of the following: a) 15 – 30-minute survey, b) 45-minute focus group activity, and c) an initial interview that likely will last less than 60 minutes, and you may receive an additional request for an interview during the next 90 days.

4. PROCEDURES

If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to answer questions about student success, the values of the organization, the culture of the organization, your personal values, and perceived fit. You can choose to participate in any or all study activities to include an online survey, focus group, and/or interview. Survey participants will be able to skip items in the online survey.

5. RISKS/BENEFITS

This study has no identifiable risks known at this time: With any research, there is some possibility that you may be subject to risks that have not yet been identified. I will use pseudonyms for all participants' names, and I will not reveal any information that can be used to identify participants.

The benefits of participation are: By participating in this study you will share your experience and insight with the higher education sector, especially community colleges. Others might benefit from this study through improved understanding of the factors that contribute to person-organization (PO) fit and student success.

6. CONFIDENTIALITY

The records of this study will be kept private and confidential. Names and IP addresses will not be collected for the survey. Confidentiality will be strictly maintained throughout the study regarding your identity and responses. While the importance of privacy will be emphasized for participants in the focus groups, confidentiality cannot be guaranteed due to the group format. A third party will do the transcription of the audio tapes. Any potential loss of confidentiality will be minimized as follows: 1) comments will not be attributed to you by name or institution in any published reports of findings, and your name will be changed to a pseudonym; 2) a code will be placed on the transcript and any other collected data, and the researcher will only have access to the code key; 3) any data that I collect for this study will be stored in a secure office, on a password protected computer; 4) the audio files will be transcribed and stored in a locked file cabinet; and 5) the original audio files will be stored on a password protected computer. Transcripts and data will be stored for the duration of the project and destroyed within one year after project completion in case I choose to extend the study or publish the findings. **The results of this study may be used in reports, presentations, and publications; but I will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a participant or the research setting.**

7. VOLUNTARY NATURE OF THE STUDY

Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. It is OK for you to say NO. Even if you say YES now, you are free to say NO later, and walk away or withdraw from the study—at any time. If you decide to stop participation in this study, you will not be penalized or lose any benefits to which you may otherwise qualify. **You can withdraw from the study at any time with no impact to your relationship with the investigator, without penalty, and will not experience any adverse effects as a result of your participation, lack of participation, or**

responses during the focus group or interview activities. I reserve the right to withdraw your participation in this study, at any time, if I observe potential problems with your continued participation.

8. CONTACTS AND QUESTIONS

The researcher conducting this study is Ja'Bette Lozupone. You may ask any questions you have right now. If you have questions later, you may contact the researcher at: 240-305-2426 or JLB9@hood.edu. If you have questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to speak with someone other than the researcher, you may contact Dr. Jennifer Cuddapah, dissertation chair at cuddapah@hood.edu.

9. COMPENSATION None

10. STATEMENT OF CONSENT

You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records.

The procedures of this study have been explained to me and my questions have been addressed. The information that I provide is confidential and will be used for research purposes only. I am at least 18 years old. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw anytime without penalty. If I have any concerns about my experience in this study, I may contact Dr. Diane Graves, chair, Institutional Review Board at 301-696-3963 or graves@hood.edu regarding my concerns.

Participant signature _____ Date _____

Signature of Person Obtaining Consent

_____ Date _____

APPENDIX C SURVEY

The purpose of this survey is to learn what faculty, staff, and others at the college think about values, fit, and student success. Before you begin the survey, please answer the following demographic questions. Once the survey begins, you may choose to skip items.

1. What is your **primary role** at the College?
 - a. Faculty
 - b. Administrator (annually contracted employee appointed by the President)
 - c. Staff (Not appointed by the President)
 - d. External Contractor
 - e. Other
 - f. Prefer not to disclose
2. What is the **division of your primary role** at the College?
 - a. Academic Affairs
 - b. Student Affairs
 - c. Administrative and Fiscal Services
 - d. Institutional Advancement and Community Engagement
 - e. Other
 - f. Prefer not to disclose
3. How long have you worked for the College?
 - a. 4 years or less
 - b. 5 -10 years
 - c. 11 – 15 years
 - d. 16 – 20 years
 - e. 21+ years

Please read the following statements about students, student success, and/or the faculty and staff who support them. Indicate your agreement with each item by selecting one answer for each question. You may choose to skip items.

1. Our community college students have the same potential as four-year college students.
Strongly agree Somewhat agree Neither agree/nor disagree Somewhat disagree Strongly disagree
2. All of our students can succeed.
Strongly agree Somewhat agree Neither agree/nor disagree Somewhat disagree Strongly disagree
3. Underserved students have the same potential as high-performing students.
Strongly agree Somewhat agree Neither agree/nor disagree Somewhat disagree Strongly disagree

4. All faculty, staff, and administrators at the college play a role in student success.
 Strongly agree Somewhat agree Neither agree/nor disagree Somewhat disagree Strongly disagree

5. For each statement, “they” refers to faculty or staff. Please indicate your agreement by selecting one response in the faculty column, and one response in the staff column for each statement.

Statement	Faculty’s Role					Staff’s Role				
	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither Agree/Nor Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither Agree/Nor Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
They play a critical role in student success.										
They are accessible to students.										
They are approachable to students.										
They are willing to support students’ needs.										
They respect the students.										
They are deeply engaged with students.										
They have quality interactions with students.										
They have deep relationships with students.										
They spend time socially with students (outside of the classroom).										
They care about students’ physical, mental, and socio-emotional well-being.										
They are responsive to students’ physical, mental, and socio-emotional needs.										
They care about students’ academic performance.										

6. Quality opportunities to meet students’ physical, mental, and socio-emotional needs is as important as quality and engaging instruction and interaction with faculty.
 Strongly disagree Somewhat disagree Slightly disagree Neutral Slightly agree Somewhat agree Strongly agree

7. Please describe a time when you went above, and beyond, to help a student be successful?

Often times, the values we hold dear come through in our work. Please read the following statements about the college’s [mission and values](#) (click the link to reference the college’s mission, vision, and values) and indicate your agreement by selecting one response for each statement. You may choose to skip items.

1. Indicate your agreement with each statement regarding the mission, values, and students at the college.

I was attracted to the college because (of):	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither Agree/Nor Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
-----------------------------------------------------	----------------	----------------	----------------------------	-------------------	-------------------

Its mission

Its values

I like working with students

I chose to work at the college because (of):	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither Agree/Nor Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
-----------------------------------------------------	----------------	----------------	----------------------------	-------------------	-------------------

Its mission

Its values

I like working with students

I stay at the college because (of):	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither Agree/Nor Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
--------------------------------------------	----------------	----------------	----------------------------	-------------------	-------------------

Its mission

Its values

I like working with students

2. I support the stated values of the college.

Strongly agree Somewhat agree Neither agree/nor disagree Somewhat disagree Strongly disagree

3. I take the college's stated values to heart.

Strongly agree Somewhat agree Neither agree/nor disagree Somewhat disagree Strongly disagree

4. My personal values are very similar to the college's stated values.

Strongly agree Somewhat agree Neither agree/nor disagree Somewhat disagree Strongly disagree

Sometimes the stated values of an organization are different from the day-to-day lived and practiced values of an organization. Please indicate your agreement with each statement about values and fit by selecting one answer for each question. You may choose to skip items.

5. The stated values of the college match the practiced values of the college.

Strongly agree Somewhat agree Neither agree/nor disagree Somewhat disagree Strongly disagree

6. I support the practiced values of the college.

Strongly agree Somewhat agree Neither agree/nor disagree Somewhat disagree Strongly disagree

7. My personal values are very similar to the college's practiced values.

Strongly agree Somewhat agree Neither agree/nor disagree Somewhat disagree Strongly disagree

8. The values practiced at the college do not match the stated values, therefore, I do not support the college's values.

Strongly agree Somewhat agree Neither agree/nor disagree Somewhat disagree Strongly disagree

9. My values guide my ethical decision-making.

Strongly agree Somewhat agree Neither agree/nor disagree Somewhat disagree Strongly disagree

10. I find that, sometimes, I must compromise personal principles to conform to the college's expectations.

Strongly agree Somewhat agree Neither agree/nor disagree Somewhat disagree Strongly disagree

11. Please select the statement that most accurately describes you.

- a. My core values and ethics are higher than institutional values and ethics.
- b. My core values and ethics are lower than institutional values and ethics.
- c. My core values and ethics are high and match institutional values and ethics.
- d. My core values and ethics are low and match institutional values and ethics.

12. I am a good fit for the college.

Strongly agree Somewhat agree Neither agree/nor disagree Somewhat disagree Strongly disagree

13. I am a good fit for my job.

Strongly agree Somewhat agree Neither agree/nor disagree Somewhat disagree Strongly disagree

14. Please describe a time when you felt like you really fit well with the college.

15. Please describe a time when you felt like there was a disconnect between you and the college.

Values shape culture. Please read the following statements about the college's culture, student success, and fit. Indicate your agreement with each item by circling one answer for each question. You may choose to skip items.

1. The culture of the college outwardly promotes student success.

Strongly agree Somewhat agree Neither agree/nor disagree Somewhat disagree Strongly disagree

2. The culture of the college, indeed, fosters student success.

Strongly agree Somewhat agree Neither agree/nor disagree Somewhat disagree Strongly disagree

3. The culture of the college matches its stated values.

Strongly agree Somewhat agree Neither agree/nor disagree Somewhat disagree Strongly disagree

4. The culture of the college matches its practiced values.

Strongly agree Somewhat agree Neither agree/nor disagree Somewhat disagree Strongly disagree

5. There is a mismatch between what some people say and what they do to support student success.

Strongly agree Somewhat agree Neither agree/nor disagree Somewhat disagree Strongly disagree

6. I fit in with the culture of the college.

Strongly agree Somewhat agree Neither agree/nor disagree Somewhat disagree Strongly disagree

7. Is there anything you would like to share about values, fit, and/or student success at the college?

Thank you for completing this survey. If you would like to participate in a focus group or interview, please email JLB9@hood.edu with your first and last name, preferred email address, and preferred phone number. The subject of the email should say, "Research Study." All prospective participants will be contacted by December 2, 2019.

APPENDIX D FOCUS GROUP PROTOCOL

PO Fit and Student Success – Focus Group

Date: _____

Focus Group Participant Name: _____

Title/Role: _____

Organizational Division: _____ **No. of years at College:** _____

Thank you for joining this focus group and your willingness to participate in this research on values, fit, and student success. During the next 45 minutes I will share a testimonial from one of our students, David. I will then ask you a few questions about the testimonial and student success. I would like for everyone to have an opportunity to speak. A copy of the questions is on page 2, where you can jot down some notes so that you do not forget what you want to say. I will collect your sheets at the end. Please follow along as I read David's testimonial.

David's Testimonial

Dr. B is such a kind and helpful individual. I feel so lucky to have them. I always leave Dr. B feeling more positive and on the right track towards my academic success. Every meeting is very productive and they always encourage me, which helps me a lot.

Dr. B took their time to ask me how I was doing and what I was finding difficult with my classes. Dr. B is a very good listener and wise. They give me tasks to complete or to think about to overcome problems that I have. After telling them what I was currently struggling with, they gave me excellent ideas as to how to overcome my difficulties with my class. Dr. B shows what I'd like to call healthy concern and strictness. They don't coddle me, but they don't abuse me either. I like that about them. This way of them helping me sticks in my mind, and always gives me extra motivation when needed. Sometimes you lack motivation of your own (at least that's my experience), and reminding myself of how badly Dr. B wants me to succeed helps give me the necessary kick in the butt.

Dr. B is also very funny and gives very good advice. Dr. B is amazing and so knowledgeable and helpful. They care about my education as much as I do, and also gives me advice on life in general not just my academics. Lately, I have been getting much emotional support which is necessary and valuable to my continuance to success. I couldn't ask for more. I look forward to meeting with them. I hope I get to see them next semester. I have no idea what I would be doing without Dr. B. I still have more work to do but I know I can count on their support always. They keep me in good spirits.

Please turn the page to capture your thoughts.

- a. Please provide an example of a time when you positively impacted a student's life. (Student Success Mindset, Values, Perceived Fit)

8. What role do faculty play in student success? (*Student Success Mindset, Culture*)

- a. Please provide an example of a time when faculty positively impacted a student's life. (Student Success Mindset, Values, Perceived Fit)

9. What role do staff play in student success? (*Student Success Mindset, Culture*)
- a. Please provide an example of a time when staff positively impacted a student's life. (*Student Success Mindset, Values, Perceived Fit*)
10. From the examples you provided, talk about how well these faculty and staff that you are thinking of fit with the college. (*PO Fit – Value Congruence, Perceived Fit, Student Success Mindset, Culture, Assesst-based narrative, Underserved student achievement*)

11. In terms of fostering a culture of student success, please describe the values and characteristics of faculty and staff that you think would be the ideal fit for the College.

12. Is there anything else that you think is important to share?

APPENDIX F VALUES EXERCISE

Academic Freedom	Cooperation	Generosity	Openness	Smart
Acceptance	Courage	Genius	Optimism	Solitude
Accomplishment	Courtesy	Giving	Order	Spirit
Accountability	Creation	Goodness	Organization	Spirituality
Accuracy	Creativity	Grace	Originality	Spontaneous
Achievement	Credibility	Gratitude	Passion	Stability
Adaptability	Curiosity	Greatness	Patience	Status
Alertness	Decisive	Growth	Peace	Stewardship
Altruism	Decisiveness	Happiness	Performance	Strength
Ambition	Dedication	Hard work	Persistence	Structure
Amusement	Dependability	Harmony	Playfulness	Success
Assertiveness	Determination	Health	Poise	Support
Attentive	Development	Honesty	Potential	Surprise
Autonomy	Devotion	Honor	Power	Sustainability
Awareness	Dignity	Hope	Present	Talent
Balance	Discipline	Humility	Productivity	Teamwork
Beauty	Discovery	Imagination	Professionalism	Temperance
Boldness	Diversity	Improvement	Prosperity	Thankful
Bravery	Drive	Independence	Purpose	Thorough
Brilliance	Effectiveness	Individuality	Quality	Thoughtful
Calm	Efficiency	Individuation	Realistic	Timeliness
Candor	Empathy	Innovation	Reason	Tolerance
Capable	Empower	Inquisitive	Recognition	Toughness
Careful	Endurance	Insightful	Recreation	Traditional
Certainty	Energy	Inspiring	Reflective	Tranquility
Challenge	Enjoyment	Integrity	Respect	Transparency
Charity	Enthusiasm	Intelligence	Responsibility	Trust
Cleanliness	Equality	Intensity	Restraint	Trustworthy
Clear	Ethical	Intuitive	Results-oriented	Truth
Clever	Excellence	Irreverent	Reverence	Understanding
Comfort	Experience	Joy	Rigor	Uniqueness
Commitment	Exploration	Justice	Risk	Unity
Common sense	Expressive	Kindness	Satisfaction	Valor
Communication	Fairness	Knowledge	Security	Victory
Community	Family	Lawful	Self-reliance	Vigor
Compassion	Famous	Leadership	Selfless	Vision
Competence	Fearless	Learning	Sensitivity	Vitality
Concentration	Feelings	Liberty	Serenity	Wealth
Confidence	Ferocious	Logic	Service	Welcoming
Connection	Fidelity	Love	Sharing	Winning
Consciousness	Focus	Loyalty	Significance	Wisdom
Consistency	Foresight	Mastery	Silence	Wonder
Contentment	Fortitude	Maturity	Simplicity	
Contribution	Freedom	Meaning	Sincerity	
Control	Friendship	Moderation	Skill	
Conviction	Fun	Motivation	Skillfulness	

Source:

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