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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE: THE INTERSECTION OF FACULTY AND ADMINISTRATOR ROLES AMONG COMMUNITY COLLEGE FACULTY DEPARTMENT CHAIRS

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DEPARTMENT CHAIRS

by

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Community colleges face significant challenges in the 21st century due largely to the effects of neoliberalism. Shifts in governance structures and an emphasis towards productivity and accountability have put a strain on institutional relationships, particularly between the faculty and the administration. Much attention has been given to how this relationship could be restored through direct means; however, another institutional stakeholder group has largely been overlooked in terms of a resource that could help bridge the faculty and administration. The community college faculty department chair is uniquely situated between the faculty and administration within these institutions, yet little is known about how they navigate their role in support of a more cohesive organizational culture and healthier relationships. Five community college faculty department chairs at a small, rural community college in Northeast Texas were the focus of this multiple case study in order to better understand how they engaged in the role navigation process, balanced and acted upon role expectations sent to them, and leveraged connections between the faculty and the administration. The findings of this study demonstrated that the participants relied heavily on their identity as faculty,

primarily, but also as administrator in serving as a conduit between the faculty and administration. More specifically, the participants leveraged the management and mediation of communication, reduced ambiguity, and mitigated tension in building connections between the faculty and administration. Implications for practice and scholarship, as well as directions for future research are discussed.

Dedication

To my hero and the reason for everything I do, my son: I love you, Max. Thank you for

your love and everything you sacrificed. I'm so proud to be your Dad.

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I need to acknowledge my parents. I would not have accomplished this without them. They have been there every step of the way, made sacrifices, rejoiced in the successes and encouraged in the failures. They are a constant for me and that will always remain. I also would like to thank my extended family. It really does take a village, and I count myself incredibly fortunate to have such a solid support system in my life. To my friends and colleagues, I see you. Your love and support have been greatly coveted and I appreciate each and every one of you more than you know.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

If it is true that, "…the essential nature of the community college, its identity, is embedded in what it does: in its actions and change processes" (Levin, 1998, p. 2), then it stands to reason that institutional oversight, or governance, is woven into the very fabric of the daily work that college personnel conduct throughout these institutions, rather than something done by a few individuals. According to Mitchell, Yildiz and Batie (2011), governance is distributed and constantly negotiated among many institutional stakeholder groups. Furthermore, Amey, Jessup-Anger, and Jessup-Anger (2008) stated that community colleges are constantly growing in terms of organizational complexity and that pressures from the internal and external environments cannot go unmanaged, but that those individuals who are charged with leveraging an institution forward do not always understand the "complicated web of forces" (p. 6) that affect institutional governance. Thus, governance is not simply a top-down or structural issue, but something that is cultural and shared between stakeholder groups throughout an organization. There is a need, however, to move away from a dichotomous notion of distributing governance on the basis of labor relations in favor of shared governance models which can be considered as a way to understand how the work of community colleges and the pressures they face come to bear on decisions and relations by all.

The way the notion of shared governance has been traditionally discussed by education observers is in terms of stakeholder tensions and labor relations, and a primary example of this can be seen in the relationship between the faculty and administration (Del Favero & Bray, 2005; Del Favero & Bray, 2010; Levin, 2006). Indeed, Del Favero

and Bray (2005) stated that this relationship was one part, albeit critical, to the effectiveness of governance among community colleges. There is evidence in the literature to suggest that administrators and faculty members are increasingly operating out of a mutually exclusive set of values or goals, which is highly disruptive to the governance structures within these institutions (Del Favero & Bray, 2010; Levin, 2001; Levin, 2002; Levin et al., 2006; Twombly & Townsend, 2008). A major reason for this has to do with a shift in the identity of community colleges at the end of the 20th century stemming from administrators moving away from more traditional shared governance practices in favor of new models that closely reflect a more corporate structure (Levin 2000; Levin 2001). Such a shift in these types of administrator attitudes and behaviors has had a profound effect on institutional culture and the nature in which these institutions are governed (Birnbaum, 2004; Boyd, 2011; Del Favero & Bray, 2005; Del Favero & Bray, 2010; Levin, 2001). As a result, tensions between the faculty and administration over how institutions should be managed have developed and deepened (Del Favero & Bray, 2005; Del Favero & Bray, 2010; Levin, 2006).

Del Favero and Bray (2010) stated that this tension in the administrator/faculty relationship stems from issues that are "…both structural and cultural" (p. 478). Culturally, faculty have long placed a significant amount of value on their segments of the institution, autonomy, and self-determination in terms of their work. Administrators, on the other hand, have taken a more holistic view of the institution and must consider a far greater number of interests almost simultaneously (Del Favero & Bray, 2005). From a structural standpoint, Del Favero and Bray (2010) stated that there has been an overall

increase in the number of administrators on campuses due to the professionalization of administrators. Del Favero and Bray continued by noting that this rise in administrator numbers has been accompanied by an increase in the variety of specialized administrative functions, which has resulted in the perception among certain institutional stakeholders that such increases have come at the expense of the faculty in terms of their involvement in institutional governance. Del Favero and Bray finally underscored this point stating that these structural issues have created, "…a ripple effect in producing tension points as faculty and administrators alike have grappled with their roles and responsibilities as well as their areas of influence and whether it includes academic or administrative concerns, or a bit of both" (p. 478).

Grubb and Worthen (1999) added that administrators have a profound impact on teaching and instruction. More than that, they pointed out that administrators set the institutional tone in relation to culture and institutional identity. Their ultimate point was that administrator attitudes towards teaching have a ripple effect across the faculty, and there is equal opportunity for cohesiveness or fragmentation between these groups. As of 2003, full-time and part-time faculty members in community colleges made up 43% of all faculty among public, nonprofit institutions of higher education (Twombly & Townsend, 2008). Given that such a large portion of faculty across higher education can be found within community colleges, issues related to faculty/administrator tensions are only made clearer. Several questions arise from this reality related to the future of community college governance, institutional relationships, responsiveness to an increasingly global economy, and what should be done as a result.

The tensions between and differing experiences of faculty and administrative roles have occupied the attention of the bulk of research on community college governance. Del Favero and Bray (2010) characterized the state of the literature as focusing largely on institutional sub-contexts and issues related to authority, motivation and job satisfaction, scarce resources, and cultural values of various actors. Yet in doing so, researchers have regularly relied on, or at least left unquestioned, the prototypical division between faculty and administrative ranks. Effectively, this sorting of individuals has stood as a monolithic given in the literature, despite the nuance afforded individual persons within the groups. What has been poorly explored in the literature, therefore, but could prove highly consequential, involves mid-level leaders, namely faculty department chairs. Just as the Roman demigod Janus (McArthur, 2002) was torn between two realities, these individuals are part administrator and part faculty, serving as the bridge between these two stakeholder groups. Little is known about how they make sense of, and balance, their role. As individuals whose roles form a bridge or leverage point between faculty and executive administrators, their experiences in navigating those intersections promise to reveal much regarding the assertions around governance broadly theorized in the literature. Yet this perspective has not been explored to date.

A better sense of how community college department chairs navigate the intersections of the faculty and administrative worlds could leverage these individuals towards a more cohesive institutional culture and governance structure. A lack of understanding of this phenomenon, on the other hand, contributes to a continued alienation between the administration and faculty as the debate over institutional

governance intensifies. The following sections provide some key insights into how governance has been perceived and realized within the faculty and administration, respectively, as well as the traditional role of the faculty department chair, as a backdrop for this research endeavor.

The Role of Administrators in Institutional Governance

Saunders (2010) echoed the notion above that governance and decision-making in higher education has seen a dramatic change since the early 1990s. Indeed, Collins (2012) stated that as faculty have become more "divorced" (p. 40) from the institutional decision-making process, administrators have become increasingly removed from the academic core of the institution. In addition to the structural changes related to increases in both the number of administrators on campuses and the variety of their functions as noted by Del Favero and Bray (2010), a shift in institutional decision-making has also occurred, which represents a shift in administrator values and behaviors. Such a shift has been characterized as moving from a decision-making paradigm reliant on equity and the generation of knowledge to one focused primarily on production and competitiveness. Boyd (2011) stated that college administrators have readily accepted this change due to the increasing number of "corporate minded representatives" (p. 251) on their governing boards. Thus, the incentive for administrators to accept anything other than a more corporate decision-making structure is minimal.

Changes in institutional decision-making represents a reframing of the administration's role in institutional governance, which brings with it many consequences. An important example of one such consequence has to do with efficiency.

Saunders (2010) discussed in great detail the significant decline in state appropriations to community colleges in recent years. As a result, administrators have had to focus more of their attention on making their institutions as efficient as possible in order to help offset declining revenues. Levin (2002) stated that a major way in which institutions are dealing with this issue beyond the solicitation of private sources funding is through the reduction of its labor force. Administrators, as Levin noted, are hiring far greater numbers of part-time faculty members due to their inherent low-cost to the institution. As Saunders pointed out, however, the level of faculty participation in institutional governance decreases as the number of adjuncts increase. The reason for this is because part-time faculty members traditionally do not serve on faculty senates, or other faculty-led decision-making groups. Therefore, the voices of faculty members are becoming increasingly marginalized in institutional governance, while administrators continue to assert theirs. Saunders finally stated that this represents a "troubling change" (p. 58) to higher education governance.

The Role of Faculty in Institutional Governance

The traditional role of the faculty in community colleges has remained relatively unchanged over the past several decades and has focused primarily on teaching and the autonomy to deliver content to students as they see fit (Del Favero & Bray, 2010). However, these authors noted that the autonomy faculty have long enjoyed is now being challenged as a direct result of the changing nature of administrator attitudes towards institutional governance.

Jones (2011) noted that faculty involvement in institutional governance has long been viewed as valuable and accepted as a very important part of higher education. Jones also stated that there is a general dissatisfaction with the level of faculty participation in institutional decision-making. Administrators, in an effort to ensure that their institutions are keeping up with the pace of business and industry, are adopting more top-down decision-making practices (Levin, 2001). This parallels Saunders' (2010) discussion regarding efficiency as a justification for replacing more traditional shared forms of governance. The primary benefit of this is that decisions are made quickly; however, this also comes at the expense of including more institutional stakeholders in the decision-making process. Del Favero and Bray (2010) stated that the ability to make decisions quickly had contributed to faculty being marginalized in institutional governance, which has placed academic freedom at grave risk.

Community College Faculty Department Chairs

The discussion on community college mid-level leaders begins with Goldfien and Badway (2015), who stated that these individuals, namely faculty leaders, can hold both institutional knowledge and broad institutional connections. Miller (1999) pointed out that the faculty department chair position within community colleges has widely been characterized by its ambiguous nature situated between the administration and the faculty. As a result, the position can also be thought of, or examined, in terms of the role expectations and task assignments coming from both of these groups. For example, in their study on the role of community college faculty department chairs in the strategic planning process, Riggs and Akor (1992) stated that administrators should place more

emphasis on orienting chairs to more administrative functions. For example, chairs should receive training in the areas of budgeting, management of the physical plant, assigning work responsibilities, and becoming more familiar with the administrations' vision for the institution. Riggs and Akor emphasized that the importance that has been placed on nurturing the administrative aspects of the chair's role is due in large part because "…the college departmental chairman bears major authority and responsibility in the management of American colleges" (p. 62).

Miller (1999) noted that consensus development for decision-making is of high interest to department chairs, especially when it relates to stakeholders who operate outside of that particular academic unit. Miller continued by pointing out that consensus development plays a pivotal role in certain areas, such as course content, working with advisory committees, and meeting the needs of students. Miller underscores this as highly significant because the department chair thus serves as the agent for implementing institutional policy set forth by the administration, while at the same time setting policies and decision-making criteria for their own academic unit. In this sense, Miller compared the community college department chair to the speaker of the house of representatives. Leaders among equals, these individuals are the conduit by which the values and ideas of the faculty are transmitted to the administration, and the agenda of the administration is transmitted to the faculty. Through an investigation into how community college faculty department chairs make sense of their role, community college scholars and policymakers alike stand to gain a key piece of information regarding how to better understand the conflicted nature of the communication being sent across the faculty and administration.

Neoliberalism as a Framework for Understanding Changes to Governance

Neoliberalism has become highly influential over the second half of the 20th century as a way to explain many of the changes in modern western society broadly speaking (Birch, 2015; Flew, 2014; Springer, Birch, & MacLeavy, 2016), and so including higher education and as a consequence governance of higher education. According to Boyd (2011), neoliberalism holds that the "…social good will be maximized by maximizing the reach and frequency of market transactions, and it seeks to bring all human action into the domain of the market" (p. 245). Ayers (2005), meanwhile, stated that neoliberal ideology "…limits the power of citizens to advocate for social change through democratic processes" (p. 530). Finally, Springer, Birch, and MacLeavy (2016) stated that "…neoliberalism has grown exponentially over the past two decades, coinciding with the meteoric rise of this phenomenon as a hegemonic ideology, a state form, a policy and programme, an epistemology, and a version of governmentality" (p. 1).

Flew (2014) outlined several taxonomies of neoliberalism that have helped to shed light on its global societal influence and emphasized how the term neoliberalism have had theoretical implications as well. For example, Flew noted that neoliberalism has been characterized as a political ideology and closely aligned with an increasingly globalized economy and financial capitalism. As a result, neoliberalism has come to symbolize an "ideological hegemony" (Birch, 2015, p. 576) that has led to its dominance as the ideology behind global capitalism. Harvey (2005) echoed this by defining neoliberalism as a theory in which the advancement of human well-being can best be

achieved through entrepreneurial freedom, property rights, free markets, and free trade. Springer, Birch, and MacLeavy (2016) took this a step further pointing to governance policies and neoliberal theory as a means to explain why labor has come to be viewed as a commodity in today's society. It is, therefore, readily apparent that the theories surrounding neoliberalism have been used to explain many behaviors relative to today's society on a global scale.

Given the extent to which neoliberalism has been presented as an explanation of complex changes in society broadly, it is important to also understand how the concepts of neoliberalism have been leveraged to explain changes in higher education governance too. When we consider issues of governance, among many issues we could consider, the effects of neoliberalism should be readily observable in the work of department heads due to the tensions between faculty and administration that are exacerbated by neoliberal forces yet have not been looked at previously. For example, Levin (2001) connected globalization and neoliberalism with a push to restructure institutions of higher education to a more corporatized model. Such a shift has contributed to a restructuring of administrators' values and decision-making processes as noted by Del Favero and Bray (2010) earlier in this chapter. Additionally, the "corporatization" (Giroux, 2002, p. 439) of higher education has translated to a vocationalization of learning at the demands of the market. And so, the experience of department heads at the crux of organizational process and purportedly neoliberal forces warrants inspection if we are to understand how colleges work in the modern era. As a consequence, we stand to gain insight into what kind of training and support department heads need, or at the least so we know what to

expect of people, their perceptions, their performance, and their stressors when put into that position, among other insights.

Neoliberalism has been widely used in the literature to characterize changes in organizational behavior on the part of administrators and institutions as a whole (Boyd, 2011; Levin, 2000; Levin, 2001; Levin, 2006; Levin & Aliyeva, 2015). However, neoliberalism has yet to be used to examine the specific tensions between the faculty and administration that have been discussed. As a result, neoliberalism provides adequate explanatory power to understand why higher education, broadly, is at a crossroads in terms of how institutions should be governed, which justifies why the ambiguity inherent to department chairs' roles must be focused.

Purpose

In the literature, then, the way authors to date have considered governance and the relationship between faculty and administrators has tended to treat the groups as largely monolithic opposed entities, when in fact there is considerable overlap, none so emblematic and pivotal as the department head. Yet we know very little about how these individuals navigate the tensions at this governance crossroads, knowledge that is paramount to understanding how modern colleges operate—and therefore, returning to the notion introduced above—what they do and are. The purpose of this study, therefore, is to better understand the role of community college department chairs and how they navigate their positionality between these groups in relation to the formation of an institutional culture. Using a multiple case study design, the following questions will guide this research:

1. How do community college department chairs navigate their role within community colleges in between the administration and faculty?

2. How do community college department chairs balance, and act upon, the role expectations relayed to them by both the senior administration and the faculty at-large?

3. How does the role of the community college faculty department chair leverage the relationship between the faculty and administration toward the realization of their respective goals?

The desired outcome of this endeavor is designed to benefit higher education scholars and practitioners alike. Advancing the body of literature on institutional governance structures through the lens of institutional relationships would be beneficial to scholars through evidence that community college department chairs play a critical role in bridging the strained faculty/administrator relationship. Practitioners, particularly administrators within community colleges, could also benefit from the knowledge that perhaps faculty department chairs can be leveraged as an agent of change to better connect and work with the faculty at large.

Significance of The Research Study

This study sought to advance scholarship and practice relative to community college governance, organizational culture, and interinstitutional relationships in a number of ways. To begin, the answers to the research questions will be particularly important to those in mid-level and senior leadership positions within community colleges who are tasked with decision-making and developing and implementing policy.

Two major effects of neoliberalism on community colleges have come in the form of decision-making, and how changes in administrator attitudes towards the implementation of policy have strained the relationship between the faculty and administration, which has also negatively affected organizational culture (Boyd, 2010; Collins, 2012; Del Favero & Bray, 2010; Saunders, 2010). This study, thus, provides insights into how administrators at all levels within community colleges can begin to rethink more top-down approaches to governance and decision-making in favor of a more shared approach that seeks out key institutional stakeholders who possess the strongest capacity for bridging the administration and the faculty.

This study will also be valuable to scholars as it adds to what is currently known about community college governance, neoliberalism in higher education, and interinstitutional relationships through a unique contribution to the literature around these areas. The literature is clear about the rise of neoliberalism in the late 20th century (Birch, 2015; Flew, 2014; Springer, Birch, & MacLeavy, 2016). It is also clear that neoliberalism has greatly influenced higher education during that time, most notably in the shift away from more shared forms of governance (Del Favero & Bray, 2010; Levin, 2001; Levin, 2002; Levin et al., 2006; Twombly & Townsend, 2008). What is not currently understood, however, is how key institutional stakeholders, and the relationships they have with individuals from other institutional stakeholder groups, could be leveraged to improve organizational culture and address the issues of governance that have become so prevalent in today's higher education landscape.

Definition of Terms

To better understand how community college faculty department chairs make sense of their role between the faculty and administration, several key terms should be clearly defined. Such terms include: *department chairs*, *faculty*, *administration*. Department chairs in the context of this study refer to academic transfer faculty members with teaching responsibilities who also oversee the administrative functions of a specific/small group of discipline(s) within a community college. Department chairs are differentiated from program directors, who are also faculty members with administrative responsibilities, but oversee a specific workforce program. Faculty is defined as those institutional employees whose primary responsibility is to teach a minimum of 5 courses per Fall and Spring semester within their given area of study. Administration is defined as those individuals who hold at least a cabinet-level position. Additionally, administrators hold supervisory responsibilities and are responsible for establishing, and enforcing, institutional policies.

Delimitations

Certain delimitations have been made to help define the boundaries of this study. First, a single institution, Maxwell Community College, has been selected as the site for this research. Thus, only the faculty department chairs within this institution were selected as cases. The reason for this primarily has to do with access; however, this decision has significant implications from a methodological standpoint. For example, this study will utilize a multiple case study design, however, it could take the form of a single case-study w/embedded units (Yin, 2018). In other words, Maxwell Community College

itself could serve as the single case with the department chairs serving as the embedded units within the case. Yin (2018) has shown how embedded units of analysis within single case-study designs can yield substantial insights and nuance towards a more complete understanding of the selected case. There is little doubt that community college faculty department chairs could yield substantial insights about their positionality between the administration and the faculty within the context of a single institution. However, because the research questions and conceptual framework center around the individual level of analysis, the multiple case study design, with the individual department chairs serving as individual cases, is better justified.

A second delimitation of this study is that only the faculty department chairs that oversee the academic transfer disciplines were selected as cases, as opposed to also including the workforce program directors. As Levin (2001) pointed out, the effects of globalization and neoliberalism have led to changes that "…include government policies to reflect both societal and economic concerns such as the training of a globally competitive workforce and private sector demands for an increase in work-based training and specific skill acquisition for workers" (p. 238). It is widely accepted that workforce training is a vital, and valuable, component of the community college mission. However, by focusing on those faculty/administrators with the highest potential for strain resulting from the infringement on the traditional work of the faculty through changes in managerial practices by administrators, the study maximizes the chances of uncovering salient evidence needed to answer the research questions. Faculty department chairs in the academic transfer disciplines, in other words, are not driven per se by employability

or job placement when their students graduate from a community college as compared to their workforce program director colleagues. By excluding workforce program directors from this study to focus on chairs of academic transfer programs, I am able to further highlight both the depth of the disparity between the traditional roles of the faculty and administration as a product of or in relation to neoliberal forces. Additionally, I am able to explore the fullest potential of how faculty department chairs could serve as a bridge between these two groups in light of those tensions.

Limitations

While great care was given to designing this work, no research is without some limitations. For this study, community college faculty department chairs were the focus of an investigation into how they navigated their role between the faculty and administration in an effort to restore the strained relationship between these disparate stakeholder groups. To accomplish this, a qualitative, multiple case study method of inquiry was used at a single community college in Northeast Texas with interviews being the primary method of data collection. A limitation of such an approach and setting was the gathering of evidence from a small number of participants. As a result, caution should be given to any comparisons between the experiences of the participants in this study and similar studies on community college faculty department chairs within different contexts.

A second imitation also involves this study's use of a qualitative, multiple case study design and interviews due to alternative interpretations of the data. For example, this study is primarily concerned about the experiences of community college faculty department chairs at a single institution at a specific point in time. Other methods of

inquiry, such as a longitudinal study, could provide different insights into the lived experiences of the chairs' experiences within the selected institution over the course of a period of time. Overall, however, the structure of this study allowed for significant insights from the participants that included personal and professional background information in supporting the meaning behind their current experiences.

Overview of Chapters

Chapter 1 provided an overview of the external challenges related to globalization and neoliberalism facing higher education governance, particularly within community colleges today. This chapter gave special attention to highlighting how these challenges have strained the faculty/administrator relationship, and the potential significance of community college faculty department chairs in bridging these two groups through role sense-making towards a more cohesive institutional culture. In Chapter 2, literature that is most relevant to neoliberalism, community college department chairs, and their mobility within institutions is explored with Chapter 3 outlining the methodological approach for this study. Chapters 4 will detail the results of the analysis, and Chapter 5 will offer a discussion of the findings with implications for both policy and practice.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The prevailing literature relevant to this study can be categorized into four overarching topical areas: community college governance, community college faculty department chairs, the ability of individuals to move in and among different stakeholder groups within organizations, and neoliberalism. This chapter first turns to the literature related to middle management, community college governance, and department chairs. This discussion is largely encyclopedic and includes information regarding how their history has been studied, as well as the current state of the literature in these areas. What follows is a methodological and theoretical overview of neoliberalism, individuals and how they move within organizations, and the inner-workings of individuals in terms of how they process and act upon role-conflict. Given the breadth of the term neoliberalism and its uses, as mentioned in chapter 1, this section serves to provide focus in terms of the use of neoliberalism for this study as a contextual aspect of the theoretical framework. Additionally, studying how intra-organizational movement occurs, and how individuals internally address situations of role conflict and ambiguity help to inform additional theoretical and methodological decisions for this study.

Mid-Level Management

The literature related to middle management in higher education, broadly, revolves around two main areas. Importantly, this work does not distinguish between the terms of manager or leader; rather, the focus of this study is primarily concerned with how individuals in mid-level management positions within community colleges characterize the work that they do. To begin, the literature addresses the roles of middle

managers in their various positions across institutions, and how that affects institutional

leadership (Boggs, 2011; Cooper & Boice-Pardee, 2011; Riggs, 2009; Scheuermann,

2011; White, 2011). Second, the literature discusses the importance of support for middle

managers (Floyd 2016, Mather, Bryan, & Faulker, 2009; Riggs, 2009). Taken together,

these areas help provide a level of understanding relative to middle management that help

to define the edges of what is known, and not known, about this layer of leadership in

higher education.

Roles

Riggs (2009), in his article on the need for community college leaders to be

proactive in terms of embracing change, specifically noted that mid-level managers

should be on the forefront of such efforts. Riggs makes the case that change is necessary

in order to leverage higher education to a more prosperous future and sustainable

viability. However, there exists a gap between community college leaders' plans for

implementing change efforts towards a better future, and what is actually accomplished.

Boggs (2011) embraced the notions of Riggs and others that higher education, and

specifically the community college, finds itself in the midst of challenges due to

increased scrutiny and financial limitations. As Boggs stated, "College leaders are

expected to respond ever more quickly to meet emerging community and national needs.

Community colleges are being asked to…prepare students to live in an increasingly

global society and economy—all with declining financial resources" (p. 13). In the face

of such challenges, Boggs focused on leadership, and the need for ensuring effective

leadership for future generations. The problem, however, is the consensus among

presidents that they were not adequately prepared for the demands of their position when they accepted the role.

A major way to address the gap between plans and actions, and the effectiveness of leadership moving forward, is to examine the role of mid-level administrators in the operation of an institution. While senior administrators have substantial influence over the direction an institution, middle administrators have the most influence over the implementation of change initiatives. As Riggs (2009) stated, "The quality of the academic environment, meaningfulness of service for students, and support for the faculty are all driven by dedicated mid-level leadership positions and not out of the president's office" (p. 3). As a result, mid-level managers can be thought of as significant change agents within institutions given their potential to affect the course of an institution based on the vision and priorities set forth by senior leadership. It is important to note, however, that change in this context can be tied to situations and people.

Scheuermann (2011) and White (2011) examined mid-level managers in terms of their role as supervisors and the complexities that accompany managing individuals from a lower institutional level of analysis. Such a discussion on the supervisor aspect of the mid-level manager's role contributes to understanding related to how these individuals are so readily able to affect change at their institutions and what kinds of support structures should be in place for them. Scheuermann, for example, conceptualized the role of supervisor as a meta-role that also includes leader, manager, coworker, and coach. Meanwhile, White explored, via the lived experiences of mid-level managers, ways in

which individuals in these positions can better navigate the challenges associated the supervisor's role.

Scheuermann (2011) outlined a series of characteristics for supervisors in mid-level management positions. These characteristics serve as a basis for what supervisors need in order to address the 21st century challenges facing higher education today, and include:

- Tolerance for ambiguity – given the propensity for fluctuations in institutional budgets at all levels, supervisors must be able to communicate "clearly, confidently, and compassionately" (p. 6) during times in which resources may diminish for an unknown period of time.

- Trust – especially in periods of uncertainty, supervisors must respect the importance of earning and maintaining trust among those they oversee. Additionally, mid-level supervisors must be confident in the trust they have with senior leadership.

- Diversity – Scheuermann stressed the importance of diversity as student and staff population demographics are becoming increasingly complex and affect the work of professionals in higher education.

- Staff engagement – a final characteristic outlined by Scheuermann had to do with the ways in which supervisors engage with their subordinates. More specifically, supervisors could give great care to resist control over subordinates as a means to increase productivity.

Overall, Scheuermann views the role of supervisor at the mid-level as a prism that contains various sub-roles that should work together in support of institutional goals, vision, and objectives. The literature on mid-level management agrees with these sub-roles and provides different ways that individuals have acted on them.

White (2011) offered a more practical view of mid-level management from the role of supervisor through the lived experiences of individuals serving in mid-level leadership positions within higher education. Through the use of case study methodology, White outlined four case studies that presented a particular challenging situation relative to the supervisors' position, including transitioning from colleague to supervisor, ethical and diversity issues, and subordinate underperformance. A series of reflection questions were then posed to the supervisors, which dealt with issues related to approaching a new supervisory role, key issues related to the supervisor's role, identifying the core challenge within a given situation, and responsibilities.

White (2011) detailed several conclusions that resulted from the case studies described above. To begin, supervisors must provide clear expectations to their subordinates, adequate resources to successfully perform their job, and support as a means to build trust. Supervisors must also align their sense of ethics with that of the institution's goals, norms, values, and policies. Finally, supervisors must continually assess the culture of the organization and ensure that issues related to diversity and multiculturalism aligns with the overall institutional mission. White concluded to emphasize that there is no one way to approach supervision. Rather, supervision is about embracing the notion that one is accountable for the actions of others, leveraging

subordinates towards their own professional growth, and moving the overall organization towards its goals.

Finally, the literature gives careful attention to mid-level managers and their role as a manager of conflict. Indeed, Cooper and Boice-Pardee (2011) stated that conflict management among mid-level leaders within institutions of higher education was rated as the "largest, and perhaps most significant" (p.35). The reason for this significance has to do with the multifaceted and pervasive nature of conflict, which necessitates that mid-level managers be skilled at mediating differences among individuals. Cooper and Boice-Pardee centered their examination of conflict and middle-management around several key areas: fiscal management, strategic visioning and goals, supervision, and legal threats. Each of these areas provides a unique insight into how conflict can manifest itself.

Cooper and Boice-Pardee (2011) asserted, however, that mid-level managers should work towards the goal of leveraging their authority to resolve conflict through visibility. In other words, middle managers, due to their position within organizations, should operate out of their capacity to be known by students, faculty, staff, and senior leadership as a means to form allies and develop social capital. As a result, middle managers are more readily able to rely on relationships as a means to diffuse conflict when it arises.

Cooper and Boice-Pardee (2011) concluded to emphasize that, while uncomfortable, dealing with conflict provides mid-level managers with opportunities for professional growth. For example, mid-level managers might use a moment of conflict as an opportunity for mentorship and to enhance their ability to supervise effectively. The

successful mediation of conflict also builds confidence and self-efficacy. In sum, managing conflict is a vital skill, and mid-level managers are in prime position to serve as role models to their entire institution when handled appropriately and positively.

Support

In addition to the importance of understanding the roles of mid-level managers, the literature is also cognizant of how these individuals are, and are not, supported in their roles, as well as how they should be. Floyd (2016), for example, stated that there was a "culture of neglect" (p. 10) when it came to providing adequate support in his study on incoming mid-level managers at two universities in the UK. Additionally, the mid-level managers in this study felt as though the increase in their workload coincided with a reduction in available time. To address this, Floyd stated that more attention should be given to individualized opportunities for leadership development relative to the areas of the institution in which a given manager would work.

Mather, Bryan, and Faulkner (2009) agreed with the need for providing formal support for mid-level managers in the form of an orientation. They agreed that support for incoming mid-level managers should begin with an examination of the organization in terms of current practices related to orienting new employees at any level and soliciting input from current employees as to what should be in an effective orientation. From there, efforts should be aimed at developing a set of desired outcomes with an action plan that should include, among others: focused content for mid-level managers, identifying responsibilities, and determining a delivery method. Finally, an effective orientation should include a meaningful avenue for assessment. Overall, it is clear that mid-level

managers require intentional support, especially at the beginning, to be most effective in carrying out their numerous roles as outlined above.

Community College Governance

Pope and Miller (2000) stressed that governance is a crucial part of what makes community colleges operate effectively, and the myriad definitions for governance in higher education that exist would suggest that is true. Schuetz (1999) stated that governance is structural in nature with importance placed on how people interact within that structure. Amey, Jessup-Anger, and Jessup-Anger (2008) added to this stating that governance is "the structure and process of decision making a college uses to address internal and external issues" (p. 5-6). Kezar (2004) agreed with these definitions adding only that governance is equally interested in policymaking as it is decision-making. Amey, et al. expanded their definition to note that governance is made up of several internal stakeholders, such as governing boards, administrators, faculty, and student groups; however, it also encompasses the relationship between higher education institutions and external entities, such as businesses, communities, and legislative bodies. Finally, these authors noted that community college governance has historically been a blend of university and P-12 governance structures since community colleges are so closely linked to each of these types of institutions.

Kezar (2004) stated that measuring the effectiveness of governance is as important as defining it. For example, effectiveness can be thought of in terms of the quality of decisions that are made; quality being defined as the integrity of the decision-making process and making decisions based on evidence when possible. A second

measure of effectiveness directly involves institutional culture. In other words, individual institutions have their own set of constituents, or external stakeholders, and certain decision-making processes may make more sense than others based on that unique relationship. An example of this being more bureaucratic campuses relying more heavily on structure relative to governance versus relationships. Regardless of quality or trust, Kezar asserts that leadership, relationship, and trust are transcendent conditions of effective governance.

Shared governance in community colleges

The 1966 "Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities" by the American Association of University Professors introduced the notion of shared governance by outlining the roles and responsibilities of the governing board, administration, faculty, and even students in pursuit of a governance structure that promoted mutual involvement and understanding among these institutional stakeholders. Specifically, the AAUP statement outlines that the governing board and administration are primarily responsible for the oversight of institutional resources, budgeting, goal attainment, and establishing a connection between the institution and its external stakeholders. The faculty, on the other hand, have primary authority over the curriculum, requirements for degree attainment, and provides authorization for the president and governing board to grant a degree.

Since its publication, the research literature on higher education governance has generally accepted the shared governance model as the standard by which the effectiveness of governance is based (Del Favero & Bray, 2005; Del Favero & Bray,

2010; Savage, 2017; Twombly & Townsend, 2008). Since that time, much attention in the literature has been given to certain aspects within the shared governance model; for example, redefining shared governance in light of internal and external shifts in higher education (Kater & Levin, 2004; Levin, 2000; Schuetz, 1999), the level of faculty involvement in shared governance (Kater & Levin, 2004; Miller, Vacik & Benton, 2006; Piland & Bublitz, 1998), and critiques aimed at the effectiveness of shared governance (Birnbaum, 2004; Eckel, 2000; Slantcheva-Durst, 2014).

Schuetz (1999) defined shared governance as a social system in which governing boards, administrators, and faculty share responsibility for institutional decision making. Lau (1996) stated that shared governance operates at its best when it is a collegial process in which all parties recognize the contributions of the others in moving towards progress. Schuetz added that shared governance is highly beneficial as a model of governance in the sense that strategies that bridge authority can be developed, resources can be shared to take advantage of opportunities that are sometimes unforeseen, and workloads can be distributed so that efficiency is maximized.

Much like Kezar (2004), Miller (1999) described shared governance in community colleges in terms of the overall institutional culture, the cultures of both the faculty and administration, and an organization's structure. In other words, institutional culture and the subcultures within institutions influence the nature of institutional governance. Beyond that, Miller (1999) also pointed to work roles and levels of administration as influencers to institutional governance. For example, faculty

responsibility in community colleges is much more geared towards teaching than research.

Globalization as a threat to effective community college governance

Amey, Jessup-Anger, and Jessup-Anger (2008) stated that for all postsecondary institutions, but particularly community colleges, external agents are increasingly serving as catalysts for organizational change and exercise significant influence on institutional governance. Levin (2000) confirmed this by adding that the end of the twentieth century saw the beginnings of a paradigm shift in the community college mission from that of education and individual development to training and meeting the needs of business and industry. Such a shift in institutional mission was largely attributed to external pressures related to an ever-changing, globalized economy (Levin, 2000; Levin, 2001; Levin, 2002), neoliberal ideology (Ayers, 2005; Boyd, 2011; Levin & Aliyeva, 2015; Giroux, 2002; Olssen & Peters, 2005; Saunders, 2010), and a refocus of legislative priorities (Levin, 2007).

Levin (2001) stated that in the 1990s, public policy surrounding community colleges in North America pressured these institutions to emphasize global competitiveness. Legislative policies directed community colleges to place more importance on economic goals and workforce training, in terms of outcomes, which resulted in institutions who were now looking to improve upon such measures as efficiency, productivity, and government accountability (Levin, 2002; Saunders, 2010). Levin (2001) also noted that legislative pressures for efficiency, accompanied with its restraints on public funding for higher education in order to increase behaviors, were

consistent with global competitiveness. As a result, these behavioral changes translated to shifts in institutional mission, which in turn has caused dramatic shifts in institutional governance.

Levin (2002) emphasized that globalization is not simply an economic process; rather, globalization is also social and cultural. Jones (2011) operationalized this notion into 4 overarching concerning behaviors that community colleges have engaged in in order to respond to the pressures of globalization:

- Hiring larger numbers of adjunct faculty – the use of contingent, or adjunct faculty has increased primarily due to a lack of funding to replace full-time faculty members. The vast majority of adjuncts are skilled and well-trained instructors; however, they are highly undervalued. For example, oftentimes adjuncts have no office space, they have few campus privileges, and they may even have their academic freedom curtailed at times if it were in the interest of students (customers). According to Jones (2011), the concern with this practice is that it is part of a deliberate strategy to keep costs low. As a result, the professoriate in community colleges has split, which has made unity more difficult. In addition, administrators have been able to take more control of academic affairs, hiring practices, scheduling, and other areas of faculty work.

- Outcomes assessments – Jones (2011) pointed out that an increased emphasis on outcomes assessments has replaced an emphasis on the educational experience within community colleges. The emphasis on outcomes is a direct result of increased accountability measures from accrediting bodies and legislatures which

are tied to state appropriations funding. Prior to this, community colleges were able to focus more on measures of assessment such as faculty quality, full-time/part-time faculty ratio, governance, and resource allocation. The primary concern with placing so much importance on outcomes is that faculty potentially stand to lose a great deal of control over such areas as course requirements, evaluations and other hallmarks of academic freedom.

- Reframing of educational decisions – Jones (2011) asserted that globalization has also pressured community colleges to make educational decision based on the notion that students were now viewed more as a customer. This notion has affected community colleges especially due to their open-door admissions policies. The more business-oriented approach to institutional governance resulting from globalization has brought revenue (gains/losses) to the forefront, which has caused community colleges to be more aware of the programs that are offered, and how they are offered, in the face of market demands. Such decisions allow institutions to meet efficiency goals when resources are in decline (Saunders, 2010). As a result, online education has seen an increase due to its high flexibility. This is also another example of why the hiring of adjuncts has been on the rise. Jones (2011) also suggested that the reframing of educational decisions in the face of globalization has also influenced the hiring practices of board members and senior administrators who are coming into community colleges with strong business backgrounds, but little educational experience, if

any. As a result, institutions are becoming more and more reliant on top-down

managerial practices.

- Shared Governance – Jones's (2011) final behavioral concern for community

  colleges in the wake of globalization has to do with the future of shared

  governance. The rise of business-oriented administrators has resulted in an

  inflated administration who see faculty, full-time and part-time, as commodities

  to be used in pursuit of reframed outcomes. As a result, the shared governance

  model has become unnecessary since top-down managerial practices translate to

  a much faster decision-making process, and faculty leadership has been pushed to

  the margins.

The literature on higher education governance is extensive and discusses both

long-held governance traditions in the form of the shared model, as well as new threats to

those traditions. What is made clear in the higher education governance literature,

however, is that there is much more understanding needed in support of a governance

model that addresses the 21st century challenges facing community colleges today.

Specifically, the relevant literature on governance makes almost no mention of

community college department chairs and their role to this point in institutional

governance. The following section subsequently outlines what is currently known about

this unique institutional stakeholder group.

Faculty Department Chairs

Riggs and Akor (1992) stated that "…the college departmental chairperson bears

major authority and responsibility in the management of American college" (p. 62). As

has been noted, faculty department chairs are uniquely situated between the administration and faculty and must navigate their increasingly disparate value sets simultaneously. To begin to better understand how this internal stakeholder group, and their function within institutions, have been characterized in the literature, it is important to look at the evolution of academic departments over time.

History of academic departments within community colleges

McArthur (2002), in his article over the development of a theoretical model for studying democratic leadership and community college faculty, stated that academic departments in the U.S. have a longstanding history dating back to the nineteenth century. During the time of the Civil War, McArthur explained that institutions of higher education were under the sole leadership of the president. Senior leadership, therefore, has direct authority over all aspects of scholarship, finance, and teaching within institutions. As time passed, however, the number of students enrolling in higher education increased so more faculty were hired to accommodate this growth. As a result, the complexity of institutions themselves increased, so academic departments were formed as a means to improve organizational and managerial structure.

McArthur (2002) continued to say that there now exists a distinction between academic departments in universities and community colleges. Riggs and Akor (1992) took this distinction a step further stating that "…it is generally conceded that the academic department has been a basic building block in the organizational structure in nearly all community colleges" (p. 57). While most universities organize their departments according to discipline, McArthur noted, community colleges tend to create

academic departments around an aggregated group of several specific disciplines. The reason for this has to do more with uniformity within community colleges' organizational structure as opposed to managerial "cohesiveness" (McArthur, 2002, p. 2). This is significant because a single academic department could include faculty members who have very little in common; therefore, it is incumbent on the department chairs to be able to facilitate a level of cohesiveness within their respective departments.

Finally, McArthur (2002) noted the hierarchical nature of community colleges, and that a level of distance and distrust exists between the faculty and administration; a notion that is widely shared in the higher education literature (Del Favero & Bray, 2010; Levin, 2001; Levin, 2002; Levin et al., 2006, Twombly & Townsend, 2008). McArthur noted that academic department has evolved to be, and should remain, a "home" (p. 2) for both faculty and students. However, the current distrust and distance with the administration has reframed the perception of the academic department as being more of a place to escape the "threats" (p. 2) of the administration rather than being the havens they used to be. Therefore, it is McArthur's belief that the way forward in restoring meaningful relationships and reestablishing a culture of trust lies in the empowerment of the department chair in order to engage in meaningful dialogue with both the senior administration and the faculty. Additionally, an empowered department chair would also be able to then empower the faculty they oversee, which would give the faculty a renewed sense of ownership of their work and provide a new incentive to work towards new solutions to current challenges. With this foundational background in mind, the discussion now turns to the characterization in the literature of the department chair;

specifically, their role within institutions and in between the disparate faculty and administration groups.

The role of community college faculty department chairs

The role of the community college faculty department chair has been characterized in several different ways within the higher education literature. For example, McArthur (2002) explained that the community college faculty department chair was once likened to the two-faced Roman demigod of Janus; part administrator, and part faculty. Over time, McArthur stated that this perception has shifted to view the department chair as more of a mediator, communicator, or facilitator. It is true that community college faculty department chairs have administrative tasks, in addition to their reduced teaching load, such as: budgeting, hiring/firing staff, course scheduling, listening to student complaints, and other duties (Foote, 1999; Gillet-Karam et al., 1999, Sirkis, 2001). In fact, it is not uncommon for community college administrators to have assumed their current role from the faculty ranks via the chair's position (Pope & Miller, 2005). Overall, however, there are several overarching roles tied to the department chair that are relevant to the study at hand.

First, the literature acknowledges the role of the community college faculty department chair through the lens of linkage between faculty and students, faculty and administration, and the college itself to the larger world (Miller, 1999; Riggs & Akor, 1992). McArthur (2002) stated that trust plays a critical, albeit difficult to realize, role in the organizational culture and environment within community colleges today. Indeed Sirkis (2001) stated that trust, more specifically building trust, was more vital to the

success of a department chair than earning respect or being liked. Because of this,

McArthur noted that it is the faculty department chair who plays an important role in

making certain that faculty feel respected and important within the institution. Part of the

department chair's role as administrator, as McArthur continued, necessitates that the

department chair be sensitive to the issues of trust, motivation, and organizational culture

especially since it can be difficult to cultivate. By being cognizant of this role, the chair

serves as a means to gain the faculty's confidence and is therefore able to advance the

department.

Second, the community college faculty department chair has also been

characterized in the literature as a leader (Lucas, 1990). Seagren (1993) agreed with this

assessment when he stated that department chairs have the ability to draw upon power

derived from two sources to enact any kind of leadership, or influence, within an

institution. First, department chairs have power given to them based on the authority that

comes with the chair's position. McArthur (2002) stressed the importance of this kind of

power because it is positional power that is the driver for advancing an agenda. Of equal

interest is McArthur's assertion that positional power helps alleviate ambiguity related to

an individual serving in a supervisory role among colleagues. Tasks, such as course

assignments and performance evaluations (Sirkis, 2011) serve as the means through

which this is accomplished. Second, department chairs, to varying degrees, have built

political capital through relationships, and personal characteristics that can be used as a

means to push and agenda or decision forward. Miller (1999) summarized these sources

of power to that of the speaker of the house of representatives in the sense that

community college faculty department chairs are considered to be a "first among equals" (p. 745) within their departments. Further, McArthur stressed that one form of power can never be a substitute for the other, and that credibility from the faculty within an academic department is critical to the effectiveness of the individual in the chair's position. In other words, the department chair's level of personal power is directly correlated to how credible he or she is seen in the eyes of the faculty.

In addition to the sources of power for department chairs, Sirkis (2011) outlined 7 leadership characteristics, or skills, that are equally important to the role of these individuals:

- Building Relationships and Networks – this involves the ability of department chairs to develop positive networks within their own department, across departments, and throughout the institution. This process involves making others feel valued and important, while regularly seeking assistance or advice. Doing so creates a "cadre" (p. 54) of individuals within the institution.

- Advocating for Faculty – due to the conflicted nature of the department chair's position, it can be difficult to arrive at solutions to issues that are satisfactory to all parties. In these situations, Sirkis (2011) stressed the importance of siding with the faculty whenever possible. Taking the side of the administrator too often risks alienating the faculty, whose support is critical to the department chair in terms of the successful execution of their role.

- Creating and Implementing a Shared Vision – this characteristic of leadership involves developing a departmental strategy through effectively communicating challenges and objectives, while involving faculty in all aspects of the process. The actual execution of this strategy can then be handled in subgroups of faculty empowered by the chair.

- Developing Faculty as Teachers and Leaders – this involves the collaborative aspect of leadership within an academic department. Chairs should always endeavor to provide opportunities for growth to faculty through professional development and trainings that are experiential. The chair should also have a firm understanding of personal development pedagogies and delegation skills. The product of this is a faculty who is confident and engaged, which ultimately reflects back on the chair.

- Earning Trust – noting back to the allusions of trust by MacArthur (2002), the chair's role is creating and maintaining an atmosphere of trust within the department is vital; though, not altogether difficult. The chair should always behave in a manner that is transparent, consistent with their values, and promotes honesty.

- Rethinking and Initiating – beyond serving as a facilitator for change (McArthur, 2002), Sirkis (2011) stated that the department chair should be an initiator of change. This involves constantly scanning the internal environment of the department, as well as the external environments of

the larger institution and the outside world, to ensure that students' needs

are being met. If not, practices may need to be reexamined and amended.

- Adapting – finally, Sirkis (2011) noted that an important leadership skill

    for the department skill involves flexibility and being able to adapt.

    Though simplistic, this is important because of all the role influencers that

    the department chair must absorb.

A third vital role given to that of the community college faculty department chair

is that of a catalyst for change (McArthur, 2002; Riggs & Akor, 1992; Spaid & Parsons,

1999). Much like derived forms of personal power, change can only be enacted with the

support of the faculty within community colleges and their respect for the power that

comes with the chair's position. Garnering such support can be difficult, and potentially

even strain the relationship between the department chair and the faculty, given the

importance placed on academic freedom and the value placed on autonomy by faculty.

McArthur (2002) stated that, "…faculty want autonomy but request assistance, demand

quick decisions yet belabor issues, seek power and authority, but delegate decisions to

administrators" (p. 5). As a result, resistance to change can quickly set in when threats to

faculty autonomy and traditional norms is perceived. Sirkis (2011) stated that, "senior

leaders, such as deans, vice presidents and provosts, are too far removed from faculty to

fully understand resistance to new practices or policies" (p. 55). It is then up to the

department chair to recruit and motivate the faculty to embrace institutional changes,

particularly those initiated by the administration. In sum, McArthur (2002) stated that

"The reality is that faculty can be a force of resistance or a wonderful repository of

creative energy. Which direction they take is due in large part to the leadership exhibited by the chair" (p. 6).

Faculty department chairs within universities

The literature on faculty department chairs is not exclusively for the community college. Page (2011) defined the university department chair as one who is "…directly responsible and accountable for the management, administration, quality and success of a specified curriculum area" (p. 104). While there are many similarities between department chairs within community colleges and universities, there are also some unique differences and challenges as well.

Page (2011) described the role of the university faculty chair through the use of faith metaphors, or perspectives. This type of analysis is useful because of the semantic similarities between religion and education. For example, faculty department chairs in universities are like fundamentalists who strictly adhere to absolute principles in response to today's financial demands on higher education and institutional shifts towards a more business-like focus. Page also compared university faculty department chairs to that of Priests. In this sense, Priests are often viewed as advocates for those in their congregations, and sometimes intercessors between a deity and their followers. As has been discussed, faculty department chairs at all levels possess an intercessory role between senior leadership and the faculty at-large. Third, Page compared university faculty members to that of converts due to the transition to manager, or administrator, from faculty that many of these individuals must make. Finally, Page compared university faculty members to that of Martyrs. Martyrs in this context were defined as

those who were willing to suffer in support of a greater cause. For university faculty members, this involves making every effort to meet every demand given to them, even to their detriment.

In addition to the typologies outlined by Page (2011) above, Winter (2009) described schisms related to the academic identity of university faculty department chairs. More specifically, Winter stated that managerialism, or the reshaping of higher education towards efficiency, managerial culture, and profit-making, has resulted in an crisis among university faculty department chairs that are "…denoted by the identities of the 'academic manager'…and the 'managed academic'" (p. 121). The notion of the academic manager embraces the new ideals of managerialism that are becoming increasingly prevalent today, while the notion managed academic rejects managerialism in favor of autonomy and collegiality. In bridging the academic manager and the managed academic, Winter suggested relying on generative conversation and leadership. As he stated, "Through regular interaction with each other, managers and academics establish relationships of mutuality…" (p. 128). Leadership in this context refers to the positional authority held by the department chairs to leverage "…innovation and commercial activity (managerial values) while maintaining the importance of academic autonomy, professionalism, and collegial relations (normative values)" (p. 128). Schisms and typologies such as these provide useful insights into the roles of university faculty department chairs, while highlighting some interesting similarities between them and their community college counterparts as has been discussed. However, some important differences exist as well.

McClure and Teitelbaum (2016) examined the work of the university faculty

department chair through the theoretical lens of academic capitalism. They explained that

the external political and economic pressures related to neoliberalism have played a

substantial role in university faculty department chairs taking on a more managerial, and

entrepreneurial role. Academic capitalism, therefore, helps to explain this behavior

because a foundational tenet of this theory is its predication on the increased capacity

given to department chairs in pursuit of new sources of income. McClure and Teitelbaum

identified roles associated with administrative academic capitalism, which include:

devoting substantial attention and resources to marketing initiatives, embedding

entrepreneurship in strategic planning initiatives, seeking out private donations, investing

in revenue-generating programs. Academic capitalism provides a unique insight into the

work roles of department chairs across all higher education domains since this notion

goes beyond the traditional teaching focus of the community college. Interestingly, a

common thread between community college and university faculty department chairs,

based on what has been presented in the literature, is that sources of role conflict and

questions of identity can largely be traced back to the effects of neoliberalism on higher

education today.

Neoliberalism

Chapter 1 introduced the notion of neoliberalism as a theoretical framework to

guide this study; however, an in-depth discussion of neoliberalism's wide

characterization in the literature is necessary. Levin and Aliyeva (2015) offered several

definitions, and applications, of neoliberalism. They outlined that neoliberalism can be

interpreted as an ideology, a socio-economic theory, and even a form of a governmental mentality. These technical and conceptual definitions of neoliberalism differ in important ways to the popular use of the term, often disparaging, in popular culture where it has become a way of characterizing the hegemonic forces of the corporatization of society. Providing an overview of neoliberalism within the context of higher education provides focus in terms of its application as a theoretical framework for this study.

Olssen and Peters (2005) stated that neoliberalism and globalization are linked at the economic level within the contexts of free commerce and trade; neoliberalism is but one facet of the broader globalization term, however. Olssen and Peters identified 4 tenets of neoliberalism that relate to higher education policy: the self-interested individual, free market economics, a commitment to laissez-faire, and a commitment to free trade. These four tenets represent the notion that individuals are naturally self-interested, the market is the best determinant of resource allocation and regulates itself better that the government, and that the economy operates best without the interference of government oversight.

Saunders (2007) described neoliberalism as a socio-economic theory that denies governmental involvement in domestic economic affairs in favor of materialism, consumerism, and making a commodity out of numerous public goods. As a result, neoliberalism has become a powerful force that now dominates many aspects of the economic dialog and behaviors in the United States today. Saunders also offered an alternative theoretical definition for neoliberalism in the sense that it "holds that the social good is maximized by unregulated market behaviors" (p. 2). Such definitions allow

for an examination into how neoliberalism has manifested in higher education at the macro-level and in community colleges at the more micro-level.

Higher education has been greatly influenced by the tenets of neoliberal ideology (Ayers, 2005; Boyd, 2011; Giroux, 2002; Levin & Aliyeva, 2015; Olssen & Peters, 2005; Saunders, 2010). Additionally, neoliberalism lays the groundwork for the facilitation of globalization into higher education through the connection between market ideology, and global culture and behaviors (Levin & Aliyeva, 2015). Boyd (2011) punctuated this discussion by stating that community colleges should not be selling education and that institutional stakeholders should not be supportive of a system that does; however, administrators are supportive because accrediting bodies and governing boards are becoming more populated with corporate-minded individuals. Thus, faculty have felt the pressure to conform their ideals, their courses, and their pedagogy to the demands of the market. As Ayers (2005) summarized, neoliberalism promotes free market activity over civic endeavors as the primary driver of the public's well-being. In other words, the primary purpose of the government is to ensure that business and industry enjoy the most favorable climate possible to their success and longevity. Saunders (2010) pointed to the dominance of neoliberalism as a driving force for this noting that the past four decades have resulted in the reframing of the "…priorities and identities of faculty and students" (p. 42). Boyd (2011) stated that in terms of the community college sector, neoliberal ideology has resulted in a paradigm shift in which education is viewed as a product to be sold, students are viewed as customers, and faculty are evaluated on how satisfied these customers are with the product they are sold.

Taken together, this serves as the basis for administrator values and behaviors in higher education today.

In their study on the impact of neoliberalism on higher education and the knowledge economy, Olssen and Peters (2005) asserted that the governmental tendency to further remove itself as a source of provision for higher education is a reality that will only continue. As such, higher education will more and more look to private sources of support, which could greatly deepen the relationship between higher education and business and industry (Levin, 2001). Saunders (2010) agreed with this assessment when he noted that a decrease in state appropriations is part of the neoliberal "regime" (p. 43) and that this is greatly influencing what administrators see as being in the best interest of their institutions. For example, Saunders stated that in addition to prioritizing revenue generation in the private sector, the degree to which college and university administrators are efficiently allocating resources has become greatly important. Levin (2001) also pointed to responsiveness to industry as key driving forces behind the shift in values among administrators as well. This is significant because the legislative agenda and program completions in the workforce disciplines directly impact several institutional stakeholders as well other areas, such as institutional funding.

Olssen and Peters (2005) stated that in terms of higher education policy, neoliberalism can broadly be understood as an input-output system that reduces education to a product. To that end, Olssen and Peters described the effect of de-professionalization, which involves:

- A shift from collaborative shared models of governance, which are flat in terms of hierarchy, to more top-down managerial models based on specifications of job performance that rely heavily on chains of command.

- Restructuring initiative geared towards market and state demands in the form of administration dictating workloads and course content; the result being the erosion of professional autonomy traditionally enjoyed by faculty.

- Increasing market pressures that redefine notions of individual freedom in order to meet market demands.

Saunders (2010) noted that a primary of this de-professionalization resulting from the spread of neoliberalism has to do with an overall reduction in funding for social services once seen as a public good, such as higher education. In other words, as public funding for higher education reduced, more and more institutions found themselves relying on private sources of funding. For the universities, this came in the forms of privately funded research. As a result, the role of faculty changed to emphasize their ability to generate revenue in lieu of participating in institutional governance.

Saunders (2010) stated that economic proficiency under neoliberalism has become a prime driving force behind institutional decision-making and served as the rationale by administrators to hire larger amount of part-time faculty and turn away from more shared forms of governance. Additionally, Saunders discussed additional changes, such as commodification of education, viewing students as customers, and the motivation for earning an education being for economic gain as opposed to developing a "meaningful philosophy of life" (p. 54). Saunders concluded by reasserting that all of

these outcomes were a result of the application of neoliberal theory on higher education. Community colleges have also seen the effects of neoliberalism, though less discussed in the research literature, which further outlines the framework for viewing the faculty/administrator relationship today.

Boyd (2011) emphasized the traditional role of the community college has been an open point of access to higher education serving a local base of students. As Boyd stated, "this was a system which evolved to give access to vocational training, life-long learning, liberal arts education, and university programs…" (p. 249). However, community colleges have also seen the effects of neoliberalism in the form of education being a product for consumption, viewing students as customers, and evaluating faculty based on consumer satisfaction. Additionally, Boyd noted that community college administrators have accepted the inclusion of neoliberal ideology due to the fact that governing boards and accrediting agencies are becoming more populated by corporate-minded individuals. As a result, faculty members have seen increased pressure to alter course content and reaching practices in order to conform to market demands.

Levin and Aliyeva (2015) described neoliberalism theory in relation to community college faculty. To begin, there is general agreement among these authors as to the external pressures community colleges are experiencing in terms of productivity and cost cutting measures. Levin and Aliyeva (2015) also stated that an additional byproduct of these external forces to the ones stated above has come in the form of competition. In other words, because views on education have shifted to make it a product to be sold, higher education institutions of all types have begun looking for their

own competitive advantages in order to attract students. For community colleges, there is great homogeneity in viewing education as a product since faculty primarily engage in teaching instead of research. Additionally, community colleges tend to rely more heavily on state appropriations for external funding over research funding. As a result, a decreased competitive advantage has forced community colleges to be more reliant on market forces than their university counterparts. This is important for community college faculty in several ways. For example, Levin and Aliyeva (2015) stated that 70% of community college faculty are adjunct faculty. Such a rise in the number of these faculty members at community colleges is to accommodate increasing enrollments numbers, paying them a substantially lower wage than full-time faculty, and still maintaining high productivity. For the full-time faculty, the economic behaviors of the institution have pushed them to the periphery of decision-making (Levin, 2006). As Levin continued, calls for greater productivity and efficiency, coupled with a more managerial style of institutional decision-making has redefined the identity of the faculty in community colleges.

Finally, Gonzalez and Ayers (2018) investigated labor expectations of community college faculty members by converging the theoretical frameworks of institutional logics and emotional labor. According to Gonzalez and Ayers, institutional logics was defined as sense making frames that help provide an understanding of what is legitimate, reasonable and effective within certain contexts. Additionally, emotional labor was defined as the emotional resources that individuals possess which are leveraged by their employers. The prevailing argument of this study was that the expectations of emotional

labor on the part of community college faculty were normalized through a convergence of multiple institutional logics; one of which was neoliberalism.

Gonzalez and Ayers (2018) stated that, in the context of their study, the institutional logic of neoliberalism helps frame sense-making efforts related to the intentional effort of making community college a market. One way that has been evidenced, for example, is through community college mission statements and the increased adoption of economic development as an institutional priority. Where community college faculty were concerned, Gonzalez and Ayers stated that this institutional stakeholder group has been expected to meet their teaching expectations, while including a more "personal touch" (p. 469), despite a decrease in overall funding and an increase in accountability. In sum, the institutional logic of neoliberalism contributes to the positioning of faculty members as laborers that have the additional expectation of being more available, stretching further and of giving more in the name of student success.

Neoliberalism theory allows for the examination of the faculty/administrator relationship within the context of current organizational culture and behaviors based on the external environment. To be sure, neoliberalism affects the administration and faculty in different ways, which has greatly contributed to the conflict between these groups. The purpose of this research, again, however, is in understanding the role of community college department chairs and how they navigate their unique position as both administrator and faculty.

Intra-Organizational Mobility

The notion of Intra-organizational mobility has been put forward as an essential way to make sense of individuals' ability to move within an organization and between otherwise disconnected groups within the same organization. Pearce and Randel (2004) noted that social relationships within organizations are the vehicle for this movement, stating that "individuals who have relationships in otherwise unconnected groups serve as bridges, allowing them information and control benefits" (p. 83). The connection between intra-organizational mobility, community college faculty department chairs, and faculty/administration is, therefore, made clear. The question at-hand now is the methodological characterization of intra-organizational mobility in the literature. Such an examination serves to inform and justify this study's methodological decisions.

The study of workplace mobility, or intra-organizational mobility, in the literature has been widely viewed through a quantitative lens (Pearce & Randel, 2004; Plouffe & Gregoire, 2011; Podolny & Baron, 1997). In their study on expectations of organizational mobility, workplace social inclusion, and employee job performance, Pearce and Randel (2004) identified two conceptual measures for determining how individuals move within organizations: Expectations of Organizational Mobility (EOM), and Workplace Social Inclusion (WSI). EOM is concerned with the degree to which employees possess a felt need to change jobs in order to stay in their given profession (Pearce and Randel noted that EOM is not a measure for the intent to leave an organization). WSI, on the other hand, is interested in individuals' levels of social capital and is a measure of the degree to

which individuals have developed social networks and feel as though they belong in the workplace.

WSI can be thought of as a meta-term for social capital because it involves both linking and communal forms of social capital. Pearce and Randel (2004) defined linking social capital, sometimes known as bridging social capital, as the capacity for an individual to link groups together who otherwise might not be connected. "Individuals who have relationships in otherwise unconnected groups serve as bridges, allowing them information and control benefits" (Pearce & Randel, 2004, p. 83). Communal capital refers to relationships that develop between individuals who engage in similar activities and is based on an embeddedness within an institution, a family, or other such associations. In the conversation of the community college department chair and their position between the administration and faculty, WSI could be a valuable tool in helping to further understand this relationship.

Pearce and Randel (2004) hypothesized that EOM and WSI were not mutually exclusive notions; rather, they are negatively correlated. Additionally, they hypothesized that a higher WSI would lead to higher job performance ratings, and that WSI is a mediator of EOM and job performance. Regression analysis was used to test these hypotheses with the data sourced from measures related to EOM, WSI, and job performance. The results showed that a greater expectation to move to another position tended to yield lower workplace social inclusion, and thus, lower job performance ratings. WSI proved to be a valuable quality in terms of tempering expectations of moving to a new position while also preserving positive job performance ratings. The

survey measures used to operationalize the variables in this study included questions related to job searching and workplace acceptance.

In two studies on intra-organizational navigation (IEN), Plouffe and Gregoire (2011) first focused on individuals' level of proactiveness in terms of how they carry out their jobs, with the second study involving the assessment of IEN's capacity as a predictor of overall job performance. Their argument was that intra-organizational navigation is a precursor to job performance via certain mediating variables that are granted to individuals who engage in proactive behavior. As they stated, "…navigation implies the discovery and harnessing of other employees, resources, and the broader competencies of the entire organization itself as it pertains to the requirements of specific jobs" (p. 694).

Plouffe and Gregoire (2011) asserted that IEN is a valid construct for measure proactivity by focusing on individuals' specific actions in terms of how they navigate their respective organizations. Additionally, Plouffe and Gregoire were interested in determining the ability of IEN to predict overall job performance. To accomplish this, regression analysis was used. The construct items used to operationalize the variables included: intra-organizational employee navigation, network ability, social astuteness, job satisfaction and performance, personality traits, manager alignment, and rule and policy concessions.

The findings of the two studies outlined by Plouffe and Gregoire (2011) suggested that management should be more conscientious about the role IEN plays in the successful job performance of individuals who operate within and across different kinds of work

roles and institutional contexts. According to Plouffe and Gregoire, "It may be time to acknowledge that developing and nurturing navigational behavior should not be left to chance. Rather, managers should consider strategies and interventions that might nurture navigational behavior" (p.728). When viewed through a proactive lens, IEN provides explanatory power for why some employees are readily able to garner resources and explore the depths of their job assignments, among other skills. That is, they have leveraged their organizational navigation to seek out these kinds of workplace inputs. The benefit to recognizing the capacity for individuals to learn these kinds of skills through IEN provides senior leadership with an opportunity for coaching. Of additional importance, within the context of this study, is learning how community college faculty members can be specifically taught to proactively make IEN a focal point of their jobs. If possible, this would partly address one of this study's aims in determining how the department chairs could serve as a bridge between the administration and the faculty.

A third study focused on the structure and content of individuals' workplace networks and how they affect intra-organizational mobility (Podolny & Baron, 1997). This study built upon previous research focused on how networks within organizations help foster mobility and promotions within organizations. For example, Podolny and Baron noted that previous research on intraorganizational networks and promotion concluded that an individual with connections to numerous institutional actors, who are themselves unconnected to each other, greatly helps in advancing intraorganizational mobility. Podolny and Baron take this a step further, however, adding that organizational identity, as well as clear and consistent role expectations, is equally important in

leveraging mobility within organizations. To test this hypothesis, Podolny and Baron relied on a logistic regression methodology. The survey items used to operationalize the variables included items related to task advice, or those within an organization who were sought out for information to help develop job effectiveness; strategic information, individuals sought out for their knowledge on organizational "goings-on" (p. 692); mentorship, individuals perceived as mentors within the organization; social support, those perceived as safe to discuss sensitive matters.

The conclusions of this study, as outlined by Podolny and Baron (1997), supports the notion that the number of connections an individual has with other actors in an organization does leverage intraorganizational mobility when resources and information are being transmitted across each connection. However, the number of connections one has with other institutional actors within an organization hinders intraorganizational mobility when identity and expectations are being transmitted. Within the context of the community college faculty department chair, these results seem to indicate that quality and quantity of intraorganizational relationships plays a role in the ability for these individuals to move within an institution, depending on the context of each connection. Understanding this would seem to help address the question of how the department chairs currently navigate their role between the administration and faculty, and how this movement could be enhanced.

As can be seen, the notion of movement within an organization has seen attention in the literature, although almost no attention in the literature is devoted to how intra-organizational mobility occurs within institutions of higher education. Further, we know

almost nothing about intra-organizational mobility from a qualitative perspective. There

has been a great deal of emphasis placed on how to promote intra-organizational

mobility, but what we lack is an understanding of how individuals who must move in

between disparate groups within the same organization. Once again, intra-organizational

mobility is tied to movement between disconnected groups via relationships (Pearce &

Randel, 2004), which is at the heart of this study. The qualitative lens of the multiple case

study approach affords the opportunity to study this construct from both a new setting

(higher education) and methodological perspective. Further, the multiple case study

approach allows for the generation of new knowledge from the department chairs' own

experiences in answering the research questions. That is, how does intra-organizational

mobility occur among department chairs. Such research questions are difficult to answer

using more quantitative methods.

Role Conflict and Role Ambiguity

Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snoek, and Rosenthal (1964) developed the role episode

model as a means to better understand role conflict among individuals in organizations.

The role episode model depicts an interpersonal process in which a sender transmits

expectations associated with a given role to a focal person. The model also accounts for

organizational, personal, and interpersonal factors that influence the role episode. Taking

all of these things into account, the role episode model depicts a feedback loop between

the role sender and focal person, which highlights the transactional nature of the

relationship between these two individuals, and/or groups (Van Sell, Brief, & Schuler,

1981). These authors also pointed out that there may also be a reciprocal nature to the

relationship between role sender and focal person; however, there is no current evidence to support this in the literature.

Van Sell, Brief, and Schuler (1981) reported that the organizational factors influencing the role episode model include: structure, level in the organization, role requirements, task characteristics, physical setting, and organizational practices. The personal factors (applicable to both the role sender and the focal person) include: status, needs, values, education, ability, age, sex, and position within the organization. The interpersonal factors, which are associated with the relationship between the role sender and the focal person, include: frequency of interaction, mode of communication, importance of senders to physical location, visibility, and feedback and participation between the role sender and focal person. All three of these categories can have an influence on the role episode itself in terms of how they affect either of the participants within the model. Such an examination could prove fruitful in determining where there might be common ground between the administration and the faculty, and how the department chairs can leverage their position to nurturing such commonality. Additionally, there is also the benefit of gaining insights into how the organizational, personal, and interpersonal factors influence the role episode between the department chairs and each role sender group.

Chapter Summary

This chapter provided an overview of the literature salient to the discussion centered around the process of role sense-making by community college faculty department chairs in four main areas. First, the literature related to mid-level

management, community college governance, and faculty department chairs was examined, broadly, from an encyclopedic perspective. This perspective served to present a state-of-the-discipline in order to shed light on what is already known about these individuals. Second, an examination of the literature related to neoliberalism was discussed from a theoretical perspective since this study relies on neoliberalism as the beginning of an ecological framework for better understanding the challenges faced by community colleges today. As the next layer of the ecological framework, inter-institutional mobility was discussed to better understand how the notion of movement within institutions, and in between people groups, has been approached. Inter-institutional mobility was also examined from a methodological perspective in order to add credence to the methods chosen for this study. Finally, this chapter provided a discussion on the literature related to individuals and how they process, and act upon, role conflict and ambiguity as a third level of the ecological framework.

Overall, understanding more about how community college faculty department chairs make sense of their numerous roles and how communication flows through them is critical. Gaining further insights into these areas could help shed light on how institutions could better communicate internally and promote a healthier institutional culture. At present, however, there is very little understating of how this actually occurs. Chapter 3, thus, provides an overview of how the selected methodology will guide how this study aims to address its purpose and research questions.

Chapter 3: Methodology

The purpose of this study was to gain a more nuanced understanding about the role of community college department chairs and how they navigate their positionality between the faculty and the administration. The following questions guided this study:

1. How do community college department chairs navigate their role within community colleges?

2. How do community college department chairs balance, and act upon, the role expectations relayed to them by both the senior administration and the faculty at-large?

3. How does the role of the community college faculty department chair leverage the relationship between the faculty and administration towards the realization of their respective goals?

Here again, the framework of neoliberalism helped to provide a backdrop as to the governance challenges facing community colleges today, and why the need to better understand the department chair's role in between the faculty and administration given these challenges is so critical. This study, therefore, sought to answer the research questions by gaining insights directly from the lived experiences of community college faculty department chairs in the construction of new understanding. The following sections outline the methodological decisions that helped accomplish this goal.

Methodological Approach

There was a strong reason to believe that a multiple case study would be an appropriate design in addressing the roles of community college faculty department chairs in terms of their relationship to the administration and faculty. Stake (1995) stated that oftentimes the reason for conducting a multiple case study is that this design lends itself to studying the phenomenon of interest in several different contexts. This reasoning was beneficial to the study of community college faculty members in that they interact with faculty and administrators in different ways providing different contextual avenues for examining their role in that interaction. Yin (2018) expanded on Stake's assertion by viewing multiple case study design through the lens of replicability. In other words, through careful selection of the cases, multiple case studies are designed to predict either similar or contrasting results with each case. The idea behind Yin's overall assertion is that if every case in a multiple case study resulted in similar constructs, then the findings would be compelling given the framework, questions, and overall design of the study.

Yazan (2015) provided an overview of several approaches to case study research based off the works of prominent methodologists Robert Yin, Sharan Merriam, and Robert Stake. Yazan detailed these individuals' perspectives around the notions of case definitions, design, data gathering, analysis, and validation. This study primarily relied on the perspectives from all three of these authors in varying levels of depth in the deployment of this multiple case study as a philosophical underpinning for the methodological decisions outlined below.

Research Setting

Maxwell Junior College (MJC) served as the context for this multiple case study. MJC was founded in 1980s and currently serves 3 adjoining counties in North Texas. MJC was selected as the setting for this research in part, following principles of case study methodology due to the generous amount of access that has been granted in the carrying out of this study. MJC's senior administration recognized the importance of this work and had no reservations about college employees and other sources of data being involved provided that privacy and confidentiality were observed. Other aspects of MJC made it a promising setting for this study due to the characteristics of its curricular offerings and multiple missions that exemplify many comprehensive community colleges today at the crux of neoliberal social forces (Levin, 2000; Levin, 2001; Levin & Aliyeva, 2015).

Over the course of its relatively brief history, MJC has enjoyed great success in terms of providing quality general and workforce education to its local community. MJC is an associate degree granting institution that also awards various certificates of competency. The academic transfer majors all lead to either an Associate of Science, Associate of Art, or an Associate of Art in Teaching degree. Conversely, the workforce programs either lead to an Associate of Applied Science degree or a certificate of competency. The academic transfer disciplines are parsed out into five divisions:

- Math/Physical Sciences – includes courses/majors in Math, Physics, and Engineering.

- Communications – includes courses/majors in English, Speech, Journalism, and Spanish.

- Natural Sciences – includes courses/majors in Biology and Chemistry.

- Arts – includes courses/majors in Education, Art, Music, Physical Education, and Theater.

- Social Sciences – includes courses/majors in History, Government, Psychology, and Sociology.

The workforce programs operate as standalone programs and offer employability to students in the areas of culinary arts, automotive technology, cosmetology, agriculture, business, funeral services, various allied health programs, and office technology. Each workforce program is led by a program director who either reports to the Dean of Workforce Education or the Dean of Allied Health. The five academic transfer divisions are led by a department chair. The 5 academic transfer department chairs and the two workforce deans report to the Vice President for Instruction, who is the chief academic officer and reports directly to the president.

MJC characterizes the role of the department chair as a full-time faculty member who is appointed to the role of director by the faculty within the specific department(s), the Dean (where applicable), and the Vice President for Instruction. The department chair does not have the ability to hire and fire full-time employees, but they may hire adjuncts. The department chairs may also request to return to their full-time faculty role at the end of each Fall or Spring semester, however, and the college president may make this request as well. Workforce programs, on the other hand, hire a director for each program

through the college's standard hiring procedure for all employees through the formation

of a committee to interview candidates and then a recommendation for hire. Additionally,

the job descriptions for the department chairs in the academic transfer disciplines are not

discipline specific and are common to each chair, whereas the job descriptions for the

workforce program directors are specific to each program.

The college has also been able to extend its reach far beyond its own service area

in recent years with the development of a strong distance education program. According

to MJC's Spring 2018 student profile, the college had a headcount of 2,781 students:

39.3% male and 60.7% female. The number of duplicated enrollments in academic

transfer courses was 3,320, and 1,264 students had declared majors designed to transfer

into a 4-year baccalaureate program with no licensure or credential upon transfer. MJC

has been influenced by the leadership of 5 presidents since its founding; however, a

distinguishing feature of the college today is that 3 of the current department chairs are

original to the college, while the other 2 have served less than 5 years as chair. As such,

MJC provides the opportunity of gaining a nuanced understanding of roles, culture, and

relationships from a young institution with department chairs who share a diverse

perspective on these constructs.

Environmental, Organizational, Individual Framework

Chapter 2 provided an overview of the literature relevant to three areas that, taken

together, served as an ecological conceptual framework (see Figure 1) that I adapted for

this multiple case study and refer to as the Environmental, Organizational, Individual

(EOI) framework. The EOI framework first considered the relative effects of

neoliberalism on MJC at the environmental level. As has been discussed, neoliberalism theory helps to add explanatory power to how, and why, institutions have shifted managerial and decision-making structures over the latter half of the 20th century (Ayers, 2005; Birch, 2015; Levin, 2001; Levin, 2006). For example, Giroux (2002) summarized what has previously been discussed in that neoliberalism has resulted in a "corporatized regime" (p. 438) that has embraced a management model of decision-making as a replacement for faculty governance. Boyd (2011), meanwhile, stated that neoliberalism has resulted in a press to treat institutions of higher education as market structures that provide services that are subject to market competition; the goal of this being generating a financial profit. As a result, neoliberalism theory, at the broadest, environmental level, allowed for the study of the positionality of department chairs as a source of governance tension between the administration and faculty at-large.

The organizational-level framework in the EOI model drew upon the Workplace Social Inclusion (WSI) and Intraorganizational Employee Navigation (IEN) theories, as outlined by Pearce and Randel (2004) and Plouffe and Gregoire (2011), respectively. WSI is rooted in the utility of organizational relationships, or social capital, and the notion that deeper relationships help to facilitate the ability for individuals to move between different organizational sub-groups. As Pearce and Randel stated, "WSI captures the extent to which employees have informal social ties with others at work and feel as if they belong and are socially included by others in their workplace" (p. 84). WSI added to this study's ability to focus on the positionality of the department chairs within the

organizational context of MJC and how well they are able to operate within, and between, the administration and the faculty at-large.

Whereas Workplace Social Inclusion focused on relationships and social capital as a vehicle for movement within organizations, Intraorganizational Employee Navigation looked more at the organizational and positional structures as a means to facilitate organizational movement. For example, Plouffe and Gregoire (2011) stated that organizational navigation is particularly important to those whose role requires them to cross certain boundaries or is characterized by "…high degrees of complexity, autonomy, and organizational autonomy" (p. 694). IEN, then, allowed this study to look at the work roles of the department chair participants, and the organizational structures in place at MJC that require them to move between the administration and the faculty at-large. In sum, the complimentary nature of the WSI and IEN frameworks afforded this study with the opportunity to investigate the department chairs' movement between the administration and the faculty at MJC from both a relational and structural standpoint. The final level of the EOI ecological framework, however, considered the internal sources of conflict among the participants.

For the individual-level of the EOI ecological framework, this study drew from Kahn et al. (1964) and their role episode model, which "…depicts the interpersonal process between the person being sent expectations (the focal person) and those sending the expectations (role senders)" (p. 46). In other words, the role episode model primarily represents a cyclical process by which an individual receives and experiences role expectations, and then responds back to the individual sending those expectations.

Secondary to this process are certain organizational, personal, and interpersonal factors that have their own unique effects on the primary model. Such factors at the organizational level include structure, role requirements, tasks, and setting; the personal factors include status, needs, values, education, sex, and age; the interpersonal factors include mode of communication, frequency of interaction, importance of sender, physical location, and feedback. Taken together, the role episode model was ideal for examining how the department chairs received, experienced, and responded to the role expectations sent to them by the administration and the faculty accounting for the contextual factors outlined above.

Schwandt and Gates (2018) discussed the notion of process tracing as a means of testing theory in case study research. Process tracing involves identifying and assessing "…the causal chain and mechanism(s) between a potential cause and an effect or outcome" (p. 349). This rationale supported the intended outcome of this particular case study with the outcome having to do with organizational-level health in terms of relationships and culture. The goal was for the EOI model to reveal a causal relationship between department chairs, their impact on the relationship between administration and faculty, and how that impacted the overall institution.

In sum, the EOI model represented an intersection of three frameworks in this study. Again, neoliberalism was intended to serve as the framework at the environmental level and helped to shed light on why community college governance is changing and why that has strained the faculty/administrator relationship. Intra-organizational mobility then looked within the organization at the networks in place that allowed individuals to

move in between otherwise disconnected groups. For community college department chairs, intra-organizational mobility relied on the relationships these individuals had with both the administration and the faculty in order to move in between these groups. Finally, the role episode model allowed for the individual examination of department chairs and how they internalized the role expectations sent to them from the faculty and administration. Taken together, these three frameworks worked in concert to provide a lens for understanding the role sense-making of department chairs in today's community colleges.

Sampling and Case Description

Stake (1995) stated that the ideal number of cases to be chosen in a multiple case study falls in the range of 4 to 10. The reason for this is that 2 or 3 cases tend to not demonstrate sufficient interactivity between the case and the phenomenon of interest. More than 15 cases, on the other hand, demonstrates more interactivity in one study than researchers and/or readers can understand. Stake also stated that the selection of cases in a multiple case study begins, at least partially, with them already being identified. For this multiple case study, the five academic transfer department chairs at MJC served as the five cases:

- Jaime – Jaime's area of responsibility included the English, Communications/Journalism and Foreign Languages departments.

- Jordan – Jordan's area of responsibility included the Art, Physical Education, Music, Drama and Education departments.

- Carol – Carol's area of responsibility included the Biology and Chemistry departments.

- Anne – Anne's area of responsibility included the Math, Physics and Engineering departments.

- Stacy – Stacey's area of responsibility included the History, Government, Psychology and Sociology departments.

In the course of cultivating the agreement necessary for permission to conduct the study at MJC, all 5 department chairs expressed their interest and willingness to be part of the study. Naturally, the study secured formal institutional permission and followed a participant consent process subject to requisite IRB oversight. Additionally, this study took the necessary steps to ensure the department chairs' privacy; thus, pseudonyms were issued to protect their identity. Given the range that Stake recommended allowed for 1 department chair to either not participate or withdraw, and the study still retain its integrity.

Stake (1995) advocated for a statistical, or science-based, selection process for the cases in a multiple case study. The rationale for this is that the cases selected should be representative of a population of cases and that the phenomenon of interest should be prominent among all of them. In other words, the phenomenon of interest is what binds the cases together. Stake also called for a purposeful sampling of cases; one that is "tailored" (p. 24) to a particular study.

As Yin (2018) reminded, multiple case studies, much like single case studies, can be holistic or have embedded units. Because this multiple case study was holistic, the

phenomenon of interest was the role sense-making of each department chair in terms of their own interactions with faculty and administration. These interactions were viewed through the lens of the role episode model in order to understand department chair interactions in light of the effects of neoliberalism.

Data Sources/Collection

Yin (2018) described a set of criteria for judging the quality of most empirical research designs including case study designs that are directly related to data collection: construct validity and reliability. Construct validity is primarily concerned with establishing a set of operational measures for the phenomenon of interest, while reliability is concerned with consistency and adhering to established procedures throughout the study.

Yin (2018) stated that individuals have been critical of case studies in the past due to perceptions that data collection is based solely on the researcher's preconceptions about the phenomenon of interest. In other words, a main criticism of data collection in case study research involves a lack of operationalization related to the case. By defining the phenomenon of interest in specific concepts that are related back to the overall purpose of the study, the test for construct validity is met. In addition, operational measures must also be identified that conceptually link with the study. For this case study, the role of the faculty department chair was examined as it related to the administration and faculty through the lens of neoliberalism and the role episode model.

To best ensure reliability, Yin (2018) suggested conducting research "…as if someone were looking over your shoulder" (p. 46). Replicability does not guarantee

reliability, replicability means that if the study were to be conducted again by someone else, the procedures could easily be repeated, and similar findings would result. In other words, reliability is not implied simply due to replicability. The discussion of construct validity and reliability are salient to data collection because these are two key areas of case study design that are addressed by how the data are collected. Yin also emphasized the importance of utilizing multiple sources of evidence in a case study as a means of ensuring that construct validity has been met. This case study primarily relied on interviews as the main source of data collection; however, certain documentation and records were collected as well.

Documentation/archival records

Yin (2018) stated that the use of documentation and archival records in case study research are primarily used to support or corroborate other forms of evidence. Where these kinds of documents are concerned, this study relied primarily on the department chairs' job descriptions in order to highlight the explicit and implicit expectations and responsibilities placed on them by the institution. Additionally, the organizational chart for the instructional division at MJC was used to highlight the hierarchical structure of the organization. This chart offered a visual representation of the reporting structure in the instructional division from the faculty at-large through the department chair, and then up to the Vice President of Instruction and the President. Yin cautioned that accuracy can be a concern with using archival records as an additional form of evidence. To address this, the department chair job descriptions and the instruction organizational chart were pulled directly from the MJC human resources office.

The documents used in the study worked to support the various components of the EOI conceptual framework. For example, the documents used in this study helped shed light on how social capital was built and used, which in turn shed light on how well the department chairs operated in disparate organizational subgroups. Certain documents, like job descriptions, helped to highlight organizational factors related to structure and role requirements, which are inherent to the role episode model as previously described. As important as documents were to the outcomes of this study, the primary source of evidence, however, came from interviews.

Interviews

Interviews were relied on most heavily as a source of evidence for this case study. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) outlined various types of ways in which interviews could be conducted; however, this study involved semistructured interviews. These types of interviews are most appropriate when the interview protocol draws upon a mixture of questions that are more and less structured, there is flexibility in how the questions are ordered, when specific information is required of the participants, the majority of the interview is guided by a list of preset questions, and the wording of each question has not been predetermined ahead of each interview session. As Merriam and Tisdell continued, semistructured interviews offer the flexibility for researchers to freely explore an issue and respond to participants in the moment, while at the same time being open to new ideas and topics based on the flow of the conversation. Such characteristics of semistructured interviews made them ideal for this case study. Again, the primary interest of this study was to gain understanding from the department chairs in terms of how they

navigated their role between the administration and faculty; potentially serving as a

bridge between them. By asking theoretically guided questions that also allowed for

flexibility, the participants had the freedom to add unforeseen nuance to the conversation.

This kept the possibility for new ideas open that a more structured interview might have

otherwise stifled.

Seidman (2006) outlined a three-interview approach (see Appendix A) to

collecting interview data in which the first interview explores a life history and asks

questions related to lived experiences up to the present time; the second interview details

lived experiences in the moment; the third interview reflects on any meaning derived by

the participants' earlier responses. The third interview is especially important, as

Seidman noted, because it builds upon the first two in order to fully make sense of the

meaning behind the relationships within the institution and what kind of overall effect

that has given the external pressures explained by neoliberalism. Neoliberalism, due to its

explanatory power as to why governance structures in community colleges are changing,

added power to the participants' words and experiences. This structure, in concert with

the semistructured interviews, was ideal in creating context to the lived experiences of the

department chairs, the administration, and the faculty within the organizational culture of

MJC.

Data Analysis

Data analysis for this study involved within-case and cross-case analyses

inclusive of all sources of data relevant to the cases and setting. Again, the primary data

source for this study came from interviews with the documentation serving to triangulate

the data. The within-case analysis involved a first and second cycle coding approach in order to establish how each department chair navigated and balanced their role, which primarily addressed research questions 1 and 2. A cross-case analysis then occurred that focused on the patterns and ways the themes related to each other across all the department chairs. This synthetic, cross-case analysis was particularly useful for addressing research question 3.

Within-case analysis

The within-case analysis began with the transcription of the 15 interviews (3 per participant) followed by the construction of analytic memos, and the first and second cycle coding process mentioned above. Once the interviews were transcribed, they were reviewed and analytic memos were developed throughout the coding stages based on the participants' routines, rituals, rules, roles, and relationships, code choices/definitions, as well as possible networks and processes (Saldaña, 2016). As Saldaña explained, analytic memos in these areas can help uncover issues related to the participants' daily lives, actions that hold special meaning, parameters that empower and restrict human actions, characteristics that encompass one's identity and status, and interactions of people in their given roles. Additionally, memos helped rationalize coding decisions and interpret how the various parts of the study were woven together. The purpose of this, as Saldaña pointed out, was to create an "intellectual workspace" (p. 44) for the researcher as a means for reflection on the coding process and any emerging patterns, categories, or themes.

First-cycle coding

For the first cycle of coding, the transcripts were reviewed line-by-line and coded against a set of a priori, or provisional codes (Saldaña, 2016). Saldana stated that provisional codes are established prior to fieldwork and focus on the development of projected categories based on various investigative sources, such as literature reviews, previous studies, or experiential data, with the actual starting number being variable. Saldana also noted that provisional codes can be added to, modified, or deleted as data are collected. For this study, the EOI conceptual framework served as the predetermined basis for the establishment of the provisional codes, which included: role structure, role conflict, role ambiguity, organizational movement, go-between, managerial authority, and autonomy. These seven codes encompassed each of the three areas of the EOI framework with respect to their level of focus. In other words, managerial authority and autonomy were related to external effects of neoliberalism on organizational behaviors; organizational movement and go-between spoke to positionality within the organization, workplace social capital, and organizational movement; where role structure, role conflict, and role ambiguity pointed to the internal sources of conflict within the participants. Once the interview data was collected and transcribed, these initial codes were modified and augmented, and then applied to the participants' words.

Second-cycle coding

For the second cycle of coding, versus coding was used (Saldaña, 2016). Saldaña stated that versus coding identifies "in dichotomous or binary terms the individuals, groups, social systems, organizations, phenomena, processes, concepts, etc. in direct

conflict with each other" (p.136). Further, versus coding was most useful in uncovering strong conflicts, competing goals, and/or opposing norms or value systems. Saldaña also stated that versus coding often leads to three primary moieties: primary stakeholders, their perceptions towards a given conflict, and the central issue at stake. As a result, versus coding for this study was primarily sorted into one of three categories: stakeholders, perceptions/actions, or issues. This was a primary sorting tactic, however, because Saldaña pointed to the importance of leaving the process open to reorganization or adding other emergent categories. The EOI contextual framework, and the continuous practices of keeping analytical memos was relevant in this second cycle of coding as a means of focusing in on the sources of role conflict among the participants, why these conflicts existed, and how the oppositional characteristics existed in the same space. The goal of this was to consider the behaviors that led to the sources of sustained conflict and how they were resolved.

Supplemental coding

Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014) also stated that In Vivo coding is one of the most well-known forms of qualitative data analysis and served as a supporting strategy for both the first and second cycle coding phases. Saldaña (2016) added that certain coding strategies, such as the versus coding strategy that were deployed in this study, move from the actual to the conceptual, which justified the use of In Vivo coding as a supplemental coding strategy. In Vivo coding uses words and phrases from a participant's own language are recorded as various codes. The real benefit to this form of analysis, however, is that it captures nuances related to culture and subculture so that

meaning from a particular group, or organization, can be derived. For example, In Vivo

coding captured the words and phrases of department chairs that spoke specifically to the

culture of MJC as well as their own positionality between the faculty and the

administration. As a result, the meaning derived from these words was then traced

directly to the faculty/administrator relationship, and ultimately the organizational

culture. Once the first and second cycles of coding were completed for each participant,

the process for the analysis across the participants began.

Cross-case analysis

Stake (1995) stated that the main activity of cross-case analysis has to do with

reading the findings of the within-case analysis and applying these findings to the

research questions. Referencing Yin's (2018) discussion on the replication logic inherent

to multiple case studies, as themes from the first and second cycle coding for each

participant are derived, themes resulting from across each case will be derived. Miles

Huberman, and Saldaña (2014) referred to this process as forming "types of families" (p.

103), For this study, the conceptual issues that resulted from the participants' role sense-

making in the within-case analysis were grouped, or clustered, according to certain

shared patterns or configurations. This helped to establish linkage between the

department chair's process of role sense-making and how that translated to the

faculty/administrator relationship and organizational culture.

Epistemological Perspective

Creswell and Poth (2018) stated that qualitative researchers must not only

understand their beliefs and theories that inform their research, but they must also be

explicit about such things in their writing. To better inform such writing, Creswell and

Poth outlined certain philosophical assumptions about the nature of reality (ontological)

and what counts as knowledge (epistemological). I primarily align with a constructivist

epistemological perspective in which knowledge is socially constructed based on an

ontological assumption that multiple realities, or perspectives, of a single phenomenon

exist (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). I believe that my research should reflect these

assumptions in the sense that knowledge would be co-constructed between myself as the

research instrument and the participants, or faculty department chairs. Additionally, each

department chair is a unique individual with their own unique perspectives on their role

within the institution and in relation to the administration and faculty.

Researcher Positionality and Reflexivity

I was raised to greatly value people and to believe that relationships bind all of us

together. I can attribute most of this to the fact that my Father was a full-time vocational

minister who then became a professional counselor in private practice. As a result, it is

my belief that people and relationships hold the key to understanding a great number of

issues related to people and organizations. Where research is concerned, these instilled

beliefs and values have profoundly influenced my research agenda and my approach to

conducting research.

I recognized that the importance of relationships in my life necessitated a certain

level of responsibility on my part when considering the influences on the data gathering

process, analysis, and the meaning assigned to the participants' words and experiences. In

other words, it was important to be mindful of my own positionality and motivations in

relation to this study so that they did not inappropriately influence where the data led. To a large degree, the methodological decisions that were made in designing this study helped to safeguard against such influence. For example, the interview protocol was developed based on the theoretical notions of the EOI framework. The analysis plan, including the approaches to coding, were also grounded in the literature. As a result, I was able to operate within the boundaries of my role as the research instrument, while also giving due respect to the objectivity that was required by the EOI framework, data collection, and analysis plans.

My career in higher education began in 2008 after graduating college. I was fortunate enough to find a grant-funded position at the same community college I had attended as an undergraduate 3 years' prior before transferring to my eventual university. After my first year, I took a position in student services as an academic advisor. This is the position that I consider to be the catalyst for my career goals, my educational goals, and my research agenda.

As an advisor, it became essential that I learn two valuable skillsets: expertise in how community colleges function and working with a vastly diverse group of students from all over the college's service area and beyond. In terms of the functionality of the college, I learned about every program in terms of their requirements, the faculty within each program, who they reported to, and what kinds of outcomes students could expect. I also had to learn about the broader reporting structures, college policies, and other procedural information to help guide students through their academic career.

In 2014, I took a third position with the same institution but with more responsibility as the director of the dual credit program. This position has further taught me about how my particular institution operates, what it means to be an administrator, and what faculty work looks like apart from the time they spend in the classroom teaching. I now have a new appreciation for things like course scheduling, proper syllabi formatting, and student learning outcomes. In other words, there are numerous administrative duties that are imposed on faculty members to ensure certain accountability measures are met. The department chairs and I share responsibility for making sure these duties are completed, which has been a large reason why their role in community college work has become important to me and to the institution we all serve.

In sum, I am now in my fifth year as the director of dual credit and it is my belief that my values growing up and spending all of my professional experience at one institution has had a cumulative effect on my research agenda. Additionally, MJC is an institution that is very near to my heart, and influential to me in many ways. The participants in this study are individuals that are well known to me; however, we all shared the common belief that this work was important, and that all efforts to improve higher education should be approached systemically and not emotionally.

As I mentioned, I acknowledged the presence of personal relationships in the carrying-out of this study, but that recognition allowed me to segment those relationships appropriately so not to unduly influence the outcome (bias is more fully addressed in the next section on trustworthiness). The intent of this study was not to be either pro-faculty or pro-administration; rather, my goal was to better understand where relationships were

strong and healthy versus where there might be ambiguity or conflict. By position, my current role most closely aligns with that of an administrator, but it is because of my position that I wanted to better understand organizational relationships and culture on a more broad, organizational scale. My professional knowledge also agrees with the literature on community college governance and culture; that there is work that must be done to improve the way these institutions function. Based on what has been outlined concerning the tension between faculty and administrators, it is also my belief that this could best be accomplished by looking more closely at the lived experiences of the department chairs who exist between these groups.

Trustworthiness

This study relied on data triangulation through documents and archival records (Yin, 2018), the use of multiple cases, and member checks (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016), as the primary means of addressing trustworthiness. Yin (2018) stated that triangulation in the broad sense is based on the intersection, or convergence, of multiple sources of information in order to calculate an object's location. As such, a case study's findings that are derived from multiple sources of information, or evidence, are much more likely to be accurate. Indeed, a major strength of case study research, as Yin also noted, is the ability to use multiple sources of evidence, and that a rationale for doing so is relative to the most basic motivations for engaging in case study research in the first place. In other words, case study research is grounded in the notion of studying a phenomenon within a real-world context. Yin continued by pointing out that the use of multiple sources of

evidence highlights the true scope of a case study, and that the opportunity exists to

develop "…converging lines of inquiry" (p. 127).

Where data triangulation is concerned, Yin (2018) stated that the collection of

information from multiple sources that can corroborate the same findings. Again, the use

of multiple sources of evidence is useful in establishing construct validity as noted above

in the overview of data collection. Through interviews, document analysis, and archival

records, the goal for this study was to offer a more complex and rich description of the

selected cases within the context of the larger institution.

According to Merriam and Tisdell (as cited by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña,

2014):

By looking at a range of similar and contrasting cases, we can understand a single

case finding, grounding it by specifying how and where and, if possible, why it

carries on as it does. We can strengthen the precision, the validity, and the

stability of the findings. (p. 40)

In other words, Merriam and Tisdell (2016) stressed that the more cases that are included

in a study, and the more these cases vary from each other, the more compelling the

findings. In fact, by incorporating multiple cases in a single study, Merriam and Tisdell

stated that the use of multiple cases is a highly common method in increasing external

validity. This study incorporated this strategy through the inclusion of the five faculty

department chairs at MJC. These individuals hold similar job responsibilities; however,

their respective disciplines include their own micro cultures. As a result, there were

similarities and contrasting characteristics inherent to the case selections within this study.

Finally, Merriam and Tisdell (2016) pointed to member checks as a means of reducing bias in qualitative research. As they explained, member checking involves presenting the preliminary analysis of a study to some, or all, of the participants to ensure that the meaning represented in the analysis is what they intended to convey. For this study, the within-case analysis for each participant was presented back to the respective participant to ensure that their words were accurately represented prior to the cross-case analysis. Once the cross-case analysis was then completed, all five participants were presented the results of that analysis for a second round of member checking.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I began with providing an overview of the purpose for conducting this study as well as the research questions. I then went into detail as to how the selected methodology addressed both of these, including the sampling strategy, the sources of data and how they were collected, the conceptual framework, and the process for analysis. Next I outlined what my views of reality (epistemology) are, and why this, plus my own positionality as a researcher, was important in the methodology. Finally, I addressed trustworthiness and how the methodological decisions resulted in valid findings.

Chapter 4: Findings

Introduction

This study considered an issue within higher education today centered on the strained relationship between the faculty and administration within community colleges in light of the effects of neoliberalism. The purpose of this study was to address this issue through an investigation into how community college faculty department chairs navigate their unique positionality between the faculty and administration, act upon the role expectations relayed to them by both of these groups and discover how these two processes affect organizational relationships and the broader organizational culture. Maxwell Junior College (MJC) was the site of this multiple case study in which each of the five faculty department chairs that oversee the academic transfer departments served as the selected participants, or cases. Each participant was interviewed three different times in order to learn about their backgrounds, how they engaged in organizational movement between the faculty and administrator groups, how they acted upon different role expectations relayed to them from these two groups, and how they influenced organizational relationships.

Three research questions served as the overall guide for this study and the basis for the findings discussed in this chapter:

1. How do community college department chairs navigate their role within community colleges in between the administration and faculty?

2. How do community college department chairs balance, and act upon, the role expectations relayed to them by both the senior administration and the faculty at-large?

3. How does the role of the community college faculty department chair leverage the relationship between the faculty and administration toward the realization of their respective goals?

Chapter 3 outlined the various methodological decisions for this study, including the reasons why a multiple case study approach was appropriate in generating new understanding into the strained faculty/administrator relationship given the distinct and unique experiences of the 5 participants. Specifically, the use of a multiple case study design accomplished this study's purpose and addressed the identified problem through advancing the perspectives and experiences of the department chairs at MJC as an institutional stakeholder group through cross-case analysis. Yin (2018) described this process as a replicability across each case, in which the unique perceptions and experiences of each case are made known and then areas of agreement are identified. As a result, the individual experiences and perceptions of the individual cases were not discounted; rather, they were leveraged in constructing the broader themes that addressed the research questions.

Individual Case Backgrounds and Analysis

The five participants who served as the individual cases for this study provided stewardship over the five academic transfer divisions at MCC. Jordan provided oversight responsibility for Art, Music, Theater, Education, and Physical Education; Jaime for

English, Communication, and Foreign Languages; Carol for Biology and Chemistry; Stacy for History, Government, Psychology, and Sociology; and Anne for Math, Engineering and Physics. These individuals' backgrounds brought a rich diversity to the chair position in terms of how the role was carried out, and how these individuals related to faculty and the administration.

Jordan

Jordan came from a military family and had the opportunity growing up to live in several places in the U.S. and abroad, but she always carried a love for education and a desire to pursue a career in teaching. Her Father, however, expressed concerns about the potential income she could make in that field. At the beginning of her career, she decided to work at various companies in California before making the decision to join the army herself. Jordan's 20 years in the army were extremely transformative in terms of the kind of individual and professional she would ultimately become. For example, she was given the opportunity to hold numerous supervisory positions over the course of her tenure in the military. She mentioned that she did not understand the reason behind this because she did not have much supervisory knowledge, so she always credited her being given these types of positions to her personality. Ultimately, as a first sergeant, she was given command of over 300 soldiers at the training school that she had attended herself after enlisting. Additionally, it was during her military career that Jordan earned a bachelor's degree in English. After retiring from the army, Jordan went to work for the post office, but ultimately returned to her early desire to become a teacher and received her master's degree in education. After graduation Jordan's family moved to Texas where she began

taking classes in the Art department at MJC. The division director at the time asked if she would substitute a class for her one day, which lead to Jordan completing the required graduate coursework in art to teach as an adjunct for eight years. When the division director retired, Jordan applied for the full-time opening and was made department chair. At present, she has been in the chair's position for just over a year.

Jordan brought a somewhat unique perspective to the department chair's position because of her extensive military background and the fact that her current role was the first faculty leadership position she had held in her educational career. As a result, Jordan viewed the notions of decision-making and governance from a more structured standpoint. For example, Jordan spoke a great deal about how administrative policies originated and how they were communicated. As she stated:

It starts at the top. Maybe not here within the college, but…that's the kind of stuff I don't know. If I'd been around higher education here in Texas for 41 years, like somebody else that you might be talking to later on, they're going to tell you where it comes from. I don't know where it comes from. The state of Texas, I'm going to blame it on the State of Texas…and the government. It's going to come from the federal government down to the state and the state is going to go, 'well, we're not going to give you any of these funds unless you tell us how you're doing in your courses.' And again, I don't know if that's true or not, but that's just what I see.

Jordan's statement pointed to her more global view of policy decisions and how they were ultimately communicated to her faculty. This, along with her military background,

provided the framework by which she viewed institutional governance at MJC.

Additionally, Jordan often alluded to institutional solvency and the importance of funding

as a function of institutional health when she stated:

> Numbers and money because…I know when they teach you or train you, they're
>
> going to say the college gets points; we get like one point if they take a core class.
>
> But I'm an Art professor and I want my art students to take drawing and design.
>
> Well, you're not going to get a point for that, but I'm going to get kids in my class,
>
> and I want my classes to make. So, I told him that right in front of the advising
>
> supervisor. You know, I just say that, but I know this was driving it. That's just
>
> my opinion. Nobody's ever told me that directly, I, just pick things up in meetings
>
> and that's what I feel.

Overall, Jordan was focused less on issues of curriculum and instruction, and was more

concerned with being in compliance with institutional policies, growth of her specific

program and the institution, and how these issues affected the bottom line.

Jaime

Jaime always had the intention of entering education right out of graduate school

and did teach for one year after completing his master's degree in Spanish. However, he

also had a desire to use his skillset in Spanish in the business world. After his initial year

of teaching at the beginning of his career, Jaime accepted a 3-month trip to Chile as part

of a cultural exchange program where he traveled the country as a journalist giving

speeches to student groups, Lions and Kiwanis clubs, and fireman's organizations. After

returning to the U.S., Jaime served as a bilingual board and staff trainer for migrant

education programs across 10 western states. This work involved facilitating economic development and sensitivity training for governing boards in Spanish. After a few other similar positions, Jaime returned to education for a short while as the Dean of Students for DeVry University in Dallas, Texas, but that took Jaime away from his love of using Spanish in his daily life. As a result, Jaime decided to move to Mexico and work as a sales person in the tourism and timeshare industry in Mazatlán for a number of years before again moving back to the U.S. Jaime had settled into a new home in Northeast Texas when he wrote a letter to the administration at MJC and was hired as a part-time instructor in Spanish. From there, Jaime engaged in ESL training, grant writing, and was instrumental in the formation of several instructional programs at MJC, such as engine repair and welding, that are still in operation today. Ultimately, Jaime applied for an opening as a full-time faculty member in Spanish and held that position for over 10 years until he became the department chair in 2008.

Jamie focused his comments primarily on working with the faculty under his area of responsibility in relation to the administration and how he approached the mediation of tension. For example, he stated that:

> You get to feel a little bit of that tension. Like a marriage, there needs to be some tension; or in like a sitcom. It's that tension that gives life to that marginal existence. That is a check and balance between, in this case, administration, and faculty and instruction. And once that becomes way too strong, it really gets messed up. And that was what we saw under [a previous president]. He was really strong for a time and he misused that power that he felt that he had. But that

tension is necessary. The faculty deserves the right to express the same counter

tension to the administration to do better. And that will create a synergy that we

have rarely seen here on this campus.

Jaime welcomed a healthy amount of tension between the faculty and administration,

which also served as a framework for how he viewed himself as a conduit between these

two groups. In maintaining this tension, however, Jaime noted that a large part of his

attention has been focused on the faculty and not so much the administration. In working

with his faculty, for example, Jaime discussed the personnel challenges that have

contributed to how he viewed leadership and leveraging a healthy organizational culture.

As he stated:

Another challenge is a people challenge, just that there are people involved and

they are individuals. And I mentioned in that last discussion that that's always a

challenge because you never know exactly what that entity is or how they will

respond to certain or uncertain stimuli for when things happen or when they feel

bad or a class doesn't cooperate or whatever. That's the mystery around this whole

thing is the people-generated mysteries. So, you just never know how somebody's

going to react, respond in any kind of relationship; but in this one also.

Jaime was mindful of institutional relationships and how to navigate subsequent

challenges that arise anytime people are involved in a given enterprise. However, the

relational lens through which Jaime viewed his role MJC was useful in further

understanding how relationship contributed to the overall culture of the institution.

Carol

Carol had a love for both education, as well as the History and Chemistry disciplines from an early age. As a high school student, for example, Carol was a member of the future teachers of America. Early on in her college career, Carol was nervous of the sciences because she was not entirely confident of her ability to do well in the sciences; however, a good grade on her first Chemistry test changed everything for her and gave her a confidence she did not know she had. In fact, this was the catalyst moment for Carol in choosing to pursue a major in Chemistry Education.

When she had progressed to the point in her degree that it was time to complete her student teaching, she chose a high school with a strong reputation for quality science instruction in Northeast Texas that was close to where MJC would ultimately be built; MJC had not yet been established at this point in Carol's life. Carol's student teaching appointment ultimately became a full-time teaching position when Carol received her bachelor's degree. In her early career teaching high school students, Carol worked under an administration that allowed her to work with a great deal of autonomy in terms of her teaching load and schedule. It was also during Carol's early years of teaching high school that she earned her master's degree. Despite this, Carol decided to take a year off of work after the birth of her second child a year before the formation of MJC.

By the time Carol was ready to return to teaching, MJC had been established, and Carol applied for a full-time faculty position. She was not offered that position, but she was given an adjunct appointment. During Carol's tenure as an adjunct, she made the

decision to pursue her doctorate degree. When the next full-time faculty opportunity presented itself, Carol again applied and was offered the position.

In terms of the chair's position, Carol noted that MJC was a primarily flat organization. In other words, there were no mid-level managers in the instructional areas when she was strictly a full-time faculty member; all oversight was handled at the vice president's level. However, when the decision was made to create a layer of management in between the faculty and the vice president's office, Carol was ultimately selected for that role after the first two people to hold the position moved on. Carol then held that position until the next organizational restructuring that created the department chair positions as they are today.

Carol possessed a unique insight to the organization in the sense that she was present, and involved in, the establishment of the college in addition to holding an instructional role from its inception. As a result, Carol has had to adapt to five leadership changes at the presidential level, which has influenced how she has viewed her own decision-making, institutional culture, and the role of the department chair in terms of administrator priorities and faculty needs. For example, she stated that:

> Other department chairs might see that differently, but for me, I'm comfortable in both of those roles; I've grown into those roles. Again, from my earliest career in education, I've wanted to understand all educational issues from multiple points of view. So, it's something that I'm very comfortable with. I'm not afraid to make decisions and to take action. You know, I've said it before, it's easier to get forgiveness than permission sometimes, and I just see it's little bitty things that

would help something on the narrow focus or narrow scale. I'm not going to ask

permission; I'm going to take care of this. If I get called on the carpet for it, okay,

I get called in the carpet for it and I'll take corrective action. But again, I'm willing

to say no because I felt like that needed to be done and I did it. We're not

changing policy. Sometimes my faculty tells me we need changes. I say, do you

guys, it's really a difficult thing to change policy, but we have some practices in

place. And sometimes we've got a record of certain practices and I can say we've

got a pattern of this is how we've done some things. So, we don't have to worry

about changing a big policy. Don't worry about policy changes. We can, in

practice, allow this to happen and work with this, and we're not going to violate

policy. But again, we're going to put into place what we need to so that we can

work efficiently and not scream and yell about, you know, whatever, and abide by

every policy we have. But we're going to also look at the history of practices.

Carol often alluded to the differing priorities and values of the faculty and administration

in macro versus micro terms. She recognized that the administration must make decisions

based on a much wider set of considerations, whereas the faculty were primarily

concerned with just the instructional issues that most closely affected their respective

disciplines. As such, Carol viewed her own positionality in terms of balancing those

perspectives with respect to the institution as a whole.

Stacy

Stacy also carried a love for teaching and education from an early age and has a

deep family history rooted in education. As the oldest of three siblings, Stacy would hold

a play school for her brother and sister after getting home from her kindergarten class each day. This dedication to education followed Stacy and her siblings all the way through high school graduation where each of them graduated valedictorian of their respective classes.

When Stacy graduated from high school, she attended a community college close to her hometown where she began working towards her bachelor's degree. After her freshman year, her college hired her full-time as a tutor where she remained employed even after transferring to her university. After completing her bachelor's and master's, Stacy earned her Ph.D. in History from Texas A&M University. After graduation, Stacy held several faculty positions at universities across the U.S.

At first, Stacy remained at Texas A&M and taught undergraduate honors courses and even some graduate coursework before moving to teach in Washington State, and then in Alabama. It was after her time in Alabama, however, that Stacy made a family decision to move to California, which took her out of teaching for seven years. When she decided to return to education, Stacy accepted a position at a high school in Natchitoches, LA, but then returned to university work afterwards in Minnesota. It was then that the department chair position opened at MJC; Stacy applied, and was given the position. Stacy is unique in the sense that her entry in to MJC was directly into the chair's position.

Stacy prioritized her identity as a faculty member and the needs of the faculty under her area of responsibility in terms of how she saw her role within the institution. For example, she stated:

I have tried to work very hard on behalf of anything that my faculty want, like

budget. If people want wish lists, you know, we'll have the conversation. And I

can make those arguments to administration. Some classes that our adjuncts teach

don't always make and I'll go to battle about having them paid full.

Stacy also was cognizant of boundaries and leveraged her understanding of MJC through

her administrative identity in different ways. For example, she mentioned the benefit of

drawing on multiple perspectives in advocating for her faculty due to the broader view of

the institution afforded to her through her position. Additionally, she discussed the

importance of sharing ideas and leaning on other faculty members to improve

instructional practices within her area. As she mentioned:

Yes. I mean within limits obviously because it's not like limitless, but at least I

have an overview perspective and can figure out what can help different

alternatives, ways of doing things. Maybe a professor has done things in one

department and then share that information in another department in another

approach. For things, for instance, like plagiarism because that's an ongoing thing,

especially since everything in my particular division is fairly writing intensive.

Everybody does a paper of some sort with nearly every class that's taught. So,

plagiarism is always an issue. And so, some teachers will fail a student or for the

course, some for the assignment. I'm like that's their call. I always have every

semester multiple instructors call me up about how to handle a situation. At what

point is the percentage? One instructor has the students write an apology letter to

the instructor and to the student that they plagiarized if it was a student. And then

> have both the students come in and that that then makes it meaningful for the
> student. A lot of times students aren't aware of what plagiarism is exactly, so the
> copying and pasting. Um, and then we do have issues where students will do a
> paper for one course and then try to reuse it in another. Which we used to have a
> lot of that happen from one history teacher to another, but now I started to see it
> happening, crossover, say for government to history, history to government. And
> so just only because I have that bigger picture, I can share ideas on like I don't
> always have to say name names of who they are, but just these are different ways
> you can handle this situation.

Stacy viewed each situation she discussed through a faculty lens and saw her primary

responsibility as a shepherd over the faculty in her departments. This did not occur at the

expense of her administrative identity, however. To the contrary, it was through her

administrative role that she was better able to view every situation from multiple

viewpoints so that she could make the most informed decisions possible.

Anne

Anne was not intrinsically interested in education early on like many of her

colleagues. In fact, she noted pursuing a variety of majors in her college years, ranging

from accounting to physical therapy. The reason for this, however, is because she simply

found so many things to be interesting. It was when her family moved from one side of

Little Rock, AR to the other that really brought her love for Mathematics into focus.

Anne was a political science major at her university during this transition when

she noticed that her younger sister was struggling in Math due to the change in high

schools. In addition, Anne had recently married and had her first child, so the need to generate income for her family became a priority. Ultimately, Anne decided to finish a bachelor's degree in Math and become a teacher. It is a decision that Anne mentioned never regretting.

When she graduated with her bachelor's, Anne was not initially hired for open faculty positions at the K-12 level because she was still completing her student teaching and was not fully qualified. As a result, she served as a substitute teacher and bus driver for a local district. Eventually, however, Anne accepted a teaching position at a private school in the Little Rock area. It was during her time in this position that her second child was born, and so Anne began looking for other opportunities that would lessen her commute each day and found one at a new high school that had just opened very close to her home.

After 4 years in this position, Anne's family decided to move to Texas where she began teaching Math at the high school in the same community where MJC had been just been voted on and established. By this time, Anne had earned her master's degree, and, like Carol, pursued employment in the newly formed MJC. Over her time at MJC, Anne was asked to perform several administrative tasks that included serving on the college's dean's council and chairing the accreditation committee. After a few years, however, Anne was given a formal administrative role over some instructional areas along with Carol.

After several years, Anne accepted a joint role with a university, which took her away from her administrative role at MJC. However, Anne ultimately came back to MJC

completely to serve in the department chair position she currently holds. Anne and Carol share many parallels in their career paths at MJC, but again, what may be most important is the fact that two of the department chairs that currently serve MJC have been involved with this institution since its inception.

Anne's approach to her role at MJC from a more administrative lens, but she still showed great respect for instruction and shared a passion for the work that her faculty engaged in daily. Specifically, Anne focused on institutional policies, decision-making, and how she translated decisions to her faculty:

As I've said, I look at my position as a position that facilitates excellence in instruction and good decision-making. It is not necessarily the decision of the bottom; I'm not in the position at the bottom line at all. And so, when we're discussing here a very, a dire need, but why could that not be addressed? I tried to talk about and discuss that issue the way I actually see it and the way I actually see it is what would be the administration's viewpoint? Why are they not supportive of something that is obviously so needed in instruction? Well, here's the reason. Of course, one of the main reasons that was just given to me is, if you look at how many students this decision affects versus this decision, then you have to take that into consideration. That's not always the bottom line, but that is definitely a part of the decision and I understand that.

Anne's emphasis on explanations, adherence to institutional policies, and facilitating understanding among her faculty brought an interesting perspective to this study. In other words, Anne's broader administrative perspective, and how she translated her perspective

to her faculty helped foster understanding into the role navigation process and how that ultimately contributed back to the culture of the organization.

Overview of the Cross-Case Findings

This section provides an overview discussion of the major findings of this multiple case study, which are discussed in greater detail in the following section. The findings of this study were born out of the cross-case analysis as outlined by Miles Huberman, and Saldaña (2014) and Yin (2018) in chapter 3, and addressed the challenges outlined in chapter 1 related to the strained relationship between the faculty and administration due in large part to the effects of neoliberalism on higher education in the 21st century. The findings aligned with the research questions in addressing these challenges, which centered around the notions of organizational navigation, balancing role expectations, and leveraging a more cohesive organizational culture and relationships. There are several ways this was evidenced through the five department chairs at MJC.

First, the faculty department chairs in this study demonstrated the ability to successfully navigate between the faculty and administration: 1) by recognizing that they were the conduit of information to/from the faculty and the administration; 2) by knowing the difference between the broad, external drivers of the administration and the narrow, internal drivers of the faculty, and how to translate one to the other; 3) by drawing on their own understanding of the broader organization in terms of functions, relationships, supplementary responsibilities (i.e. committee work), and their own emotional investment in the organization; 4) by staying current on responsibilities

relative to their role structure; 5) by recognizing, adapting to, and reducing ambiguity as much as possible; 6) by recognizing that their identity primarily aligned with the faculty, but they embraced their administrator identity as well.

Second, the department chairs at MJC were able to manage, and act upon, the role expectations relayed to them from both the faculty and administration in a variety of ways. Of paramount importance was their ability to manage the flow of communication between the faculty and administration. However, the participants also pointed to the ability to balance faculty and administrator responsibilities and work with both groups as being crucial components of managing the role expectations relayed to them.

Finally, the participants noted the importance of mediating the flow of communication between the faculty and administration, modeling the behavior of the administration to faculty, encouraging co-involvement between both groups, and recognizing the hierarchical structure of MHC in facilitating connection between these increasingly disparate groups. Again, these findings advanced the notion that the community college faculty department chair is uniquely capable of advancing institutional initiatives set by the administration, ensuring quality instructional delivery by faculty, and leveraging a cohesive organizational culture through inter-organizational relationships. The next section provides a more in-depth discussion of these findings as they more directly relate to the research questions.

The next section provides a more in-depth discussion of these findings from the cross-case analysis, presented as they relate to the research questions. Broadly speaking, the findings point to the conclusion that the community college faculty department chair

is an institutional resource that carries tremendous capacity in terms of improving

organizational culture, building connection between institutional stakeholder groups, and

positioning community colleges for meeting the ever-changing needs of higher education

in the 21st century. The major findings are organized and discussed relative to each of the

three research questions and presented thematically according to the Environmental,

Organizational, Individual (EOI) framework discussed in chapters 2 and 3. Overall, the

findings point to a need for the community college faculty department chair to play a

more intentional structural, administrative, and strategic role in the governance of

community colleges today in pursuit of a more cohesive organizational culture.

Cross-Case Findings

> **Research question #1: How do community college department chairs**
>
> **navigate their role within community colleges in between the administration**
>
> **and faculty?**
>
> *Community college faculty department chair as conduit*

As has been outlined in previous chapters and in the higher education literature,

broadly, one of the defining characteristics of the community college faculty department

had to do with their intermediary position between the faculty and administration. This is

significant because the chair's position as it is situated within the institution served as a

foundation for understanding their capacity as a conduit between these two groups.

Ultimately, understanding the chair's role as conduit facilitated a wider understanding

into how the department chairs in this study navigated their role between the faculty and

administration at MJC.

Anne summarized the department chair's role as a conduit between the faculty and administration when she stated she served as:

> The go-between and the filter and to be supportive on both ends; they're like my bookends. And respect their decisions that help on both ends, both to understand where the other side is coming from, why they've not said yes to this or why they're not making a rule to enforce this policy, but what our responsibility is as gatekeepers of the curriculum for our students. It's all about the students.

According to Anne, her sense of role navigation was grounded in the need for understanding and support, in addition to pointing out her recognition of her own positionality. Additionally, Anne pointed to the role of institutional policies in guiding the navigation process. In other words, the chairs reconciled the decisions and behaviors of the faculty and administration against policies in navigating their own decision-making. This respect for policy was also something Jordan mentioned when she stated she is:

> …a bridge between what the administration wants to the departments that I'm in charge of. It goes both ways. That bridge, like they come down with some new policy or a new way to do something. For example, we're going to do new course maps. They haven't put it in writing yet, exactly what they're going to do; but I'll put that down to my faculty and tell them why it's important. And then when they do them, then they'll go back up, and cross that bridge back up to the administration. So, I think I'm a conduit between administration and the faculty.

Jordan compounded the notion that the department chair played a critical role in receiving a piece of information, processing it for understanding based on where the message originated, and then essentially translating it into a language that the receiving group would understand.

Carol noted, however, that this was not always an easy process, that being the conduit sometimes meant dealing with criticism, and that serious consideration must be given to conveying a message the right way:

But that's the most challenging thing. Again, some people might want to criticize or say you're straddling the fence. While you are straddling a fence, when it comes down to it, you've gotta make a decision one way or the other; you've got to be able to step across it and say, okay, but the decision is here, or the decision is here. As an example, I'm on the administration side and this is what the decision is you guys. Okay, but then vice versa; I'm on the faculty side, but this is what the decision is from the faculty side.

Carol's use of the fence analogy was especially helpful in uncovering the underlying notion of movement inherent to the department chair's role as conduit. In other words, the community college faculty department chair must be able to exist as an administrator or faculty member when appropriate, and then transition to the other group as the given situation dictates.

Another example of this came from Jaime when he stated that, "the administration and the faculty seek the same goal, same objective, but sometimes in different ways. And I've thought about that a lot and I think that there is a lot of truth in that." Jaime also

mentioned that as a member of the faculty himself, despite being in the chair's position, he saw a great deal of cynicism among the faculty where the motivations of the administration were concerned. As he mentioned, "…there's always a cynicism toward administration not at all unlike some of the cynicism that we see in the general labor market where labor is somewhat cynical about the motivations of management. It's the same thing here." Jamie spoke of the faculty and administrator relationship in broad terms, but he pointed to a clearly defined source of tension between the two. When asked how he navigated this tension in terms of communication, he stated that:

> I communicate it in an attempt to kind of alter it in the same way that my
> cynicism has been altered and kind of brought around to a more positive
> perspective. I simply offer the other perspective on that point that sometimes is
> seen through cynical eyes. And it certainly does happen, and it happens a lot. It
> happens a lot, not just in terms of administration and in terms of peers, other
> people, pedagogy. It happens with all kinds of things.

Jaime also spoke of the need for making certain concessions in the processing of information before passing it along to the next group. Compromise and understanding, in other words, were the primary methods that he used in his role as conduit between the administration and the faculty. In summary, role navigation through serving as a conduit for information among department chairs was important, but it also leveraged other ways in which organizational movement occurred.

Broad versus narrow focus

Role navigation in this study was also shaped by the 5 department chairs' unique ability to see a bigger picture of organizational processes than a traditional faculty member and their perceptions of a broad administrative focus and a narrow faculty focus. For example, Stacy stated that, "I have that bigger picture, I can share ideas on different ways you can handle a situation." In her view, the department chair role granted her access to a larger pool of resources that she would not have otherwise had in a more traditional faculty role. This was significant where role navigation was concerned. Based on the situation, in other words, Stacy might be able to shift budget money to help fund an initiative or provide counsel to other faculty members in her department who are struggling with how to handle a certain situation.

This ability for the department chair to see a larger institutional picture helped inform the discussion on what Carol defined as a recognition of the difference between a broad administrative focus and a narrower faculty focus. The broad focus of the administration in this case represented the interests and motivations of the administration, while the narrower focus represented the interests and motivations of the faculty. As Carol stated:

> We've got a broad focus here and we've got a narrow focus here. Right? And it's not that they're totally inclusive or exclusive of each other. But I've got to listen to the broad focus, whether I agree with everything or not. It's my role to understand it and then I have to communicate that back to the narrow focus of the faculty.

Carol's statement was not unlike the previous section's discussion on how the department chairs at MJC navigated their role through serving as a conduit between the faculty and administration. The difference in this case, however, was the importance of understanding the motivations behind each group versus relying simply on a single message in a single situation. As Carol continued:

> I think that top level administrators always have the bottom dollar on their mind. I think it has to be, that's the broad focus versus our narrow focus. In the narrow focus, we're not thinking about what financially needs to be done. We're just thinking, heck no, we're not going to offer online science classes; that's not good for student learning. Heck no, we're not going to convert online to an eight-week online. On that narrow focus our point of view is almost entirely how do we provide an instructional program with rigor, fairness, and making sure that our college is represented by the courses that we teach.

Again, Carol highlighted the need to understand the underlying broader motivations of the administration and the faculty.

Where MJC was concerned, all 5 participants were clear on their perceptions into the driving motivations behind each of these groups. In their view, the primary drivers behind the administration were:

- Enrollment numbers
- How prepared students are employment upon graduating from MJC
- Money and the institutional bottom line
- A dedication to instruction

- Productivity among faculty and staff

- Valuing and appreciating the faculty

- External pressures from the legislature and business and industry

Conversely, the participants identified the faculty drivers as:

- A passion for their discipline

- Student learning

- Academic freedom

Based on these notions outlined by the participants, it became evident that there existed a disparity between the motivations of the administrator and faculty groups at MJC; however, there also existed some common ground. According to the participants, for example, the administration was motivated by drivers that were more tied to dollars and outcomes that affected the organization broadly. Faculty, on the other hand, seemed to be more concerned with those issues that existed within their own discipline and having the freedom to operate as they pleased. Despite these differences, both groups seemed to greatly value instruction and successful student outcomes.

Overall, the ability for the 5 department chairs at MJC to successfully navigate their role between the faculty and the administration involved a level of understanding into the motivations behind these groups. This level of understanding went beyond a single decision or message in a given situation, however. The participants described this understanding as a tool they used to inform their own decision-making and ability to communicate across these two groups. The discussion on how the participants further navigated their role with MJC then turned to a more organizational level of analysis.

Role navigation through additional duties

The department chair participants' ability to navigate their role in between the faculty and administration at MJC was also leveraged by several organizational factors. In other words, successful role navigation included the need to be able to work with various other institutional stakeholder groups, such as student services. It also sometimes meant taking on other responsibilities, such as service on institutional committees or taking on an advisory role for a student organization. The department chairs at MJC discussed at-length how their involvement in various areas of the organization, outside of their responsibilities as chair, played a significant role in their ability to navigate the organization, broadly, as well as between the faculty and administration.

In terms of committee work, the participants spoke of institutional governing bodies as another means by which they influenced the flow of communication between the faculty and the administration. For example, Jaime stated that:

> One of the things that I'm always aware of is taking information back from those administrative-type bodies to the individual faculty. I don't think I ever do a perfect job of that, and I need to get better at it; so, there's that mission. As far as going the other way, I think I do a much better job of taking concerns from my people and expressing them in particularly to the instructional council. But I think I also do okay in terms of curriculum committee. I think taking information from their concerns to those two bodies is good.

In other words, involvement in other areas of the organization was another means by which Jaime relied on to navigate between the faculty and administration. The reason for

this had to do with the fact that these administrative-type bodies, as Jaime noted, were joint decision-making groups that were made up of both faculty and administration. This outlined the reason why opportunities to engage with the organization outside the traditional responsibilities of the department chair, such as committee work, were such effective resources used by the department chairs at MJC in terms of role navigation.

Stacy discussed another way in which the department chairs at MJC engaged with the organization that helped to demonstrate how they navigated their role across several institutional stakeholder groups:

And…to be able to help a student realize how they can graduate more quickly because of my position. I'll tell you one story of a student. So, there was a particular course that she needed, and I went to bat for her. She had planned on graduating in May, but she had taken a course that didn't work in one area of the core curriculum for her degree. Because she was then told she had to take an additional course, her graduation plan was pushed back to August. She had a 4.0 at MJC, and she was also in our two-year college honor society; that's how I end up knowing a lot of students, and I knew this student's own personal back story. She had never graduated from high school, she was an older student, and she never thought that she would graduate from anything. When they came back and told her no to graduating in May, she was in tears in my office; just devastated. This wasn't just a minor thing for her, it was beyond huge. So, I went to the registrar, and she was able to allow that course, the one she had already taken, to count so she could graduate in May. This is where having people on our campus

who, when you can present a case, can help make things happen. At first, the

registrar was not going to allow the substitution, but we found a way together

through navigating our policies, and the student was allowed to walk in May and

get her diploma.

It was readily apparent that Stacy was able to draw on her position as department chair

and her knowledge of institutional processes in support of a successful outcome in this

situation. However, it was through her position as an advisor to a student organization

and through her relationships with other institutional stakeholder groups, such as student

services in this case, that were the primary catalysts that allowed Stacy to navigate the

organization in support of the student being able to graduate. In summary, the department

chairs at MJC relied on resources available to them outside their traditional

responsibilities in navigating their role among, and within, various institutional

stakeholder groups.

Role structure

A third aspect related to role navigation among the community college faculty

department chairs at MJC had to do with how their position was structured within the

institution beyond just the faculty and administration. As has been discussed so far, the

department chairs in this study engaged in organizational navigation based on their role

as a conduit between the faculty and administration, and through responsibilities outside

their traditional responsibilities. Role structure in the context of this study, however, also

was considered in terms of the chairs' ability to stay current with pedagogical trends

relative to their disciplines, managing tasks effectively, and learning their place based on the responsibilities of other institutional stakeholders.

Jordan, for example, stated that the most effective method for her in learning about institutional processes when she came on board was simply walking from department to department and meeting people in their own work environments:

I like to walk around and see people. That's how I think that's how I learned a lot about this campus is just go out there and see what they're doing in the bookstore and talking to people and see how they do their job.

This was especially meaningful for Jordan who has been a department chair the least amount of time relative to her colleagues. Additionally, this allowed Jordan to form relationships and connections with people from other institutional stakeholder groups. The chairs' reliance on structure and relationships aligned with the Workplace Social Inclusion (WSI) framework outlined by Pearce and Randel (2004). Again, WSI is primarily concerned with an individual's level of social capital in an organization, and the degree to which individuals are able to develop social networks and feel as though they belong in the workplace. Because Jordan took some initiative in meeting people and learn about their work roles in their work contexts, she was able to build the kind of capital and social networks Pearce and Randel described. Ultimately, this helped increase her ability to navigate her role within the organization.

Jaime, on the other hand, noted that an area he found challenging relative to how his role was structured had to do with staying current with trends in technology:

To me, personally, sometimes it's keeping up with technology. That's just me

personally. That's certainly not going be true of everybody because a lot of people

are native speakers of technology, and I'm just not; I wasn't born in this territory.

So, that's been one of the challenges that I haven't been able to accommodate.

MJC as an organization has invested heavily in technology in recent years. Most notably,

the college converted to new student information and learning management systems

within the last 5 years. Both of these technological changes, among others, affected how

faculty entered grades, certified rosters, and delivered online instruction to students. For

Jaime, struggling to stay current with trends in technology proved to be a hinderance in

his ability to efficiently navigate his role within the organization. As the organization

made the move to essentially operate on a single base system, Jamie has had to

increasingly focus on overcoming his gap in technological skills in order to effectively

navigate his role.

Role structure for the department chairs in this study was not limited to staying

current with technological trends, however. Anne spoke more about curriculum and

relaying changes in instruction to her faculty:

When we were looking at the new co-rec model, when we look at adding a dual

credit class anywhere; anything that has to do with changing curriculum, I'm very

quick to make sure the full-time faculty, the appropriate full-time faculty are

completely apprised of what's about to happen. And if they have input, I'm willing

to, and I would definitely take that into consideration when we make decisions of

what, what changes are going to be made.

Anne's statement about the currency of curriculum or the establishment of new methods

of content delivery was important for its own sake in the effectiveness of carrying out her

role. Where role navigation was concerned, however, it was also significant that she

mentions the need to relay this information to her faculty and involve them in the process.

As has been noted, neoliberalism has had a significant effect on higher education

in the 20th century, especially in the areas of curriculum and the pressure on institutions

to remain current where the needs of business and industry are concerned (Ayers, 2005;

Birnbaum, 2004; Boyd, 2011; Levin & Aliyeva, 2015). As neoliberalism continues to

drive rapid change, Anne's ability to convey curriculum changes to her faculty, for

example, was as important to role navigation as Jaime's struggles with technology. How

the role of the department chair is structured at MJC, or situated beyond the faculty and

administration dyad, proved to be another compelling component of how effectively the

department chair participants in this study navigated their role.

Role ambiguity

One of the major challenges to the effectiveness of role navigation among the

department chairs at MJC also had to do with role ambiguity, or unclear boundaries

relative to their job responsibilities and institutional policies. For example, Jordan stated

that, "…our whole division didn't have anybody in charge of us, even though a person

had a hat on. We never received any direct leadership a few years. So, we just did stuff

and I didn't know what was going on." The department chairs in this study described the

job responsibilities of their position and the policies set forth by the institution as the

foundational, structural frameworks by which they relied on to navigate their role

between the faculty and the administration. Though presented as problematic, the department chairs descriptions of how they identified and overcame instances of role ambiguity provided great insights into their role navigation between the faculty and administration. Additionally, the discussion on role ambiguity also proved useful in understanding how the broader organization affected this process as well.

A job description for the faculty department chair was obtained through MJC's human resources department. The following responsibilities outline the specific requirements for carrying out the role:

- Lead the full-time faculty in the division in curriculum development and instructional advancement of their fields at the College.

- Assess the instructional needs of students in the division and coordinate the development of a plan to address these needs.

- Assess the operational needs of faculty in the division and make recommendations to fill those needs.

- Maintain primary responsibility for scheduling classes in the division.

- Facilitate the development and provide oversight for strategic planning for the division.

- Facilitate development and preparation of the annual budget and coordinate departmental management.

- Coordinate the annual core curriculum evaluations of the department and prepare reports.

- Assist and encourage full- and part-time faculty with their professional development.

- Review College catalog on an annual basis with regard to division curricula and courses and make appropriate recommendations for changes.

- Identify and recruit qualified part-time faculty in the division; review credentials for compliance with SACS; and confirm hiring decisions with Dean (if applicable) and Vice President for Instruction.

- Assist in the hiring and orientation of new faculty.

- Participate in the Part-Time Teacher Academy and encourage new faculty members in the division to enroll in the program.

- Supervise and evaluate full and part-time faculty in the division.

- Coordinate departmental textbook orders.

- Maintain communication and work cooperatively with Directors of off-campus instructional sites.

- Oversee departmental program review and student learning outcomes evaluation process.

- Assist with the coordination of Dual Credit and Distance Education offerings.

- Serve on institutional committees.

- Provide leadership and substitute as needed for other Division Directors during summers and other times when absences occur.

- Perform other duties as assigned.

These responsibilities defined the pre-established institutional boundaries for the role of the department chair at MJC. Additionally, these responsibilities amplified the perspectives of the department chairs themselves when discussing sources of ambiguity in carrying out their roles.

For example, the outlined responsibilities from the MJC department chair job description discussed the need for chairs to oversee course scheduling, maintain departmental budgeting, and ensure that qualified faculty are hired; particularly in the case of adjuncts. The department chairs in this study, however, noted that ambiguity affected their ability to effectively navigate their role in carrying out these responsibilities. In the case of compensation for adjuncts, Jordan stated that:

> There's no set thing across this campus…why I am paying my guy $250 per student when I got somebody in a very similar situation in another department or another division who gets paid the full thing. But…I'd made my command decision saying, 'okay, we're going to go and get paid by student' because I thought that's what the norm was. But then I find out as I talk to more division chairs, 'oh no, I pay this person full even though he has seven students in there.' I go, well what's the cutoff?

This lack of specificity and consistency in terms of how policy was applied across different classes and adjuncts added an additional challenge to how Jordan navigated her role in that situation. Ultimately, she took it upon herself to make the final decision. Jaime noted some similar issues relative to role navigation and ambiguity when he stated that:

Knowing where all the boundaries are; but, again, that's me. I guess with [the VP of Instruction], I know that he's a much more regimented mind. I have not encountered any situation where I felt that I had done anything wrong; but I guess I'm still trying to figure out [the VP of Instruction] to the point of knowing exactly what my limit is. For example, something that's been going on for forever is this idea of the magic number that causes a class to be made in a given semester. Well, as far as I can tell, the number is seven; but nobody ever says that. So, I have to flirt around this fricking number of a seven when it might be eight; it might be six depending on what the reality is. It might even be three in some disciplines, I don't know. So, there's that and it would be helpful to know what the number is.

Jaime's experience with role ambiguity went a step further than Jordan's in the sense that Jaime explicitly associated his sense of ambiguity to the administration and looked to the VP of Instruction to address that. In other words, Jaime did not believe that boundaries were punitive or a restriction on academic freedom; rather, boundaries helped clarify limits and leveraged his ability to navigate his role more efficiently.

Establishing boundaries to reduce ambiguity and increase efficiency was not limited to Jaime's experiences. The idea of the chair being in the position to establish boundaries as a means to more efficiently navigate their position and carry out their role was shared across the participants. Jordan, for example made this statement drawing on her military background:

In the military it's set in stone, and that's what you follow and abide by. You can't

change like the main army regulation; you can supplement it, you can't take away

from it, you can add to it.

Stacy even mentioned looking beyond MJC for guidance on boundaries and how to

navigate her role based on legislative and accreditation polices that were being handed

down. In her position, she leveraged the establishment of boundaries:

In order to avoid things that would become problematic down the road, that then

turn into unresolvable issues, that there's like a point of no return that like action

has to be taken. I would rather prevent something ever getting to that point in the

best interest of the faculty and ultimately the college itself as a whole. So,

knowing then, what are the rules and the regulations? That includes going up to

SACS and governmental levels…so, to me, that's like take time to make sure that

we are taking care of everybody.

As has been pointed out, the response by senior-level administrators to the increased

involvement of legislative bodies and other external influencers on higher education

today has largely been the focus in the higher education literature (Levin, 2001; Levin,

2002; Levin, 2007; Saunders, 2010). Stacy's interest in the decisions and policies handed

down by accreditation and legislative bodies in order to navigate and carry out her role

provided a new perspective given the discussion on neoliberalism in previous chapters

and in the literature, broadly.

Finally, Anne echoed Jaime when she pointed to consistent leadership and

adherence to policy as strong mechanisms that she relied on for navigating her role,

primarily through the communication of decisions between the faculty and administration. Role ambiguity, however, was a hinderance to her ability to accomplish this:

> Well, from my viewpoint, I like to feel that I can see from multiple angles, not just the one that I personally look from. When I see policies not enforced that are there for a reason, and there's not a good reason why they're not, that, in my opinion, serves as a deterrent to the best of instruction. Then, when I'm in between the faculty and administration, and I don't find that administration is interested in [enforcing unfollowed policies], then there's not any place for me to have firm footing to say, "you know, that's probably not a good idea".

Overall, ambiguity proved to be a hinderance to the department chairs at MJC and to their role navigation. To address this, the participants voiced a need for consistency on the part of the administration in terms of the adherence to established policy, well-defined role boundaries throughout the institution, and the ability to establish boundaries on their own in order to successfully navigate their role between the faculty and the administration.

Role identity

The discussion on role navigation among the department chairs at MJC, to this point, has centered around external processes. Understanding role navigation among the participants, however, also involved a discussion of their internal processes as well. In uncovering notions related to the chairs' sense of conflict between the faculty and administration, for example, the idea of their role identity was discussed. In other words,

the chairs described perceptions of how well they belonged, or identified, with each group, which was significant where role navigation was concerned.

To begin, the department chairs at MJC described an identity that was primarily faculty oriented. Anne, for example, stated, "I like to think of myself as a teacher first and foremost. I really see myself more as a full-time faculty member than I do administrator. I'm really like a 60/40." Stacy echoed this when she stated, "Faculty first; always first." However, the participants noted various ways in which their faculty and administrator identities manifested in the navigation and carrying out of their role. From a faculty standpoint, much of their identity had to do with taking care of the faculty at-large and serving as their advocate. There were several ways this was evidenced. Stacy, for example, described building safety among her faculty:

> I would try to, right, and I want them to feel, um, that they can come to me and that I will get what they will try to on their behalf. Even if it's not always easy. I feel like I would try to have their back. I don't always feel like anybody has my back, but that's kind of the vulnerability of the position, I guess. But I don't feel unsafe per se, but I would want my faculty to think they're dealing with things okay. To know that we would work with them.

Carol described the need to educate her faculty:

> I think the faculty I oversee fail to understand at times that we're not a university, we're an open-door community college. And that all are welcome. You know, we're a very democratic institution. That's not to say that I think sometimes they

feel like they're being asked just to get people through without educating them; that's not what we're being asked to do.

Stacy discussed the need to encourage her faculty:

The best faculty are always kind of tweaking things anyway; and, you know, I always like to encourage them to be able to. You don't want to get into a stale routine. When I do faculty evaluations, I try to encourage them and then make changes.

Jaime discussed the need to understand his faculty:

Well it's not discipline stereotypes, but personality issues are a big part of the thing. And there are going to be personality situations or personal situations in any group; there just are. That's what I have, and that's what affects my ability or inability to do my job as I think it ought to be done and it impacts me. It slows me down.

These perspectives helped to reveal how role navigation occurred through the chairs' faculty identity. In other words, the department chairs in this study made clear that the faculty was their primary concern, and that their decisions and behaviors were grounded in a faculty perspective. As a result, the chairs' interactions with other institutional stakeholders were also viewed through the same faculty lens.

Despite the importance placed on faculty and carrying out their role from a faculty perspective, the department chairs at MJC were also very much invested in their administrator identity. To begin, Stacy discussed the need to manage her faculty so that autonomy was respected, and that they embrace effective pedagogies:

Because I want them to feel that they have freedom, academic freedom. And how

they teach the course…as long as there's a certain minimal sort of hedges, but

they can run around between the hedges all they want. And I try to encourage

especially interactive components in my classes, everything in my division.

Carol discussed delegating responsibilities in order to leverage faculty strengths:

You've got to let people do what they're good at, and help them find, you know,

again, because I've tried people in [different roles]. Will you do this; will you do

that? And I realized, okay, that wasn't such a great fit for them. So, being able to

make an adjustment then. You know, not everybody should be teaching online.

We know that. I've asked people to do that before and realized that's not fitting

them. Okay. Let me fix that so that they don't like that, that's not enjoyable to

them.

Jamie discussed the importance for him to front a competent look to the institution:

Oh, when first day of a semester, the first eight o'clock class, everything goes just

fine. Everybody's made me look good. Everybody in administration has done their

job. It all works good and it goes off flawlessly. That's a moment that I look at

every single semester and I get terrified by it when I come to work, what the hell

did I forget to do that's going to blow up?

Jordan discussed her willingness to try new initiatives herself:

I said, you know, there's got to be a better way. So, I've made it into that hybrid

now that we went to quality matters with. But until I knew or asked about it…I

said something in a meeting one time, it's like, I don't get it, you know? And then

they said, well, that's just the way it's always done. Not that it's correct, but you

know, you're welcome to change it within means.

Carol discussed her felt need to pick up any addition course sections that may not have an

instructor or cover other responsibilities within her department that have not been

assigned:

I feel conflicted quite a bit. Part of it again, my fault. Because you know what

happens when I don't have an adjunct? Oh, okay. Well I'll just take that. I'll just

take that extra section because you know we've lost that person. So, I'll do that.

Although, again, I've kind of stopped doing that. I've realized I shouldn't be doing

that.

Anne discussed managing in order to maximize the benefit to all parties involved in a

given situation:

Well, I do wish that in some of the areas where "we're just not going to be able to

do this because we have some type of policy in place." As long as there are very

good reasons for this, that we could get to the place, though, that we had some

structure of some policies. But that's going to take a place in time where

discussions can take place and there can be buy-in by the faculty.

Where role navigation was concerned, the administrator perspectives held by the

participants highlighted a more institutional view. In other words, the chairs' decisions

and behaviors through their administrator identity were primarily concerned with what

was going to leverage the most favorable outcome for MJC. Overall, the ways in which

the department chairs at MJC described their respective faculty and administrator

identities helped to demonstrate that they leveraged their position for the benefit of their faculty, but they also recognized the importance of making decisions for the good of the overall institution.

Research question #2: How do community college department chairs balance, and act upon, the role expectations relayed to them by both the senior administration and the faculty at-large?

Manage communication

The discussion regarding how the department chairs at MJC balanced, and acted upon, the role expectations sent to them by the faculty and the administration was largely centered around communication, their relationship with both groups, and balancing responsibilities. The role episode model (Kahn, et al., 1964), therefore, was helpful in providing a foundational understanding at the individual level of analysis into how the department chairs at MJC engaged in balancing the role expectations relayed to them by the faculty and administration, particularly where communication was concerned. Much like their capacity to serve as a conduit, the participants more specifically described how they managed the flow of communication between the faculty and administration. As Anne stated:

> I'm a part of the communication when the vice president wants to communicate with a full-time faculty member and then of course a part-time faculty member. I would definitely be a part of the communication. I have to make sure that all textbooks orders have actually been submitted, even though a faculty member has the right to choose any textbook that they want, to make sure that reports are

done. If it were back in the earlier days of the college, [the VP for Instruction]

would have met with all of the math full-time faculty and we would have decided

how we were going to design our plan. But the way we did last year and this year,

I met with the full-time faculty and then…with [the VP for Instruction]. He did

not meet with other faculty members, and we communicated what the plan would

be for the math department.

Anne's statement highlighted a shift in terms how the institution had treated

communication between the faculty and administration in previous years versus its

current structure. In other words, the shift in moving the responsibility for

communication and department planning downward from senior administration to the

chairs' level established a foundational understanding for the structural flow of

communication through the chair's position.

Figure 2 outlines a role episode model (Kahn, et al., 1964) that I adapted for this

study in terms of demonstrating how the department chairs at MJC (focal person)

balanced and acted upon the role expectations sent to them by the administrator and

faculty (role sender) groups. The model also includes certain organizational, personal,

and interpersonal factors that are external to the navigation process but can affect how

efficiently it occurs.

Figure 2. The Role Episode Model (Kahn, et al., 1964) depicting department chair movement between faculty and administration

Role Sender Administration		Focal Person Department Chair		Role Sender Faculty	
Role Expectation	Sent Role	Experience	Response	Role Expectatio	Sent Role

Organizational Factors	Personal Factors	Interpersonal Factors
Structure	Status	Mode of Communication
Level	Needs	Frequency of Interaction
Role Requirements	Values	Importance of Sender
Task	Education	Physical Location
Physical Setting	Ability	Visibility
Practices	Age	Feedback
	Sex	Participation
	Tenure	
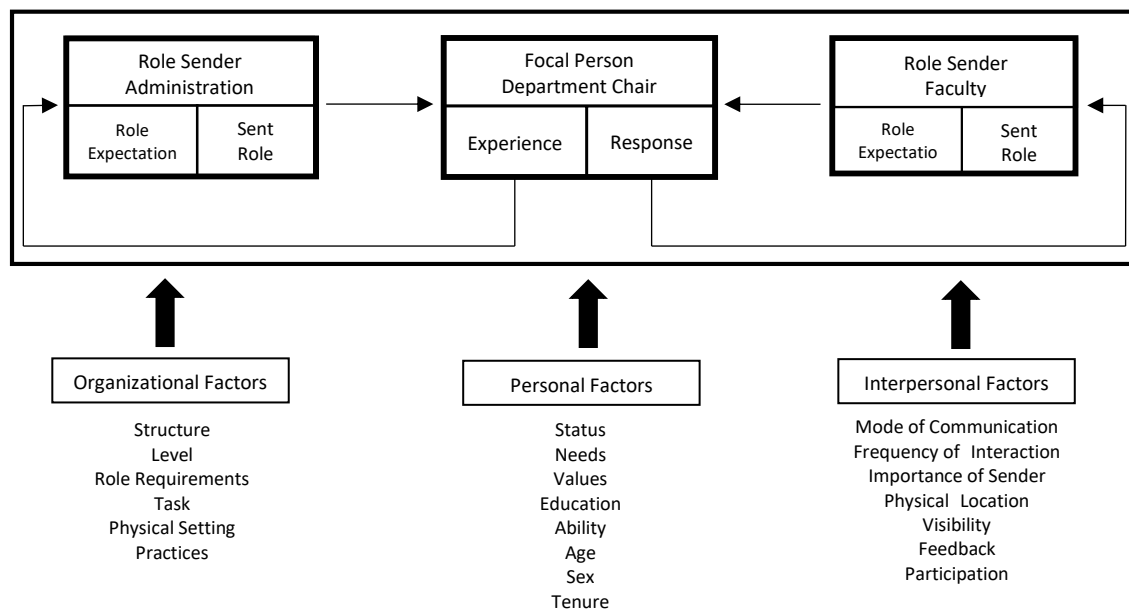
The adapted role episode model for this study as presented in figure 2 represents a process that remains relatively unchanged on the part of the department chair despite the fact that the messages, or sent roles, and the contextual factors could be vastly different from one situation to the next.

Jordan also explained that managing communication between the faculty and administration involved providing explanations and keeping open the possibility for arriving at alternatives:

In responding in a timely manner, and either saying yes, we'll do this and we're going to do it by this time; or, if you say no, explain why. That doesn't sound like me saying that, but now I do say I'd want to know in this environment. Is there

another alternative or can we work something out or is this possible? And maybe

in six months some negotiation communication in between the two.

In summary, a significant first step in understanding how the department chairs at MJC

balanced, and acted upon, the role expectations sent to them by the faculty and the

administration had to do with their ability to manage the flow of communication between

these groups. The role episode model (Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snoek, & Rosenthal, 1964)

was valuable in helping to demonstrate that this occurred through the department chair

receiving a message, recognizing and incorporating the relevant contextual factors, and

then acting on that message to the opposite group. In acting on these responsibilities

through communication, however, the participants discussed the inevitable presence of

conflict.

Manage tension

As has been widely discussed in the higher education literature, conflict between

the faculty and administration in higher education today is commonplace and a byproduct

of the issues facing higher education today, particularly due to the effects of

neoliberalism (Del Favero & Bray, 2005; Del Favero & Bray, 2010; Levin, Kater &

Wagoner, 2006). The department chairs at MJC were very clear about the conflict they

encountered between these groups. Anne, for example, stated that, "You are just making

wise choices when you choose which issues that you are going to address and how you're

going to address it." Approaching conflict from a judicious standpoint, shed light into

how the department chairs acted upon moments of tension between the faculty and

administrator groups, instead of simply being a bystander. Anne continued stating that she approached conflict:

> Hopefully as skillfully as I possibly can. Because first of all, I recognize that one person's viewpoint is not always totally correct. I have to realize there are many situations where I must consider, and address, other people's vantage points. And first and foremost, as we've discussed previously, a full-time faculty member, or any instructor, must have the confidence that they can make good professional judgments/decisions in the classroom, and when they're working with students. So, it doesn't have to be one way. In fact, if that were the case, then that actually is a deterrent, in my opinion, to good instruction; to achieve the student success that I described.

Stacy echoed Anne, stating that:

> I don't think that I would be able to work with everybody in my division the same way. I feel like I respect them, and they respect me. I feel like I've got a good relationship that goes both ways for the most part. Does that mean that over 10 years have there been some concerns raised about issues? Yes. But all of that has been dealt with in confidence and worked out beautifully; and, I think that that comes from just the diversity of the backgrounds and experiences.

Anne and Stacy recognized the importance of diversity, the ability to receive multiple viewpoints on a given situation and weighing their validity in order to come to an agreement on an outcome. Interestingly, they both noted that the existence of conflict and

embracing the possibility of multiple beneficial outcomes as being positive and can

promote quality instruction.

Conflict was not always as easily absorbed among the participants, however, as

Carol noted:

> The most challenging is dealing usually with personnel issues or student issues in
>
> which you're having to resolve conflict. I don't like conflict, yet if I'm confronted
>
> with it, I will try to work through it. My expectation is that everyone will work
>
> through it in a professional manner. Whether you're a student working through
>
> conflict, you can be kind and respectful. But the challenge for me is if I'm
>
> confronted with a situation in which that person is not going to be kind and not
>
> going to be respectful, that's when I lose my temper a little bit. That's when I get
>
> quite upset.

The role episode model (Kahn, et al., 1964) as outlined in figure 2 also serves as a useful

tool in understanding how the department chairs at MJC acted upon conflict they

encountered with respect to the same set of external factors. In doing so, managing

tension can be viewed in much the same way as communication. In other words, the ways

in which role expectations sent to the chairs from the faculty and administration,

accounting for the appropriate external factors, were treated virtually the same from the

chairs' perspectives. Again, Anne and Stacy mentioned diversity and the embracing of

different perspectives in understanding the source of tension and then responding.

Balance responsibilities

The department chairs at MJC also discussed the need to balance their respective faculty and administrator responsibilities in leveraging understanding into how they acted upon role expectations sent to them by each group. To begin, Stacy stated the amount of responsibility that has been given to the department chair position, broadly, has drastically increased over the course of her time at MJC; however, this increase has largely been administrative:

> Well, I'm glad…that it had ramped up in terms of responsibility. If I had walked straight into the job 10 years ago and there was the amount of responsibility I have now, that would have been extremely difficult. 10 years ago, it was pretty much making schedules and hiring adjuncts; the bulk of it was finding adjuncts and scheduling. There's been a lot that's added since then. Moving requirements for reporting has increased exponentially. I do not want them to turn us into like the high schools, but all the things that we have to do now, reports and so on. I mean even the program reviews, which I think are a good thing because you should be evaluating; but, all that paperwork, none of that existed when I first started. There was nothing. We just sort of had these, but we did have end of course, sort of at least in the core curriculum areas, but now it's just sort of exploded.

Stacy's discussion on her increased administrative responsibilities was symptomatic of what Levin (2001) and others in the higher education literature identified as a shift away from local community needs in favor of market and government demands. The increase

in the chairs' administrative responsibilities have proven to be a challenge to assimilate and balance with their faculty responsibilities as well. As Anne stated:

The staffing no doubt was very challenging. At that time when I was the staffing person for all of academic transfer, several issues were very tough for me. One was English; we had numerous English classes on the schedule and in those days people didn't take online. At the first there was no online and the president was adamant we would not hire another faculty member. So, to find a faculty member who would drive to campus and could teach college level English was very, very challenging.

Despite the focus on the chairs' increase in administrative responsibilities, the participants still primarily held to a faculty perspective in balancing the responsibilities from both groups and acting on them accordingly. For example, Carol talked about her decision to delegate more autonomy to her faculty as a means to bring her responsibilities more into balance. More specifically, she discussed giving ownership of the disciplines in her department to the full-time faculty under her supervision. She mentioned that by doing so, she placed herself in a much better position to garner support for her faculty through administrative tasks, such as through the hiring of adjuncts. However, she also provided support by taking on additional instructional responsibilities, even at the occasional expense of her administrative responsibilities:

So again, some of the things would just be that I need to back off…because there's just so much to do. It just seems like there's so much to do when it's a split position. Our position is really a faculty member. With the way it's set up here

you are a faculty member. We do have to reduced load, that's good, but

sometimes I find myself, 'well, okay, I guess I can pick up that lab' because we

have limited adjuncts during the day. I got some great teachers in public schools,

but they're working, so we've got limited adjuncts during the day. I would prefer

not to in some ways so that I could spend more time on the administrative

functions.

Jaime echoed Carol in many ways where maintaining a primarily faculty focus was

concerned. Regarding the disciplines with which he provided supervision, he discussed

how he weighed the administrative responsibilities of his role as chair with the need to

maintain quality instruction:

I have certain things that I ask about and, and every discipline is a little bit

different. Speech is different from English, and English is different from foreign

language. And the realities that we live I never have a problem with too many

people in class. I rarely ever have a problem with too many people in a class to do

the job. It's altogether different, but it is situational. My approach to it is kind of

global, spherical; to look at this piece and that piece and what's the real deal and

how do I feel today about it.

Overall, Jaime stated that his primary considerations were discipline-specific because

each discipline had its own unique set of considerations. Beyond the discipline

considerations, there were the particular instructor considerations in terms of

personalities and wants. Balance, then, occurred at the intersection of discipline,

individual faculty, and administrative considerations.

Working with the faculty and administration

In continuing the discussion on balancing faculty and administrator responsibilities, the department chairs at MJC gave specific examples as to how they acted upon these responsibilities. When considering notions related to how the participants acted on their role responsibilities, the EOI framework at the organizational level was highly useful, but from a navigational perspective. Intraorganizational Employee Navigation (IEN) as outlined by Plouffe and Gregoire (2011) has been previously discussed in this study as a useful theoretical lens for understanding how individuals proactively navigate their role responsibilities. Plouffe and Gregoire continued to assert, however, that within the IEN framework is the notion of deliberate and proactive behavioral engagement on the part of individuals in a given situation. In other words, proactive behavioral engagement requires an intentional decision-making process in which an individual makes an assessment of a situation and leverages behaviors and actions toward a desired outcome. Part of this decision-making process also involves a risk assessment in which the decision to engage in a given behavior outweighs any existing risks or costs. The department chairs at MJC first described the intentional carrying out of their administrative responsibilities from the perspectives of advocacy, trustworthiness, safety, and the external environment:

- Advocacy – As has been pointed out, the chairs' roles as conduits and managers of communication were key factors in understanding role navigation and balancing role expectations. Advocacy, as defined by the department chairs at MJC, however, added another perspective in terms of acting on role expectations.

Jordan, for example, stated that she really felt as though the administration supported her and would always support her, which made it easier for her to buy-in to administrative decisions and subsequently advocate on behalf of the administration to the faculty at-large. The participants collectively acknowledged that there would be resistance from the faculty at times but advocating for the administration was an important part of acting out their administrative responsibilities.

- Trustworthiness – The department chairs at MJC also noted that being able to trust the senior administration was important to being able to effectively work with that stakeholder group. Carol gave two examples from two different presidents during her time at MJC. She spoke of making a critical comment to a previous president's presentation of a new institutional initiative. She was critical because of how this initiative might negatively affect her faculty. In a subsequent conversation with this president, she learned that her comment was not appreciated. She recollected never feeling free to voice concerns like that again. Conversely, she also talked about being asked by the current president to head an accreditation reaffirmation committee a number of years ago, which she mentioned she was honored to do. However, on the next reaffirmation cycle she mentioned that she turned down his asking again only because she felt as though she had the freedom to say no. This highlighted the great importance of trust on the administrator/chair relationship at MJC and how that affected the chairs'

ability to work with the administration effectively and act upon their administrative responsibilities.

- Perceptions of administrator attitudes toward faculty – The department chairs also mentioned the importance of faculty perceptions of administrator attitudes in affecting their ability to work with the administration. As Jaime said of a previous president, "He didn't appreciate how good, dedicated, thoughtful and complete this particular faculty at this institution is." The chairs', therefore, emphasized the need to remain cognizant of how the faculty believe they are viewed by the administration. Incidentally, this also proved to be a reason why advocating on behalf of the administration was an important part of working with the administration for the participants.

- Dealing with imposed pressures – In working with the administration, the department chairs at MJC seemed to understand the challenges faced by senior administrators. For example, Stacy stated that from her perspective, regulatory complexities at the state and the federal levels shifted like, "sand under foot sometimes without much warning" and that administrative decision are not arbitrary. Rather, she continued, the administration must acknowledge the realities of the changes that come from legislative bodies. Such a perspective pointed to an acknowledgment of external pressures instead of a denial as to their existence. For the department chairs at MJC, working with the administration required at least an appreciation for such pressures in terms of acting on administrative responsibilities.

Where the acting out of faculty responsibilities were concerned, the department chairs at

MJC noted several similarities to working with the administration. For example, the

chairs in this study noted that, much like with the administration, advocacy and

recognizing the realities of external pressures were key factors in working with the

faculty. Additionally, the chairs discussed the importance of autonomy and ensuring

cohesiveness among subordinate faculty:

- Advocating for faculty – Managing communication and serving as a conduit

  through advocacy was important in terms of the participants' ability to act upon

  instructional role expectations. For example, Jordan stated that, "If I was

  confident that my faculty guys would not be capable or comfortable doing

  something, I would voice my opinion at that time in that meeting or however that

  came out." Advocacy for the faculty, therefore, represented a need for the chairs

  to understand the individual faculty they oversee and use discernment as to when

  and how they needed to act on behalf of their subordinate faculty.

- Dealing with imposed instructional pressures – In discussing the pressures facing

  the faculty at-large, the department chairs held to the perception that the

  administration was not the source of such pressures. For example, Carol stated

  that, "Coming as a faculty member the push for online…this is going back years, I

  understand that. But I don't think this is our administration. I think it's coming

  from the state and the legislature." Again, the department chairs at MJC pointed

  to the external environment as the source of pressures that have made some areas

  of faculty work more challenging in the 21st century. As a result, the chairs were

in a much better position to correct any misperceptions the faculty might have about the administrations' motives.

- Autonomy – The department chairs at MJC stated that their own identity as faculty members first was an important factor in promoting autonomy among their faculty. As Anne pointed out, "When faculty members feel supported and feel that they have the ability to make their own professional decisions, they work much more professionally with students. That would've been true with me as a full-time faculty member." This was significant because the department chairs ironically believed that less direct action in a given instructional situation, was often a more effective way to act upon their faculty responsibilities.

- Managing cohesiveness among subordinate faculty – Finally, the department chairs at MJC stated that a key aspect of working with the faculty and acting upon faculty responsibilities was to ensure cohesiveness among the individual faculty members they oversee. Jaime, especially, noted the importance of, "Harmony between the faculty members within departments. There needs to be, and there never is, quite a complete harmony within a department that has more than one professor, but that that's what you strive for." In other words, the department chairs noted that it is much more difficult to act upon instructional role expectations when there is excess conflict among the faculty at-large. This highlighted the very important role of the chair in building cohesiveness among the faculty.

In summary, the department chairs at MJC displayed a significant measure of consistency relative to taking proactive action against the role expectations relayed to them by the faculty and the administration as outlined in the IEN framework (Plouffe & Gregoire, 2011). In acting on both their administrative and faculty responsibilities, the participants pointed towards a more proactive position that involved situational assessment at the external and internal levels, drawing on multiple pools of resources, and then taking the appropriate action. Taken together, the management of communication and tension, along with the balancing of working with the faculty and administration, demonstrated how the department chairs at MJC balanced and acted upon the role responsibilities sent to them by each group.

Research question #3: How does the role of the community college faculty department chair leverage the relationship between the faculty and administration toward the realization of their respective goals?

Mediate communication

The first two research questions provided insights and understanding into how the department chairs at MJC navigated their role between the faculty and administration, as well as how they acted upon the role expectations relayed to them by each group. The final research question was concerned with how the department chairs in this study created avenues for connection between the faculty and administrator groups within the institution. To begin, the participants again pointed to communication as an initial means for affecting the relationship between the faculty and administration through their position. The role episode model, as outlined in Figure 2, explained how the department

chairs managed the flow of communication from a more structural standpoint in order to demonstrate how the participants acted upon the role expectations sent to them by each group. In terms of the faculty/administrator relationship, however, the department chairs at MJC discussed the need focus on the message itself from a content perspective. Carol, for example, stated that:

> I see my role as always promoting my faculty…and the needs that they have to administration. At the same time, I've got to be able to listen and understand why they always agree or not; and that goes either way. I don't always agree with the things that my faculty are pushing me to push, but I understand why they're pushing that. And so, I have to present that to administration and listen to that response. Understand again, we've got a broad focus here and we've got a narrow focus here. Right? And it's not that they're totally inclusive or exclusive of each other. But I've got to listen then to the broad focus, whether I agree with everything or not, it's my role to understand it and then I have to communicate that back to the narrow focus of the faculty in the department.

Carol described mediating communication, in this case from her faculty, as the process of understanding the message being convey to the administration. Such a process was also useful in terms of the department chairs' role as advocate for the faculty and administration. Additionally, Carol recognized that she may not always be in agreement with her faculty in every situation, but that understanding of their position was nonetheless necessary. Once that occurs, she then presents the message to the

administration keeping in mind the need to understand their position as well before communicating back to her faculty.

Stacy situated the mediating of communication between the faculty and administration in the context of faculty support for administrative initiatives. As she stated:

> But discussions on how to get the faculty on board is better than just saying, 'hey, this is mandated from above' and just putting it into effect immediately. It's having the discussions like, 'okay, what can be done?' It all goes back to communication. It's not so much that this is what I've observed; it's not so much the decision itself, whether it's received or not received. It's how it goes. And that's learning across the board. How you bring it across rather than coming in and saying, 'hey, feta complete. This is done.' This is what's happening to generate the discussion. But then you had to be very careful not to have the end goal already determined, but have it be something that legitimately comes from them. Doing SLO's, for example, nobody likes that. That is now mandated. We have to do them in every single class. What has helped is I don't tell the faculty what the method of assessment is and having those reassuring conversations that it's their decision and that they don't need to change what they're already doing; but, rather, to look at what they're already doing and see how that fits already.

An especially important part of Stacy's perspective here in terms of bringing the faculty and administration together centered around involving faculty in the process with the department chair serving as a mediator of communication between the two groups. This

could be done by not having an end goal already determined, or by involving the faculty

the process of reaching an end goal. Carol gave an example of a time when a previous

president unilaterally made a decision to offer an advanced course in her department

online as part of a grant MJC had received without consulting her or any of her faculty.

Not only did he make the decision to offer the course online without her input, he had

already decided to use an online course that another college had developed. Carol

mentioned that she and her faculty heavily resisted both of these decisions and that their

lack of input at any point in the process caused significant damage between the faculty,

her, and the president. Conversely, all of the department chairs praised the current

president over his handling of MJC's recently completed strategic planning process. He

not only involved the department chairs in the development and operationalization of the

goals, objectives, and initiatives within the new plan, he involved the faculty at-large,

students, staff, and even community members in the process. As a result, the chairs

mentioned how much better the relationship was between the faculty and administration

because their ability to communicate between the two groups was so much more

efficient; there was trust. Anne confirmed this when she stated:

> I think that the morale of the faculty has improved a lot. I'm going to give [the
>
> president] credit for that. And I think that [the president] has the very rare ability
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> to; I saw where he provided structure in the area of instruction. But he did it in a
>
> very positive way and he chose to avoid anything that was not necessary and was
>
> encumbering to faculty. And I believe that the response is very, very positive.
>
> And that goes along the line of when we talk about what's challenging with my

job position. Yet I actually believe that it would be so much better to avoid a

legalized structure situation because you just don't get the same result from

faculty members when they feel that they must. You get so much better out of

instruction when you take care of their role. But there does need to be, at some

point, some leadership at the top that expresses what is preferred at least. It's kind

of like herding cats. You need at least somebody at the front that provides that

leadership of the direction that we need to go in, and that is very difficult.

Anne continued by again acknowledging the inevitability still of conflict; however,

because the current administration has tended to communicate a stronger valuing of the

faculty, the department chairs have felt more flexibility in their communication with both

groups:

In my opinion, I feel like the administration is fair-minded; I feel like they're very

supportive when they can be. But I also believe they have used a lot of wisdom to

avoid conflicts that would only disrupt instruction. They would not serve to

actually promote better instruction. They must be very careful in the way that they

handle that. You know, knowing the history of this college and the flat

organization that we have been, I think the president understands that at a small

college maybe it's not so necessary to have such a legalistic type system that my

colleagues at the larger colleges have where a rule must be made or a policy. And

then everybody must follow that because allowing everyone to do a different

version of that policy is just almost prohibitive in a large college. In a small

college, not so much.

As Anne pointed out, conflict that is unnecessary or that hinders instruction is especially damaging to the flow of communication and to the relationship between the faculty and administration. She also pointed to the need for discernment in terms of what moment of conflict warranted engagement on the part of her position or the administration. Broadly, Anne mentioned the benefit of MJC being a small institution, which has afforded the faculty and the department chairs more freedom in their roles versus having to defer more to policy boundaries. This was advantageous because, as all the department chairs at MJC noted, an increase in autonomy allowed for more flexibility where communication was concerned.

Modeling behavior

In leveraging connections between the faculty and administration, the department chairs at MJC often looked to the administration as a model for their own decision-making and supervision of their individual faculty members. Jaime likened this to a parental relationship in which the chairs looked to the administration for guidance in leading the faculty they oversee:

> Another one of the things I've learned a long time ago is that everything starts at the top. It starts with leadership and whatever the leader values will have a pretty fast trickle-down effect. And so, people will start to line up in terms of supporting that particular value. And I think that's a powerful thing when it's modeled starting at the top it's going to be accepted as we go through the hierarchy. It's just like parenting. The most powerful teaching in the world is done by parents usually, and that's modeling.

In this sense, the department chairs at MJC were able to leverage administrative decisions and behaviors through a faculty lens so that the distance between administrator and faculty priorities and values was lessened via the chair's position. Anne expanded on this when she stated that:

> That's exactly what my role can a lot of times be, and, in my opinion, that's what good leadership is. Good leadership doesn't…a person who has a negative point of view is an unprofessional point of view, in my opinion, cannot be a good leader. At least what I see is good leadership, good leadership. The person believes that you're going to be fair, fair-minded, and you're going to be supportive at every possible chance. And that's the type of behavior that I try to exemplify even when I don't agree with perhaps what another colleague in my area of supervision has just said. From certain, just like with our administration, from other points of view, I have to see where they're coming from. Why do you feel that way? And I have to be honest with you, I haven't yet. I'm pretty fortunate. I don't seem to work with a group of faculty members that this is definitely an ongoing issue. It may arise from time to time, but it never has reached the level of concern because we're always able to discuss. And I think it's important to always keep that level open because it's only when those lines of communication close that either a going toward administration or toward full-time faculty, that's when that level of trust of being supportive and being fair-minded. Once that's compromised, then I think that those are where issues begin to come up when they shouldn't.

Anne highlighted three areas that embodied the primary ways in which the department chairs at MJC modeled the behavior of the administration in leveraging connection with the faculty. The first area had to do with support and embracing different viewpoints, which also mentioned in the chairs' discussion on mediating tension. For the chairs to embrace differing viewpoints on a given issue also afforded them ability to build connections while also reducing any tensions that may exist. To accomplish this, however, the chairs needed to be fair-minded and provide explanations behind decisions whenever possible.

Co-involvement

The department chairs at MJC also discussed the importance of visibility and the need for administration and faculty to be directly involved in the work that each group was doing to advance the institution. For example, Carol stated that:

> I like to see administration wandering around a little bit. Not in a, 'I'm going to check who is in their office during office hours,' but walking through academic buildings; being aware of what's going on. You can see a lot walking down the hallway. And if you've got an administrator that never does that and they don't see that, how can they know? So yes, it's your job to make sure you are as a faculty member seen as being engaged. And I tell faculty that you've got to get engaged. You can't just come teach your classes and go. Adjuncts, of course, you know, but if you're an adjunct during the day and you can stay and be a part of us, that's what we need.

For the faculty to be engaged as Carol suggested meant that opportunities would present themselves to not only bring the faculty and administration together, but also to advance the institution, broadly. For the department chairs, their role in this process involved much of what has already been discussed, in terms of balancing role identities between the faculty and administration and navigating between the two groups so that they can help foster opportunities for connection. As Carol continued:

> I don't want to blame administration, but administration has changed. And so, as people settle into a role, I think we just have to figure out, 'how am I now going to move forward with the role that I have?' One thing that I miss goes back to the former VP of Instruction when he decided that we've got to have a little more organization; it just was overwhelming. So, we would meet at his home for a workshop. We've lost that small knit group though where we just get together to talk…because we have different issues, but we also have the same issues. Maybe that's just our fault, maybe we could initiate that and just meet on our own. We used to sit down with the president every month or six weeks just as the department chairs of the academic areas and have some discussions and get to hash things out a little bit. We've lost that; that was important to me.

In sum, leveraging connection between the faculty and administration from the department chairs' perspective involved creating more meaningful opportunities for those two groups to interact with each other. For the faculty to experience first-hand what the administration is doing, and vice versa, the chairs believed that would only lead to greater

understanding of what drives these two groups in terms of values, goals, and what will ultimately advance the institution.

Authority and decision-making

Finally, the department chairs at MJC spoke frequently about the structural hierarchy within the institution, how it has changed since the college was founded, and how they leveraged the chain of command to build connections between the faculty and administration. To begin, Carol stated that:

> I would hope that if I felt like something needed to be challenged a little bit, I hope that I would not be afraid to do that. I did not feel that the previous president was as open of a leader. Now, he had a role that he had to play, and he did certain things right by this college; I'm not going to dispute that at all. I just saw things that I just thought wasn't my style of leadership and so I didn't necessarily always want or to follow.

In this case, Carol pointed to the willingness on the part of the administration to discuss issues with the department chairs and the value she placed on having that kind of freedom. This was also mentioned earlier in the discussion on how well the department chairs acted on their role responsibilities; however, the degree to which the administration was open to communication and feedback was critical to building connection to the department chairs and the faculty.

Jaime looked past the structural nature of the organization in terms of positions and focused primarily on the human aspect to the organization where decisions were made:

I think we've all seen that since the last president left and this one took over, that a lot of things have changed. The consideration of people and their needs and where they are as an individual is not always perfect and therefore you have to give them some slack. I think the previous president operated from the point of view that he could ultimately just excise a person. I think that he did and that doesn't happen anymore. I know of one situation where a maintenance man had this issue going back many years and he told somebody it never was handled. He asked the president at the time every single year and never was handled. And when the current president took over, he said this has been going on for a long period of time and he re-explained the whole situation. And the president said, okay, let's take care of it. So, he just handled it because it was the right thing to do. It affected his employment here, but also impacted his retirement as I understand it somehow. Anyway, it was just the right thing to do.

Jaime's perspective was important because he recognized that the human aspect to decision-making can have a profound effect on institutional relationships. In other words, Jaime made clear that true connection within the organization is greatly hindered when decisions are made that all but omit the fact that the organization is made up of human beings, not just positions. Rather, connection occurs when decisions are made with respect to individual needs and doing what's right by the people who have invested in the organization.

Finally, Stacy mentioned the benefit of moving the responsibility for accountability down lower in the organization to the chairs' level:

I think moving accountability closer down helps and now when new people come

in and I can say this is the expectation and if you don't abide by the expectation I

can come back and say hey no that was it. You know, this is a problem and I can

then mention it and the faculty evaluation and make that negative comment for a

track record.

From a relationship standpoint, Stacy's comments pointed to another opportunity for the

chairs to build trust with the administration by demonstrating that they will hold the

faculty they oversee accountable to the institution and the policies that have been

established. This was not a punitive measure for the faculty; this was intended as a way to

further position the chair as someone who understands the needs of both groups and can

be trusted to respect both of their interests. In doing so, the chairs further cemented their

ability to identify and help realize every opportunity for connection.

Chapter Summary

This chapter has demonstrated how the department chairs at MJC navigated their

role within the institution, acted upon the role expectations sent to them by the

administration and the faculty, and leveraged opportunities for connection between those

two groups. This was primarily accomplished in several way: through serving as a

conduit between the faculty and administration, by recognizing that their primary identity

lies with the faculty despite being a part of the administration, by reducing ambiguity and

tension where possible, through the managing and mediation of communication between

the two groups, through modeling behavior, and creating opportunities for co-

involvement.

In uncovering how the department chairs at MJC navigated their role, acted upon role expectations, and leveraged connections between the faculty and administration, the findings indirectly highlighted the myriad ways in which the department chair position is underutilized as a means for combating the challenges facing higher education today. For example, in improving the relationship between the faculty and the administration, the higher education literature has focused primarily on how this could occur directly between these two groups (Del Favero & Bray, 2005; Del Favero & Bray, 2010). In doing so, the potential of the department chair has been vastly overlooked. The final chapter will expand upon this notion, give guidance for higher education practitioners, and provide directions for future scholarly inquiry.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Implications, Recommendations, and Conclusions

Discussion

In uncovering notions into how community college faculty department chairs navigate their role in between the faculty and administration and leverage organizational culture given the challenges facing higher education today due to the effects of neoliberalism, this multiple case study centered around the five faculty department chairs who oversee the academic transfer departments at Maxwell Junior College. Specifically, this study was focused on how these departments chairs navigated, and acted upon, their role responsibilities between the faculty and administration given their unique positioning between these groups. Additionally, this study sought to better understand how the department chairs at MJC leveraged connections between the faculty and administration.

This chapter provides a discussion of the core conclusions that were derived from the major findings with respect also to the research questions that guided this study. This chapter also provides connections between the major findings and the Environmental, Organizational, Individual (EOI) theoretical framework. Through this discussion, this chapter highlights how the participants' role navigation process, the balancing of their role expectations, and the degree to which they leveraged connections between the faculty and administration established linkages to each of the three levels of analysis within the EOI framework. Additionally, this chapter will also explore the degree to which the findings and conclusions agreed with previous research on community college faculty department chairs. The chapter will conclude with a discussion on implications for MJC administration, scholarship and future research.

Research Questions

In order to better understand how the 5 department chairs at MJC engaged in role navigation, balanced and acted upon role expectations sent to them by the faculty and administration, and leveraged organizational culture through leveraging connections between the faculty and administration, the following three research questions guided this study:

1. How do community college department chairs navigate their role within community colleges in between the administration and faculty?

2. How do community college department chairs balance, and act upon, the role expectations relayed to them by both the senior administration and the faculty at-large?

3. How does the role of the community college faculty department chair leverage the relationship between the faculty and administration toward the realization of their respective goals?

Conclusions Based on the Findings

The findings of this study helped shape a prevailing argument that the community college faculty department chair position has been greatly overlooked as a resource in restoring the relationship between the administration and faculty, and leveraging a more cohesive organizational culture in spite of the challenges facing higher education in the 21st century due largely to neoliberalism. Again, current scholarship on the community college faculty department chair has focused on their perceptions relative to a shared governance model (Miller, 1999), coping with job strategies (Miller &

Seagren, 1997), and involvement with strategic planning (Riggs & Akor, 1992). On the

other hand, scholarship on the faculty/administrator relationship focused primarily on

why tensions currently exist (Del Favero & Bray, 2010; Levin, 2006), and how each

group should communicate and participate in institutional governance directly (Del

Favero & Bray, 2005). The argument that arises from this study, therefore, can be

grounded in how the department chairs at MJC were secure in their identity, leveraged

communication through their capacity as conduit between the faculty and administration,

and their mediation of tensions to reduce conflict. In doing so, the chair became an

effective mechanism for establishing connections between the two groups.

Identity

Much has been said about how the community college faculty department chair is

unique in terms of work roles and how this internal institutional stakeholder group is

positioned within community colleges. What has been mentioned less, however, and what

the findings have shown, is the equal importance of their identity as an administrator, but

primarily as a faculty member. When discussing issues related to the challenges facing

higher education in the 21st century due to the effect of neoliberalism, this is especially

important. As Levin (2006) pointed out:

> The press for greater productivity and efficiency by governments and other
>
> external influencers, such as business and industry, coupled with a managerial
>
> model of institutional decision-making, has called into question the professional
>
> identity of faculty and has skewed their work as educators.

It is significant, then, that the department chairs at MJC discussed at-length the importance of their identity within the institution, how that affected their relationship to the faculty and administration, respectively, and how they built connections between those two groups. Miller (1997) also alluded to the notion of identity when he stated that the community college faculty department chair was a "first among equals" (p. 745), which agreed with the findings of this study in the sense that the department chairs at MJC grounded their decision-making, attitudes, priorities, and values through a faculty lens. However, this did not occur at the expense of their administrator identity. To the contrary, it was through their administrative identity that the department chairs in this study gained an understanding of administrative decision-making processes, attitudes, priorities, and values because the chairs were a part of that institutional stakeholder group. Riggs and Akor (1992) summarized this notion when they sated that, "…the real power in colleges is not centered in the administrative authority system, but within departments where all important decisions are made…" (p. 61). As a result, the chairs' recognition of their combined faculty/administrator identities and their discernment in terms of when to assert each one is relevant to the notion that these individuals are important institutional resources when organizational health and relationships are concerned.

Communication

The department chairs in this study also relied heavily on the management and communication to and from the faculty and administration to balance and act upon the role expectations sent to them by each group. As Sirkis (2011) stated:

Since most substantial changes cannot be made without the cooperation and involvement of faculty, the department chair is the person best suited to promote action while effectively managing objections. This means communicating challenges and overall objectives to the department and then involving the entire faculty in the process of developing a top-level vision and strategy for the future.

Sirkis underscored not only the importance of the department chair in affecting change within institutions from a positionality standpoint, but also the importance of their ability to effectively communicate within and across institutional stakeholder groups. Much like with the chairs' identity, however, the effectiveness of communication depended on how well the chairs understood the positions and motivations of each role-sender group. As a result, the need for establishing direct connections between the faculty and administration became lessened due to the presence of an intermediary in the form of the department chair. Despite this, there exist certain situations or conditions that could affect the community college faculty department chair's ability to carry out their role as an intermediary in pursuit of leveraging more effective communication.

It is important to note that the context of this study was an institution that does not involve any collective bargaining among its faculty. This is significant in terms of the role of an intermediary between the faculty and the administration. For example, community college faculty who serve at institutions who rely on a collective bargaining model could potentially have multiple intermediaries available to them beyond their respective chairperson. As a result, the interpersonal dynamics between faculty, chair and administration that have been discussed in this study could greatly differ in those

institutional contexts. Another example could involve adjunct faculty and the degree to which their presence differs across different institutions and departments. In other words, the number of adjunct versus full-time faculty across different departments, and how cohesive the department functions, could have an effect on how well the chair is able to communicate within their department and ultimately with the administration.

The notion that the community college faculty department chair could play a meaningful role in restoring the strained relationship between the faculty and administration through their communication efforts is not widely addressed in the higher education literature. What has been more prevalent in the literature in terms of establishing connections between the faculty and administration through communication have been in the ways these two groups should directly interact with each other (Del Favero & Bray, 2005; Del Favero & Bray, 2010). In sum, then, the findings of this study addressed an absence of scholarship and understanding into how the community college faculty department chair could serve as a catalyst for connection between the faculty and the administration through managing and mediating communication between those two groups.

Conflict

As stated earlier, Del Favero and Bray (2005) stated that the root tensions that exist in higher education today between the faculty and administration stem from issues that are both structural and cultural; these aspects referring to, among others, work roles, priorities and values, respectively. From the perspectives of the department chairs at MJC, findings of this study largely agreed with Del Favero and Bray in the sense that the

participants noted marked differences at times between the administration and faculty from the standpoints of their values and motivations. Most notably, the department chairs at MJC stated that the moments they felt the most conflict between the faculty and administration were on those occasions in which the administration unilaterally made decisions that affected faculty work. Decisions, such as which courses should be developed for online delivery or who should have the sole final say on a hire for a faculty position, without the input of the faculty via the department chair were the most prominent at MJC. This is why the department chairs in this study mentioned the importance of advocating for the faculty, remaining open to different viewpoints, and being judicious in deciding which moments of conflict were worth engaging.

Additionally, the structural notions of tension and conflict within community colleges are important to the role of the department chair from the standpoint of innovation. Van Waes, De Maeyer, Moolenaar, Van Petegem and Van den Bossche (2018) discussed learning and professional development through the lens of social network theory, which states that behaviors and performance among individuals are influenced by their connections to a larger set of social connections. As Jaime mentioned earlier, tension is not always negative and is, in fact, necessary for growth and innovation. In sum, it is readily apparent that the community college faculty department chair can be a valuable resource in not only reducing conflict between the faculty and administration within community colleges, but also in leveraging tension to spur growth and innovation where possible.

Linkage to the EOI Theoretical Framework

The Environmental, Organizational, Individual (EOI) framework proved to be a useful foundation for understanding role navigation among the department chairs at MJC in light of the challenges facing higher education in the 21st century due to neoliberalism. The findings of this study addressed each area of the EOI ecological framework, and while there was substantial agreement between the findings and the framework tenets, there were also ways in which existing theory was challenged.

Environmental

The findings of this study at the environmental level agree with many of the challenges described in the higher education literature that are facing higher education today as a result of neoliberalism. As Boyd (2011) stated:

> The crossover of models and attitudes from industry to educational institutions included both treating students as customers and imposing industrial paradigms of measuring production outputs on classes and faculty in an attempt to standardize, homogenize, and control a perceived measurable output of learning across all disciplines.

From the perspective of the department chairs at MJC, certain tenants of neoliberalism, such as productivity, employment rates, enrollment numbers and the budgetary bottom line were among the primary priorities of the administration. These administrative priorities align with what Levin (2000) described as organizational behaviors that have been born out of the need to respond to a global economy. This is also what Carol referred to as the broad focus of the administration that needed to be funneled and

refocused through the chair's position to the narrower focus of the faculty. Additionally,

the department chairs in this study pointed to behaviors of previous presidents who made

top-down, unilateral decisions for faculty members without their input, such converting

an advanced science class to online using a pre-built class to satisfy a grant requirement

from which the institution received funding. Interestingly, however, the department

chairs in this study noted on several occasions how welcome they felt among the current

administration because the perceived the current president as an administrator who

valued the work of the faculty and was open to their concerns and ideas about

institutional policies, such as the strategic plan that the participants mentioned. In sum,

the effects of neoliberalism were readily apparent at MJC according to the department

chairs' perceptions. What was equally true, however, were their perceptions of the

current administrations' recognition of the faculty's value and potential in the governance

of the institution.

Organizational

At the organizational level of the EOI framework, Pearce and Randel's (2004)

overview of linking social capital within organizations proved to be highly useful in

understanding how the department chairs at MJC navigated their role between the

increasingly disconnected faculty and administrator groups. As they stated, "Individuals

who have relationships in otherwise unconnected groups serve as bridges, allowing them

information and control benefits" (p. 83). Pearce and Randel continued to describe the

notion of Workplace Social Inclusion (WSI), which measures the depth of informal social

networks within an organization and the degree to which employees feel as though they

belong among others within an organization. Where the department chairs at MJC are concerned, these notions provided an adequate foundation for capturing their experiences and understanding how they were able to navigate their role between the faculty and the administration. The notions of social capital and WSI were especially useful in understanding the department chairs' ability to serve as a conduit between the administration and faculty, particularly where communication, working within each group, and mediating tensions were concerned. These abilities hinged on the chairs' identity and their belief that they were a part of each group and felt as though they belonged.

Additionally, Plouffe and Gregoire (2011) defined Intraorganizational Employee Navigation (IEN) as:

Self-initiated behavior the employee engages in to identify salient resources germane to their work, key personnel who can assist them with job-related tasks and responsibilities, and/or the alignment of other needed organizational processes, inputs, or policies in their favor.

Given this definition, connections between the IEN framework and how the department chairs at MJC navigated their role and balanced role expectations are readily apparent. For example, in working with the faculty and administration, the participants described being cognizant of state and federal influences on institutional policies, and the need to make decisions that leverage the institution in spite of these forces. Additionally, the participants discussed intervening on behalf of faculty members, for example, because they have access to knowledge and resources that the faculty at-large did not have access

to that then allowed them to proactively make decisions to protect their faculty from a potential failure.

On the other hand, the IEN framework and the department chairs at MJC did not entirely align in every instance. For example, Plouffe and Gregoire (2011) discussed the selfish aspect of IEN and that an individual's own self-interests were a major driving force behind decision-making and resource handling. This was not entirely in line with what the participants stated in terms of the importance of shepherding the faculty and advocating for both the faculty and the administration. To the contrary, the motivations behind the participants' role navigation and acting on role responsibilities were largely selfless and aimed more at leveraging the faculty, the administration, students, and the overall institution.

Individual

Finally, the role episode model (Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snoek, & Rosenthal, 1964) that I adapted for this study and again outlined in Figure 2 below, demonstrated how the department chairs at MJC balanced, and acted upon, the role expectations sent to them by the faculty and administration with respect to situational institutional factors.
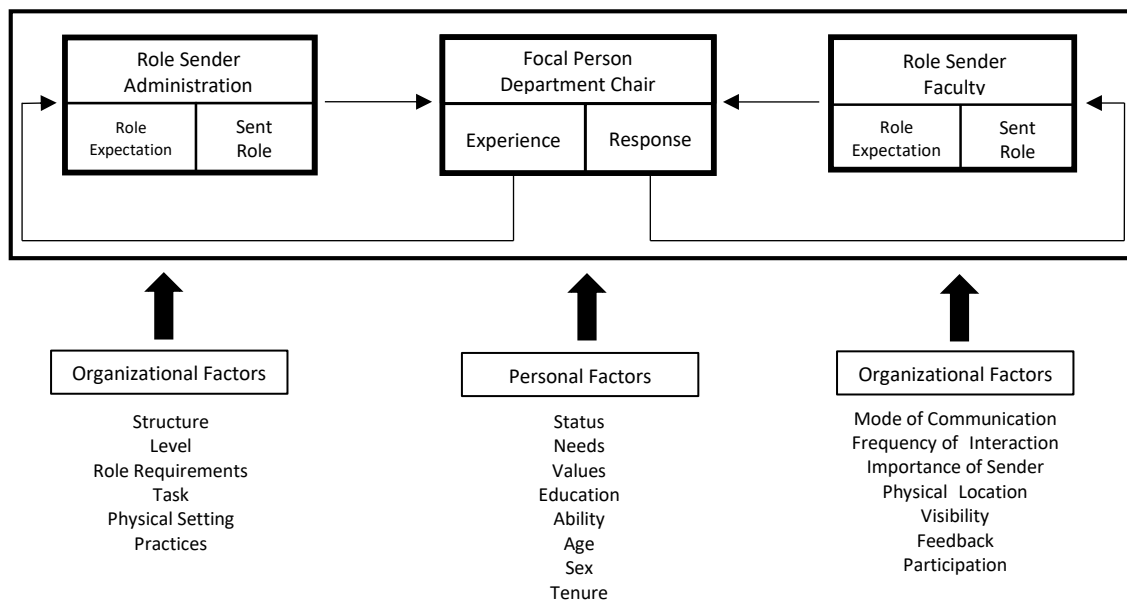
Figure 2. The Role Episode Model (Kahn, et al., 1964) depicting department chair movement between faculty and administration

Like a figure 8, the adapted model for this study situated the department chair at the nexus of sent role expectations between these two groups. The department chairs described their own decision making as an internal process in terms of balancing role expectations, which is why the role episode model was so useful in uncovering how this process occurred. More specifically, the adapted role episode model was useful in understanding how the department chairs at MJC managed communication and eased tensions between the faculty and administration. Additionally, situational factors in a given situation, such as the position of the administrator, the mode of communication used, the level of participation, and role requirements were valuable aspects in understanding the department chairs' perceptions of what affected the sending and receiving of the role expectations between the faculty and administration at MJC.

Taken together, the three levels of the EOI ecological framework adequately explained how the department chairs at MJC navigated their role, balanced and acted upon the role expectations sent to them by the faculty and the administration, and leveraged connections between each group despite the presence of certain facets related to neoliberalism. Again, one interesting aspect of the findings relative to existing theory was that the department chairs at MJC largely felt welcomed and valued by the administration. This conflicts somewhat with the notion that the values now held by the administration due to neoliberalism have largely blinded them to the value of the faculty in the overall governance structure of the institution. This highlights even more the idea that the department chair is an incredibly valuable, yet overlooked, resource for the realization of a healthy, inclusive organizational culture.

Linkage to Previous Research

This study sought to bring greater understanding to the community college faculty department chair position in terms of role navigation, acting on role expectations, and leveraging a more cohesive organizational culture. In doing so, this study also leveraged previous research on the community college faculty department chair position, organizational relationships, and how the individuals in the chair's position serve as a bridge and conduit between various institutional stakeholder groups. This section provides insights into where linkage does, and perhaps does not, exist between this study's methods, questions, and findings as they relate to previous studies on the community college faculty department chair.

To begin, McArthur (2002) studied community college faculty department chairs from a leadership perspective in terms of organizational structure and was interested in determining the most effective strategies for leading faculty given a culture of mistrust with the administration. McArthur structured his study more in the form of a scholarly essay in which he drew on his own experiences as a former department chair to ground his argument that community college faculty department chair should lead democratically and encourage faculty participation in governance rather than guiding his study through stated research questions. He began by discussing the history of the faculty department chair and pointed specifically to institutional structures that became responsible for situating this stakeholder group between the faculty and administration. He also noted that faculty and administration have differing agendas, which led to a discussion on the role of the department chair as "faculty developer, manager, leader, and scholar" (p. 3). In summary, McArthur asserted that the community college department chair should leverage those roles together in order to effectively lead the faculty they oversee.

This study agreed with McArthur (2002) in several ways; however, there were some key differences. First, this study aligned with McArthur's assertions that the community college faculty department chair plays an important role in leading the faculty as a first among equals in pursuit of a healthy organizational culture. This is especially important given that McArthur also acknowledged the challenges associated with organizational culture relative to the mistrust that exists between the faculty and the administration. In contrast, however, this study more closely followed a methodological approach in the form of a multiple case study and that the findings were guided by

questions that were grounded in the literature. As a result, this study focused more on how community college faculty department chairs navigated their role between the faculty and administration beyond issues of leadership.

Another study by Gillet-Karam, Cameron, Messina Jr, Mittelstet, Mulder, Sykes Jr, & Thornton (1999) examined community college faculty department chairs through the perspective of six community college presidents. The purpose of their study was to help define the role of the community college faculty department chair through these administrators' experiences relative to job responsibilities, conflicts and outcomes. As a result, Gillet-Karam, et al. relied on interviews to outline the presidents' own narratives in guiding their study. Specifically, the interview questions centered around the presidents' definition of the department chair's role, duties and responsibilities, reporting structures, the overall need for mid-level management, their chairs' successes and difficulties, and essential skills. The authors' findings suggested that community college faculty department chairs maintained a significant influence over hierarchical structures within community colleges and that senior-level administrators had become dependent on the chair's position in disseminating policy decisions to faculty. In doing so, the presidents also cautioned against burnout and limiting pathways for faculty leadership to move into a more senior leadership position.

In comparing the study by Gillet-Karam, Cameron, Messina Jr, Mittelstet, Mulder, Sykes Jr, & Thornton (1999) to the current study, several similarities and differences are laid bare. First, the study by Gillet-Karam, et al. relied on more qualitative means in better understanding administrator perspectives of the department chair's place

in their institutions. In contrast, the perspectives of the chairs themselves were not discussed. Additionally, Gillet-Karam, et al. defined the role of the department chair as a go-between for the faculty and administration and identified sources of conflict relative to differing value streams; however, little was mentioned in terms of how the department chairs navigate conflicts inherent to their role or how they leverage organizational culture and relationships.

A third study by Miller and Seagren (1997) focused on how community college faculty department chairs identified and prioritized strategies for coping with work-related challenges. Additionally, these authors discussed differences in how department chairs relied on certain strategies based on their previous work experiences. Data for this study were collected via the International Community College Chair Survey in which the participants noted their previous work experience and rated their level of agreement with the various coping strategies included in the survey that they felt would be most helpful in dealing with challenges associated with their role. Based on the coping strategies included from the survey, conducting curriculum reviews rated highest in being most helpful among the participants that participated. The findings also suggested that participants whose previous work experience primarily came from university backgrounds shared a significant overall difference in agreement on coping strategies than the other background categories.

Through their quantitative analysis, Miller and Seagren (1997) agreed with the current study in terms of the need for identifying how community college faculty department chairs deal with work-related challenges; however, their findings emphasized

professional development and the need for striking a healthy balance between their work and personal lives as to how this should occur. In contrast, the findings of the current study suggested that identifying sources of ambiguity, for example, were also highly effective in reducing some of the job challenges that community college faculty department chairs may face. Miller and Seagren also discussed the importance of interpersonal relations, consensus building, and adult training as tools for department chairs in institutional planning initiatives and situating their own departments within the broader organization. Despite their quantitative approach, Miller and Seagren agreed with a key area of the current study in terms of identifying the potential of the community college faculty department chair in leveraging a more cohesive organizational culture.

Finally, Miller (1999) conducted a study on the role of the community college department chair in including faculty in institutional decision-making towards a more shared governance structure. Miller sought to establish that such a governance structure hinged, in part, on the successes of the various academic departments within institutions. Such successes, however, necessitated that faculty be extensive participants in institutional decision-making and that the department chair played a critical role in ensuring their participation. Data for this study were collected from the National Data Base on Faculty Involvement in Governance at The University of Alabama in which the 100 participants at the department chair level in the study were asked to rate their beliefs on the role of faculty in institutional governance. The findings suggested that the department chairs emphasized the faculty's role in more clearly defining the administration's approach to policy implementation, the rights and responsibilities for

governance roles should be established, and that faculty committees should work more closely with administration. The department chairs in Miller's study also reported that rewarding faculty for participating in institutional governance was an ideal part of a more shared governance structure.

Miller (1999) was ultimately concerned with how community college faculty department chairs viewed a more shared approach to institutional governance and how they believed the faculty could help leverage such an outcome. Miller arrived at his conclusions through more quantitative means; however, his findings and the findings of the current multiple case study both reflected that the department chair and the faculty both play pivotal roles in realizing a more cohesive organizational culture. For example, the department chairs at MJC also mentioned the importance of advocating for their faculty and for there to be a strong level of co-involvement between the faculty and administration. Additionally, the department chairs at MJC recognized the importance of clarifying roles and reducing ambiguity. While Miller did not emphasize role navigation on the part of the chair or institutional relationships, broadly, his findings agreed with the overall notion the faculty should have a voice in institutional governance, that the department chair is crucial in serving as a conduit between the faculty and the administration and that institutional culture only improves as more shared forms of institutional governance are internalized.

Implications

    Implications for MJC Administration

The findings of this study provide valuable insights into how the administration at MJC can implement specific change at the institutional level to better leverage the department chairs for a healthier organizational culture and more closely connected relationships. To begin, the administration should be intentional about identifying and reducing sources of ambiguity within the organization. The department chairs discussed at-length the issues they had when role responsibilities were not clearly defined and when boundaries had not been established. Additionally, as Anne noted, ambiguity also took the form of policies that were not followed. Where the challenges related to neoliberalism are concerned, reducing ambiguity is especially important. For example, as Saunders (2010) pointed out, decision-making structures that reduce the role of the faculty and emphasize efficiency also promote the need to make decisions quickly. By reducing ambiguity through adhering to established policies, clearly defining work roles, and establishing boundaries, MJC could still maintain a high level of responsiveness in terms of decision-making without defaulting to the more top-down hierarchical structures that have become so prevalent in higher education today.

The department chairs at MJC also noted the importance from their perspective of the administration and faculty to be more intentionally involved in the work that each group is doing. A key piece to this, however, is that the chairs emphasized that this kind of co-involvement should happen informally. Carol, for example, noted a time in the college's history in which faculty and administration would meet on a Friday morning

each month to share breakfast and discuss things that they were doing for the good of students and the organization. Another example was given about a former vice president of instruction who would invite faculty to his house for a Christmas party. The chairs also stated their desire to simply have administrators be present at faculty events or to simply walk the halls during class times just to demonstrate to the faculty that they are invested in the work that they do with students every day. By doing so, the administration could better position themselves to establish their own direct connections with the faculty beyond what the chairs could help leverage.

Finally, the department chairs at MJC stressed the importance they placed on working with administrators who have themselves come from the faculty. Jaime, for example, stated of the current administration:

I am a huge fan of the administration because I see the value that they express and show to faculty members. And I've said on another occasion that [the president] is an instruction guy. He's a faculty member. His mentality is faculty. He is a pragmatist as an administrator, and he is a consummate engineer at those controls. He's a great administrator. But you see the things that he deals with, what we see him deal with are really on the instruction side. He will bring information about the taxes and all that; he deals with that and takes care of that. But when he comes in for Instruction Council, Curriculum Committee, Faculty meetings, if he comes to those at all, it always has to do with something new initiative that is eventually instruction. And I've known him for 31 years and have served with him and he's been a great instruction guy every one of those years I've been here. The Vice

President for instruction I know differently. He was a student of mine in class

many years ago and he was a great student, and I've just kind of watched him do

all kinds of things. But through all of that, he seems to constantly migrate back to

instruction and student learning. A lot of stuff he's done had to do with the

workforce areas, but in dealing with workforce you're dealing with students who

are having to learn a skill or whatever. And so, it's still about student learning. So

those two gentlemen are the two things that really changed a lot in the last two

years here. I'm a huge fan of theirs. They're good men.

Jaime's perceptions that the administration at MJC were genuinely invested in faculty

work because of their own background as faculty members was an important, albeit

indirect, aspect to the chairs' ability to work well with the administration at MJC. Much

of the higher education literature on neoliberalism and the changing nature of

administrator attitudes points to faculty values being marginalized in favor of what will

meet accountability standards and the needs of business and industry. The perceptions of

the department chairs at MJC, however, lie in stark contrast to these notions because of

the administrations' rooted background as faculty members.

Implications for Research

Conceptual Understanding

The findings of this study provide several insights into the conceptual areas of

role navigation, neoliberalism and higher education, and the faculty/administrator

relationship through a more nuanced understanding into the influential role of the

community college faculty department chair. At the outset, this study helped to focus the

identity of the community college faculty department chair. Much of what the department chairs at MJC described relative to their work roles, decision-making processes, and their ability to navigate between the faculty and administration was grounded in their identity as faculty and administrator. In this sense, McArthur's (2002) comparison of the department chair to the two-faced Roman god Janus is appropriate; however, the greater understanding of the chairs' identity from this study is its grounding in the realm of the faculty always. In other words, the department chairs at MJC did not define edges between their faculty and administrator identities separately; rather, they described acting on even their administrator identity through a faculty lens. Therefore, the notion of identity among the department chairs in this study contributed to a more nuanced understanding of role navigation from a conceptual standpoint. In other words, identity was the primal component for the department chairs at MJC that served as a basis for their embeddedness within the faculty and the administration. Their identity then helped drive their behaviors and decision-making within each group and was more so the foundational tool they used to carry out their faculty and administrative roles than their prescribed job responsibilities.

In keeping with the faculty focus, the department chairs at MJC noted that the real work in addressing sources of disconnection in the faculty/administrator relationship, that ultimately affect organizational culture and meaningful connections between these groups, lie with the faculty and not so much the administration. For example, Jaime stated that:

I've never in this administration, or in a previous administration, really had a problem with any kind of a dictum that I could have anything to do with, that I could change related the faculty. The problem has always come from the faculty side. But that's kind of where we live. The administrative hat that I wear resides in an area where the administration is simply trying to adjust something; make something more efficient or whatever. Whereas with faculty it is often an attitude problem. So, it's a pedagogical problem, sometimes it's just a workplace problem, and I don't have those issues with the administration when they come up. But the area that I am asked to handle has to do with my faculty. If something has to be handled, it has to be handled there. I don't handle things in the same way administratively. The administrative tools have to do with, really, how we shape this part down here that is faculty. So not much of what I do is going to impact, in a large scale, the administrative work. It's going to adjust it and so forth. And it may be flavored by something that's happening in terms of faculty member or whatever, but it really is just creating better tools to handle all that. Whereas down here it's kind of down and dirty sometimes kind of nitty gritty. It's people.

Jaime's focus on the need to work better with faculty is important for a variety of reasons. Most notably, much of the higher education literature that currently exists regarding the faculty/administrator relationship in light of neoliberalism is administrator focused in terms of how they have altered governance structures, their attitudes towards decision-making, and that faculty has largely been reactive to these changes. Jaime, on the other hand, stated that perhaps a more faculty focus is appropriate in addressing some

of these challenges. In other words, Jaime alluded to what Miller (1999) discussed in terms of the department chairs' responsibility to create opportunities for faculty to participate in institutional governance and to reward faculty for taking advantages of such opportunities. Jaime also discussed his desire for there to be a robust faculty senate at MJC who was given the authority to act on behalf of faculty in institutional decision-making and policy development. Such faculty-centered approaches that are viewed through a more proactive framework would serve as a healthy counter to the more prevalent administrative approaches in the literature at absorbing the effects of neoliberalism in higher education today.

Finally, the findings leverage a more nuanced understanding into how a more positive organizational culture can be cultivated in spite of neoliberal effects through the role of the community college faculty department chair. For MJC, the department chairs relied on a grounded identity in the faculty and leveraged communication to translate a broad administrative focus into a much narrower faculty focus. It was through the department chair that messages from both the faculty and administration were received, processed, and then sent forward. In summary, this study has demonstrated that the community college faculty department chair can be a much more effective tool in leveraging opportunities for connection between the faculty and administration than relying on more established and conventional strategies suggested by Del Favero and Bray (2005) and Del Favero and Bray (2010), for example, that bypass the department chair in favor of more direct communication efforts.

Future Research

The findings of this study have provided significant insights into the community college faculty department chair in terms of how the engage in role navigation between the faculty and administration and their capacity in leveraging connections between these groups. However, the findings have also generated new questions about neoliberalism and organizational culture that should be the focus of future research. First, the department chairs at MJC valued the fact that the current senior administration had an extensive faculty background, which helped build trust and communicated that the administration valued the work of the faculty. What is not entirely clear, however, is whether there exists a difference in how neoliberalism is evidenced among community colleges through administrators who have come from the faculty versus an administration with no direct background in faculty work.

A second area of future scholarship should center around faculty governance groups within institutions, such as the faculty senate. This study was exclusively focused on how the community college faculty department chair served as a bridge between the faculty and administration. Even the department chairs in this study, however, voiced a need for an effective faculty senate in serving in a similar capacity to leverage a more cohesive organizational culture. Jaime, for example, stated that:

> The one area that I seek improvement in is in faculty; not in the quality of the faculty, but in the organization of the faculty. And that has to be around a faculty senate. I truly think it needs to be improved. We had a good consideration of what that leadership entails. We've had some horrible leadership in faculty senate, but

as I just said earlier, it's just extraordinarily important to provide that tension and

that's where the work needs to be done. So, I'm hopeful that establishing a strong

faculty senate will be one of the huge improvements that can go across this

campus.

Based on this, it is clear that there is a place for faculty senates, and other organized

decision-making bodies within community colleges, in affecting the course of these

institutions. Future research should be aimed at defining their place in today's neoliberal

environment, especially where institutional governance and organizational culture are

concerned.

Another area of future research might address the discussion on collective

bargaining within community colleges mentioned earlier. Based on what has been

outlined in this study, future research might focus on how the presence of additional

intermediaries with the administration beyond the department chair could affect the flow

and effectiveness of communication within institutions. Specifically, future research

could examine how the role of the department chair might change in terms of their role as

a conduit and advocate for both the faculty and administration.

Finally, this study focused solely on the faculty department chairs at MJC who

had oversight over the academic transfer areas; however, the workforce program directors

also play a vital role in carrying out the community college mission in the 21st century.

Given the effects of neoliberalism related to employability and market needs, workforce

program directors within community colleges could provide unique insights into how

they relate to their faculty and the administration. Future research could investigate the

notions of role navigation and role conflict that were explored in this study but from the perspective of the workforce program director. Doing so could answer important questions related to any similarities or differences that may exist between the workforce and academic transfer areas.

Chapter Summary

This chapter provided an overview of the findings relative to the Environmental, Organizational, Individual (EOI) ecological framework and the research questions. The EOI framework was adequate in helping to uncover how the department chairs at MJC navigated their role between the faculty and administration through their own identity, serving as a conduit between the two groups, leveraging communication, and reducing tension. In doing so, the findings also advanced the notion that the community college department chair is vastly overlooked as a resource in building connections between the faculty and administration and that administrators should be more mindful of their capacity in creating a more cohesive culture for their respective institutions.

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Appendix A – Interview Protocol

1st Round Interviews

- Can you tell me a little bit about your background?

    - How did you come into education?

    - Was education always your profession?

    - What other kind of work experience do you have, if not?

- What other kinds of positions have you held at the college, if any?

- What kinds of things did you love and hate about your previous work experience in any position?

- What kinds of experiences led to the kind of professional you are today?

- What was the first big "lesson" that you didn't expect to learn when you came into this position?

- What kinds of previous experiences influence the work you do today?

- What did kinds of things did you wish you had known coming into this position?

- Over the course of your time at this institution, have you noticed any changes in the way decisions have been made by the administration? Why or why not?

- Have any such changes affected how you've had to carry out your role as chair? How so?

2nd Round Interviews

- What are the most beneficial aspects of your role as chair?

- What are the most challenging aspects of your role as chair?

- Are there any aspects to your job that you would change?

- What kinds of things do you feel like are most important to the administration relative to the institution?

  - What are their priorities?

  - What do you think they value most?

  - How have you seen this exhibited?

  - How do you feel like they've expressed these values to you?

  - What do you think drives these values?

- What kinds of things do you feel like are most important to the faculty relative to the institution?

  - What are their priorities?

  - What do you think they value most?

  - How have you seen this exhibited?

  - How do you feel like they've expressed these values to you?

  - What do you think drives these values?

- Do you feel like the institution values student learning or the bottom line more?

  - What have you seen by way of decisions or behaviors that led you to feel that way?

- Have you ever felt pressured, or been directed, to increase enrollments in your area?

  - If so, what was the reasoning you were given for the needed increase?

  - Did you agree with this need?

  - How did you communicate this to the faculty?

- o Did they agree? How did you deal with this, if not?

- o What strategies did you employ to comply with this request/directive?

- o What was your faculty's role in accomplishing this?

- How comfortable do you feel when working directly with the administration?

  - o Do you feel like you are "welcome" among administrators? Why or why not?

  - o Do you feel more/less/equally comfortable among the faculty you oversee?

  - o How well do you think you "move" between both groups, and why?

  - o What do you think has contributed to your ability, or inability, to move between these groups?

3rd Round Interviews

- Based on your responses thus far, what is the most important part of your role as department chair?

- Do you ever feel torn between administration and faculty values?

  - o How do you navigate that, if so?

- What do you think drives the administration's decision-making today?

  - o How do you communicate that to the faculty you oversee?

  - o How do you handle situations in which the faculty do not agree?

- What is most challenging about specifically working with these two groups?

  - o What is it about the administration's work that faculty understands the least, and vice versa?

- What is most rewarding about specifically working with these two groups?

  o What is it about the administration's work that faculty understands the
    most, and vice versa?

- How do you think the relationship between faculty and administration could
  improve?

  o What do you think the faculty's role in that process should be?

  o What do you think the administration's role in that process should be?

  o What would you say your role is in that process?

Appendix B – Framework/Data Sources/Analysis Map

EOI Conceptual Framework	Data Source(s)	Analysis Plan

Neoliberalism – managerial decision-making, institutional priorities, attitudes towards faculty roles/work, employability of students.	**Documents:** Emails, Meeting Agendas, Memos
	Interview Protocol:
	• Over the course of your time at this institution, have you noticed any changes in the way decisions have been made by the administration? Why or why not?
	• Have any such changes affected how you've had to carry out your role as chair? How so?
	• What kinds of things do you feel like are most important to the administration relative to the institution?
	   o What are their priorities?
	   o What do you think they value most?
	   o How have you seen this exhibited?
	   o How do you feel like they've expressed these values to you?
	   o What do you think drives these values?
		Within Case Analysis: Round 1 Provisional Coding: Managerial Authority Autonomy
		
		Round 2 Versus Coding based on participants' responses
		
		In Vivo Coding to be used in support of both rounds of coding
		
		Across Case Analysis: Theme derivation based on "types of families" approach (Miles Huberman, and Saldaña, 2014)

	• What kinds of things do you feel like are most important to the faculty relative to the institution? 　○ What are their priorities? 　○ What do you think they value most? 　○ How have you seen this exhibited? 　○ How do you feel like they've expressed these values to you? 　○ What do you think drives these values? • Do you feel like the institution values student learning or the bottom line more? 　○ What have you seen by way of decisions or behaviors that led you to feel that way? • Have you ever felt pressured, or been directed, to increase enrollments in your area? 　○ If so, what was the reasoning you were given for the needed increase? 　○ Did you agree with this need?	

	○ How did you communicate this to the faculty?
	○ Did they agree? How did you deal with this, if not?
	○ What strategies did you employ to comply with this request/directive?
	○ What was your faculty's role in accomplishing this?
	• What do you think drives the administration's decision-making today?
	   ○ How do you communicate that to the faculty you oversee?
	   ○ How do you handle situations in which the faculty do not agree?	

Organizational Mobility	**Documents:** Emails, Meeting Agendas, Memos **Interview Protocol:** • How comfortable do you feel when working directly with the administration? ○ Do you feel like you are "welcome" among administrators? Why or why not?	**Within Case Analysis:** Round 1 Provisional Coding: Organizational Movement Go-between Round 2 Versus Coding based on participants' responses In Vivo Coding to be used in support of both rounds of coding

	o Do you feel more/less/equally comfortable among the faculty you oversee? o How well do you think you "move" between both groups, and why? o What do you think has contributed to your ability, or inability, to move between these groups? • What is most challenging about specifically working with these two groups? o What is it about the administration's work that faculty understands the least, and vice versa? • What is most rewarding about specifically working with these two groups? o What is it about the administration's work that faculty understands the most, and vice versa?	**Across Case Analysis:** Theme derivation based on "types of families" approach (Miles Huberman, and Saldaña, 2014)
Role Conflict/Ambiguity	**Documents:** Emails, Meeting Agendas, Memos **Interview Protocol:**	**Within Case Analysis:** Round 1 Provisional Coding:

	• Can you tell me a little bit about your background?
	    ○ How did you come into education?
	    ○ Was education always your profession?
	    ○ What other kind of work experience do you have, if not?
	• What other kinds of positions have you held at the college, if any?
	• What kinds of things did you love and hate about your previous work experience in any position?
	• What kinds of experiences led to the kind of professional you are today?
	• What was the first big "lesson" that you didn't expect to learn when you came into this position?
	• What kinds of previous experiences influence the work you do today?
	• What did kinds of things did you wish you had known coming into this position?
	• What are the most beneficial aspects of your role as chair?
	• What are the most challenging aspects of your role as chair?
		Role Structure
		Role Conflict
		Role Ambiguity
		
		Round 2 Versus Coding based on participants' responses
		
		In Vivo Coding to be used in support of both rounds of coding
		
		Across Case Analysis:
		Theme derivation based on "types of families" approach (Miles Huberman, and Saldaña, 2014)

	- Are there any aspects to your job that you would change? - Based on your responses thus far, what is the most important part of your role as department chair? - Do you ever feel torn between administration and faculty values? - How do you navigate that, if so? - How do you think the relationship between faculty and administration could improve? - What do you think the faculty's role in that process should be? - What do you think the administration's role in that process should be? - What would you say your role is in that process?	

Appendix C – MJC DEPARTMENT CHAIR JOB DESCRIPTION

Division Director

Department: Instruction

FLSA Status: Exempt

Grade/Level: Faculty

Work Schedule:

Monday - Thursday 8AM - 6PM
Friday 8AM - 12PM
Or as assigned by the supervisor

Job Status: Full Time
Reports To: Vice President for Instruction

Amount of Travel Required: As needed
Positions Supervised: Department faculty members
Contract Length: 10.5 months

PURPOSE:

The primary purpose of this position is leadership in the academic area of responsibility. This leadership extends to supervising full-time faculty in their division, articulating and implementing a vision, coordinating instructional and other needs, and providing guidance for students. The individual in this position is a faculty member who serves as a liaison with the upper administration of the College, while also performing administrative functions. Division Directors are also responsible for the recruitment, supervision, and evaluation of part-time faculty in the division.

MAJOR RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Lead the full-time faculty in the division in curriculum development and instructional advancement of their fields at the College.
- Assess the instructional needs of students in the division and coordinate the development of a plan to address these needs.
- Assess the operational needs of faculty in the division and make recommendations to fill those needs.
- Maintain primary responsibility for scheduling classes in the division.
- Facilitate the development and provide oversight for strategic planning for the division.
- Facilitate development and preparation of the annual budget and coordinate departmental management.
- Coordinate the annual core curriculum evaluations of the department and prepare reports.
- Assist and encourage full- and part-time faculty with their professional development.

- Review College catalog on an annual basis with regard to division curricula and courses and make appropriate recommendations for changes.
- Identify and recruit qualified part-time faculty in the division; review credentials for compliance with accreditation; and confirm hiring decisions with Dean (if applicable) and Vice President for Instruction and Student Development.
- Assist in the hiring and orientation of new faculty.
- Participate in the Part-Time Teacher Academy and encourage new faculty members in the division to enroll in the program.
- Supervise and evaluate full and part-time faculty in the division.
- Coordinate departmental textbook orders.
- Maintain communication and work cooperatively with Directors of off-campus instructional sites.
- Oversee departmental program review and student learning outcomes evaluation process
- Assist with the coordination of Dual Credit and Distance Education offerings.
- Serve on institutional committees.
- Provide leadership and substitute as needed for other Division Directors during summers and other times when absences occur.
- Perform other duties as assigned.

POSITION CHARACTERISTICS:

Division Directors are full-time faculty members, with appointments as Director made by the College President upon the recommendation of the faculty of the division, the Dean (if applicable), and the Executive Vice President for Instruction. Directors may return to teaching faculty status upon their request at the end of any fall or spring semester or by the College President at any time. Based on the broad range of responsibilities and the need to be available to students and others, Directors will be limited in the degree of overload teaching permitted and will be expected to maintain appropriate on-campus office hours.

ADDITIONAL ESSENTIAL POSITION FUNCTIONS:

- May exceed 40 hours per week on a consistent basis, including evenings and weekends.
- Visible and available on campus during the standard 40-hour work week.
- Available as necessary via phone, email and text including evenings and weekends.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS:

An individual appointed to a Division Director position must be a faculty member qualified to teach one of the disciplines in the division. In disciplines where courses transfer to four-year colleges or universities, this means a master's degree in the discipline or a master's degree in a different discipline with a minimum of eighteen graduate hours in the teaching discipline. In workforce areas where courses do not transfer to four-year institutions, a minimum of an associate degree along with appropriate work experience and/or industry certification is required, with a bachelor's degree preferred. The individual must also have a minimum of five years of successful full-time college-level teaching experience, preferably in a community college, be an excellent communicator, have superior interpersonal skills, be an innovative, problem-solving thinker, and have demonstrated potential for leadership. Completion of a formalized leadership program is preferred.

Signatures:

_____   _____
Division Director/Faculty   Date

_____   _____
Executive Vice President for Instruction   Date

_____   _____
President   Date

Reviewed: August 2013
Revised: August 2013

Figure 1 - Environmental, Organizational, Individual-Levels Framework Model

The environmental level accounts for the external effects of neoliberalism on the institution, and pays attention to organizational behaviors/decision-making/culture as a result.

The institutional level focuses on the ease in which individuals, specifically department chairs, are able to move between different organizational groups (i.e. the administration and the faculty).

The individual level looks within the individual department chairs to discover the process by which they process and act upon the role expectations sent to them by the administration and faculty.
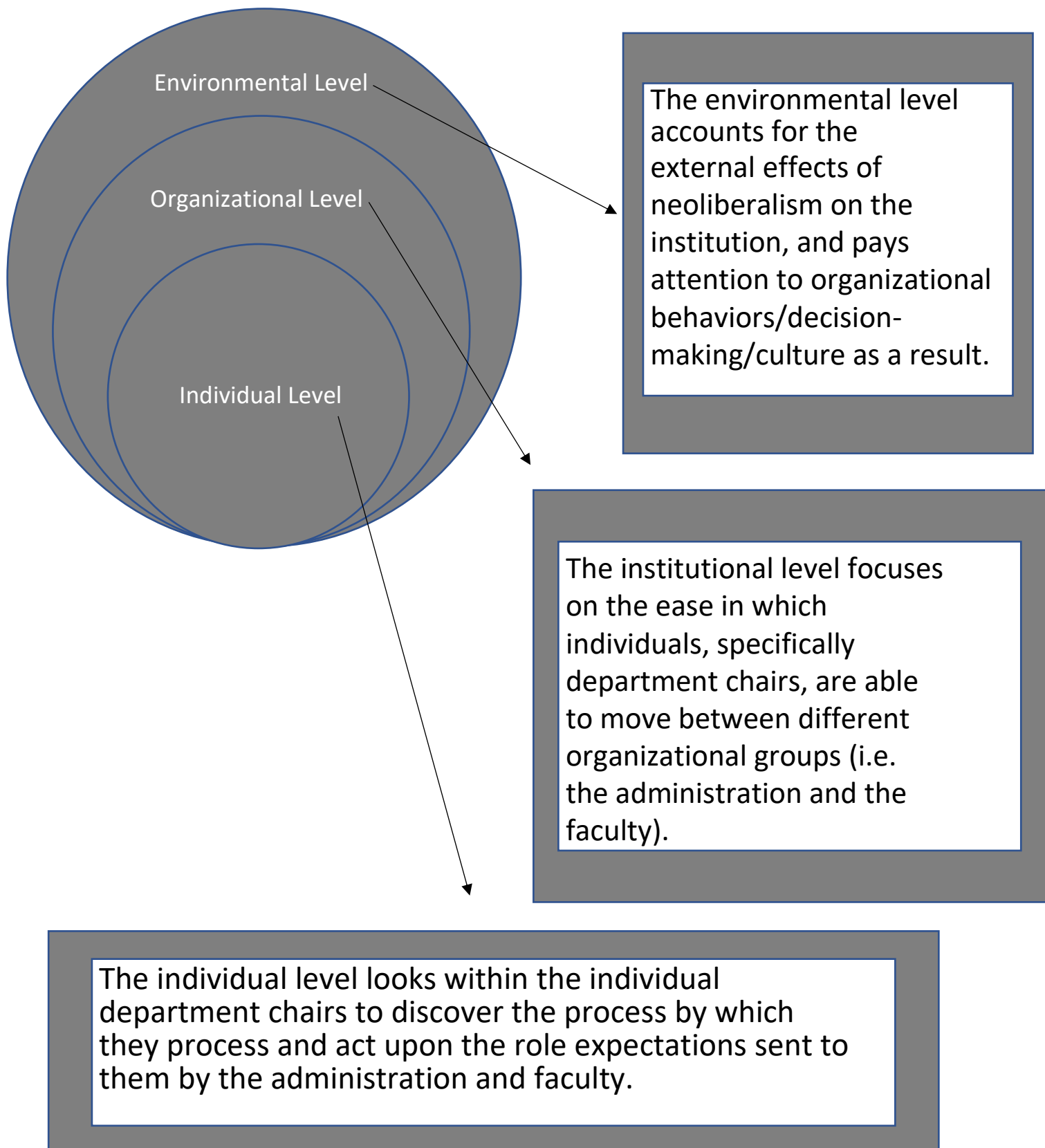
Figure 2 - MJC Role Episode Model

Role Sender Administration	Focal Person Department Chair	Role Sender Faculty
Role Expectation / Sent Role	Experience / Response	Role Expectation / Sent Role

Organizational Factors

Structure
Level
Role Requirements
Task
Physical Setting
Practices

Personal Factors

Status
Needs
Values
Education
Ability
Age
Sex
Tenure

Interpersonal Factors

Mode of Communication
Frequency of Interaction
Importance of Sender
Physical Location
Visibility
Feedback
Participation