

## ABSTRACT

Kendra E. Harris, A COLLECTIVE LOCUS OF LEADERSHIP: EXPLORING LEADERSHIP IN HIGHER EDUCATION THROUGH A PARADIGM OF COLLABORATIVE EFFORT (Under the direction of Dr. David Siegel). Department of Educational Leadership, June, 2010.

This single-case qualitative study examines leadership in an institution of higher education using the Responsible Leadership for Performance (RLP) model (Lynham & Chermack, 2006) as a framework. The study explores how using a paradigm of collective leadership as an alternative to models of individual leadership could inform understanding of leadership in higher education organizations. By using the RLP framework, this study seeks to examine conceptualization of leadership as the result of collective action while exploring applicability of the RLP framework in the context of higher education. Although the RLP depiction of leadership as a system could be useful in developing leadership system assessment and categorizing constituent demands on institutional leadership, this study suggests application of RLP in higher education is incomplete without supplementing the RLP framework with theories addressing organizational culture and the influence of organization members on organization outcomes. RLP provides some insight into leadership as the result of collective action with implications for developing new leadership paradigms congruent with collaborative paradigms of organization. There continue to be opportunities for further exploration of emergent leadership theories and expanding conceptualization of leadership to include a collaborative locus.

A COLLECTIVE LOCUS OF LEADERSHIP:  
EXPLORING LEADERSHIP IN HIGHER EDUCATION THROUGH  
A PARADIGM OF COLLABORATIVE EFFORT

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## DEDICATION

For my sons, Jackson and Riley, my best creative endeavors.

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*Whenever a thing is done for the first time, it releases a little demon.*

-- Emily Dickinson

To those who have nurtured in me the desire to do things for the first time, those who have encouraged me along the way, and those who always believed I would succeed, my gratitude is yours always. You have released in me an endless joy in exploration and learning.

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## CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

In an effort to inform administrative practice and understand leadership in higher education, administrative leaders are challenged in identifying applicable leadership theories and frameworks. Diversity of leadership perspectives in the literature renders application of any one theoretical model difficult, if not impotent, as Richmon and Allison (2003) found that within higher education, “existing theoretical approaches to leadership . . . are ill-equipped to inform administrative practices” (p. 32). There is now an opportunity to discover a new leadership paradigm that could explicate leadership practice in higher education and inform leadership practice in emerging forms of collaborative organization.

In their 2003 review of leadership theories, Richmon and Allison identified several common themes. They found leadership described as “a process for exercising influence,” a means to “induce compliance,” a “measure of personality, a form of persuasion, an effect of interaction, an instrument of goal achievement, a means for initiating structure, a negotiation of power relationships or a way of behavior” (p. 34). Whether leadership was construed as a process, personality, persuasion, power or practice, it was most often characterized in theory as belonging to one individual. In contrast, leadership in practice for higher education administration is often enacted by a collaborative and interactive group. In order to inform understanding of leadership in practice in higher education, it appears necessary to use a framework that has both flexibility to unite organizationally relevant themes of leadership and consideration of leadership in a plural form, allowing the locus of leadership to be shared rather than isolated within one individual.

## Purpose of the Study and Area of Research Inquiry

This study examines a newly developed framework of collaborative leadership as an alternative to individualistic models. In an effort to test applicability of the model and to explore the nature and process of leadership in higher education, the study considers leadership within a university setting. The Responsible Leadership for Performance Model (RLP) (Lynham & Chermack, 2006) approaches leadership from a dynamic, systems-centered perspective, appears relevant to the study of leadership processes within an executive academic leadership team, and has not yet been applied as a descriptive model in higher education. This single case study examines the executive administrative cabinet at a public, doctoral-intensive university in the south eastern United States using the Responsible Leadership for Performance theory as a framework for investigation.

## Context of the Study

Prevailing models of leadership and dominant discourse associated with them place a single individual at the center of leadership, “asserting that this one person provides a global perspective and direction” (Bensimon & Neumann, 1992, p. 29). Joseph Rost (1997) identified this as the “industrial paradigm” of leadership, which holds that leadership is carried out by an individual leader, and that “leadership is what the leader does” (p. 7), identifying leading with acts of managing. Rost proposed an alternative view in which he defined leadership as “an influence relationship among leaders and collaborators . . . that reflect their mutual purposes” (Rost, 1997, p. 11). This alternative, or “post-industrial” paradigm, appears more congruent with leadership realities both on and off university campuses and represents an effort to shift conceptualization of leadership from a static set of individual traits to a dynamic and collaborative process. Recent perspectives suggest a shift in the literature toward examination of

leadership that accommodates complex organization structure and process by considering the interactive and dynamic nature of leadership and the possibility that it may emerge as a process or an event within a social context.

Birnbaum (1992) observed that “our culture has led people to ascribe leadership to persons in formally designated leadership roles, such as presidents. . . (b)ut it is often the case that the ideas, decisions, and behaviors of many campus participants come together to influence others and help shape a college’s common perception of reality” (p. 105). It is this process of shaping a shared reality that, according to Birnbaum, “defines success and effectiveness in leadership in terms of levels of constituent support” (p. 25). Shared vision thus becomes more important than a “presidential vision” for engendering confidence in institutional leadership and support from constituents. For higher education in particular, this conceptualization of a singular leader at the helm of the organization appears to be insufficient for describing leadership. More than simply shared governance, leadership is the influence toward a shared vision that comes as a result of collaborative work from university members.

In light of collaborative leadership in practice within the university setting and the necessity for developing mutual understanding of institutional vision, leadership defined “as the quality of the individual rather than as the property of the group” (Bensimon & Neumann, 1992, p. 29) would be “inadequate” for informing understanding of higher education leadership. As Bensimon and Neumann argued, “in a turbulent future, the ideal leader will not be a super-solo-hero who makes all the right decisions and tells others what to do in carrying them out. Rather, the ideal leader will be the person who knows how to find and bring together diverse minds” (p. 2). They suggested that conceiving leadership as occurring in an individual would likely give way to conceiving leadership “it in its plural form – leadership as occurring among and through a

group of people who think and act together” (ibid.). Since university leadership teams consisting of several upper-level administrative and faculty leaders are a current reality in higher education leadership, an examination of leadership in its “plural form” may offer insights about leadership on university campuses.

With functional administrative leadership of most universities manifest in an executive leadership team, it should be informative to explore university leadership using a model that accounts for its systemic and collaborative nature. Nevertheless, leadership in dominant discourse (found in popular and academic literature) is often described and conceptualized in terms of individual performance, characteristics and behavior. At the same time, teamwork, collaboration and shared governance are touted as critical aspects of modern effective organizational functioning, particularly in higher education. As Bensimon and Neumann (1992) observe, despite a “teamwork ideology, . . . most often, the usefulness of leadership teams is taken for granted, which means that the particular nature of their “usefulness is left unexamined” (p. v). Conventional discourse has provided a sufficient vocabulary for describing individual leader success and failure, but does not develop a common “language for talking about the team’s interactive processes” (Bensimon & Neumann, p. 40). A limited collaborative leadership vocabulary may lead to limited understanding of the nature of the leadership process in organizations with collective leadership function. Examination of existing leadership models, particularly those applied to higher education, reveals a discrepancy between concepts of organizational units as defined by teamwork and collaboration and the treatment of leadership as individual by much of the literature, both popular and academic. Recently, Woodfield and Kennie (2008) observed that, “in higher education, discussions of leadership tend to focus on the effectiveness of the leadership style of the head of institution . . . rather than the leadership

exhibited by the top management team . . . as a collective body” (p. 399). Between individualistic models and collaborative reality of higher education leadership lie keys to the intricate nature of leadership in complex organizations, particularly those of higher education.

### *Responsible Leadership for Performance*

The Responsible Leadership for Performance theoretical model is a recently developed leadership framework. Integrating a systems perspective, RLP represents leadership within an organization as a “system with inputs, processes, outputs and feedback” (Lynham & Chermack, 2006). The RLP framework is comprised of three principal concepts: (1) “considerations of constituency,” (2) “framework of responsibility,” and (3) “domains of performance.” By including constituents, both inside and outside the system, the model accounts for the catalyzing forces acting upon the system and upon the leadership unit. “Responsibility” is drawn from the 1986 Tennyson & Strom work on judgment and responsibility in leadership. Thus, by considering “responsibility,” Lynham and Chermack propose consideration that action is not only based on desired effect or outcome, but is also directed toward and guided by some understanding of what is ethical. The third concept, domains of performance, accounts for work that is done and is guided by constituent demands. Domains of performance are arenas of action, outcomes that are not dependent upon a particular position or title within the organization. The RLP model was developed recently but has not yet been integrated into exploration of leadership in a particular organizational type, including higher education. It appears to be relevant to exploration of the leadership system of a university and may provide an applicable paradigm for exploration of collective leadership.

Of relevance to this study, RLP theory defines organizational leadership as an organizational sub-system rather than as an individual or a process managed by an individual. In

addition, the theory states that the purpose of leadership is to serve the needs and interests of the constituencies of the organization. In this case study, the university executive council meets the theoretical definition of a sub-system, defined as consisting of interacting and interdependent administrative executives functioning as an integrated unit. Each member represents the division of which he or she is the designated executive head, and as a group, the council is charged with advising the chancellor in university leadership and management. Their purpose is to ensure appropriate and adequate response to student, legislative and university system needs and objectives. The executive council is aligned with the definition of a university leadership sub-system, according to the definition set forth by the RLP theory regarding the purpose of leadership.

RLP theory depicts the leadership sub-system as serving constituent needs and interests by following ethical practices, maintaining effectiveness and focusing on achieving organizational objectives. The RLP framework “Laws of Interaction” describe sequential relationships between constituent needs, ethical practices and organizational objectives and indicate all three are necessary for the theory to function. The university executive council, as a leadership sub-system, depends on constituency interests and demands that define organizational objectives, making it a reasonable case in which to examine applicability of the RLP model and to explore how the model may inform understanding of leadership in higher education.

Exploring applicability of this theory to higher education has implications for this case as well as for more general educational leadership study. RLP authors hypothesize that as a leadership system practices RLP principles, constituents will perceive leadership sub-system and organizational performance more positively. The authors also hypothesize that as constituent participation and involvement with the leadership sub-system increases, so does constituent

perception of the value of the leadership sub-system to the organization. If the theory proves applicable to the study of leadership in higher education, additional research could include development of evaluation tools for a collaborative leadership entity, such as a university executive cabinet. Within a systems perspective, constituent involvement provides feedback to the leadership system and the RLP theory could be used to develop mechanisms for that feedback.

### *Individualist Leadership Paradigms*

Dominant leadership paradigms tend to isolate leadership within an individual rather than to conceptualize it as a dynamic process involving contributions of multiple individuals (Bensimon, Neumann, & Birnbaum, 1989; Bisbee, 2007; Darling & Ishler, 1992; Friedrich, Vessey, Schuelke, Ruark, & Mumford, 2009; Maak & Pless, 2006; Richmon & Allison, 2003). Thus, these paradigms miss the collective nature of leadership function within collaborative organizations and ignore environmental influences on leadership. For higher education in particular, institutional administration is a collective effort, occurring within shared governance between faculty and administration, and among collective leadership teams. These elements of higher education organizations and their leadership form the basis of collaborative governance in which it becomes increasingly challenging to explore leadership using individualistic paradigms. Collectivist models of leadership may be more pertinent to describing institutional leadership than would an individualist model and may better serve to explore participatory forms of governance than would models focused on a single individual holding positional power.

### *Emerging Perspectives*

Shifting leadership perspective from individualist to collaborative paradigms holds additional implications for understanding the context of leadership. When viewed through the

lens of systems theories, the organization system contains sub-systems and is subject to external influences which provide context within which the organization functions (Jaffee, 2001). As Scott and Davis (2007) observed, “systems are composed of multiple subsystems, and systems are themselves contained within larger systems” (p. 97), noting that this is often overlooked in the study of organizations. Interactive and collaborative perspectives suggest leadership could be conceived as a “team property” (Carson, Tesluk, & Marrone, 2007) and that leadership emerges from interactive processes within a social context (Lichtenstein, Uhl-Bien, Marion, Seers, Orton, & Schreiber, 2006; Uhl-Bien, Marion, & McKelvey, 2007), implying a shift in the locus of leadership from individual traits or qualities to processes of group collaboration. If applied with a focus on leadership, an informed description of leadership for higher education administration includes consideration of environmental influences, a collaborative structure and the collective effort in producing outputs. For higher education, increasingly held to externally generated outcomes-based standards (Alexander, 2000) and constituent concerns, environmental influences and shared responsibility appear to be increasingly important to the role and nature of institutional leadership. Exploration of leadership informed by Systems Theory sensibilities and emerging collaborative models allows for consideration of environmental influences and interactive processes as important factors that influence and define leadership.

### *Disconnected Paradigms*

In the paradigm of organization-as-system, conceptualization of a single individual as the locus of leadership lacks power to illuminate environmental context and misses that the “changing role of higher education require(s) a practice of leadership that goes beyond individual and institutional orientation. System concepts invite educators to focus attention on the systemic and societal implications of their decisions” (Burkhardt, 2002). Models currently applied to

higher education leadership are limited in their ability to portray higher education leaders as members of the system in which they operate. Few offer the means to link higher education to social change. With an individual view of leadership, examination of leaders themselves would only include “a few of the variables that may impact organizational performance” (Pfeffer, 1977). Describing leadership thusly may narrow understanding of the scope of potential leadership influence and opportunity and may limit possibility to explore the leadership system, rather than one particular individual, as the heart of organizational leadership. With “virtually no scholarship” exploring the nature of leadership as a system (Kezar & Eckel, 2004, p. 373), there remain untapped possibilities for exploring collective efforts that comprise leadership in practice in higher education administration and offer potential to conceive leadership beyond the scope of an individual. Understanding collaborative leadership in a system framework allows consideration of organizational environment, including larger society and other organizations, allowing a richer understanding of the role of leadership in organization-level partnership and social change.

#### Significance of the Study/Conceptual Contribution

This study seeks to inform understanding of leadership in higher education in several ways. Engaging a collective model of institutional leadership may provide an alternative view of leadership as not just a compilation of traits and behaviors of a single individual, but as the collective effort of several individuals leading in concert. Exploring applicability of the RLP model for describing a university executive leadership team may help place the leadership system within an organizational context as a sub-system of a larger whole, affording recognition of its contributions and challenges within that system and within the system’s societal context and environment. Additionally, the RLP model has not been explored as it relates to higher

education in particular. Exploring the applicability of RLP to higher education offers an additional perspective of leadership within a unique organizational type. Its exploration in this study facilitates a richer understanding of leadership in higher education and allows exploration of the complex nature of leadership by including variables missed by individualist models that focus on a singular leader or identify particular behaviors, traits or characteristics.

#### Delimitations of the Study

In order to explore in depth the complexity of leadership in higher education, a single institution was examined. This afforded the opportunity to observe interconnected leadership systems within the organization, environmental influences at work on the leadership team and the collaborative nature of their work. The leadership system studied includes the chancellor and the Chancellor's Executive Council, comprised of the chancellor, the provost and senior vice chancellor for academic and student affairs, the vice chancellors of health sciences, research and graduate studies, administration and finance and advancement, the university attorney, the university spokesperson and secretary to the board of trustees, the athletic director, the associate provost for equity, diversity and community engagement, the associate vice chancellor for environmental health, safety, parking and transportation and the chancellor's executive assistant. Data were collected from institutional documents and artifacts, interviews with the council members, and observation of a typical council meeting. Key constituents were defined by the informants in the study, and included community and business leaders, faculty, students, the university system president, legislative members and members of the Board of Governors.

## Description of Terms and Related Conceptual Descriptors

The following are descriptions of terms and concepts used for this study.

*Collective and Collaborative* - assumed to contain the processes and elements of conflict, negotiation, compromise, joint effort and consensus building.

*Constituency or Constituents* - refers to the individuals or groups who depend on the university to fulfill its mission and produce its stated objectives. These include students, parents of students, the community in which the university operates, staff, faculty, alumni, the legislature or statewide governing body, the Board of Trustees, the Board of Governors, accrediting institutions, donors and corporate or government partners.

*Environment* - refers to the social, cultural, geographical, technological, governmental and regulatory, financial and legal influences in action upon the university. Environment will also include the university system, economic realities and the job market.

*Leadership* - defined as coordinated behavior among a variety of individuals with the intention to accomplish group goals.

*Leadership System* - defined by the key informants of the case institution studied and will refer to the university's primary leadership actors.

*System in Focus* – refers to the university chancellor and the executive council, comprised of the chancellor's "inner circle of administrative colleagues" (Bensimon & Neumann, 1992), including the chancellor and the Chancellor's Executive Council, comprised of the chancellor, the provost and senior vice chancellor for academic and student affairs, the vice chancellors of health sciences, research and graduate studies, administration and finance and advancement, the university attorney, the university spokesperson and secretary to the board of trustees, the athletic director, the associate provost for equity, diversity and community

engagement, the associate vice chancellor for environmental health, safety, parking and transportation and the chancellor's executive assistant.

### Organization of the Study

This chapter provided the context for inquiry, areas of inquiry, purpose and significance of the study as well as limitations, delimitations and a description of terms, conceptual descriptors and an overview of the study's organization. Chapter two reviews the literature and synthesizes both academic and popular conceptualizations of leadership. Chapter three describes the methodological framework and outlines study protocol. Chapter four presents a case description, including institutional history and current institutional structure. Chapter five presents a discussion of the leadership system using the RLP framework as an exploratory lens. After examining the case, the chapter examines how case exploration informs understanding of the RLP framework. Chapter six concludes the study with discussion of the informative power and limitations of the RLP theoretical framework and provides recommendations for future research.

## CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

In their consideration of leadership in higher education, Bensimon and Neumann (1992) recognize that “leaders may . . . need to alter their conceptions of leadership and how it works in colleges and universities” (p. 26). They propose consideration of leadership as a collective and collaborative process rather than as an individual endeavor since “groups, not persons, are likely to be the basic units of organization” (Bensimon & Neumann, p. 28). For higher education, the leadership-as-group paradigm is particularly relevant to the use of committees, senates and teams with an emphasis on collaboration and collective effort. A paradigm that adopts a “view of leadership which counters the emphasis on individualism, hierarchical relationships, bureaucratic rationality and abstract moral principles,” (Blackmore, 1989, p. 94) and one that instead allows for the “re-conceptualization of leadership as a collective and interactive act” (Bensimon & Neumann, p. 33) would appear to be of use in informing understanding of the nature of leadership in higher education. A review of relevant literature on leadership theory, leadership in higher education, dominant popular leadership literature, and organizational systems theory reinforces the need for exploring leadership with a framework that includes collaboration and the collective nature of leadership in higher education.

### Leadership Theory

Approaches to leadership vary throughout the literature. Both academic and popular literature has explored extensively the nature of leadership, revealing a variety of explanations for the phenomenon. Bennis and Nanus in 1985 identified as many as 350 distinct definitions of leadership in literature of the 30 years prior to that time. Similarly in 2003, Richmon and Allison summarized “reviews of eight distinct attempts to organize leadership theories” (p. 35). Their work resulted in a summary of academic literature that outlined thirty-five separate theories and

acknowledged the possibility for categorizing additional theoretical models beyond those. Their synopsis of current popular leadership literature revealed a variety of approaches to defining leadership.

The most prevalent theories adopted paradigms attributing leadership to individual leader abilities, traits, and qualities, such as Cognitive Resources, Great Man, and Trait theories. Extant literature was replete with theories focused on leader values, Behavioral and Style theories, Situational and Environmental theories, and theories focused on perceptions and responses of followers, such as Attribution, Charismatic and Followership theories (Richmon & Allison, 2003). These theories attribute leadership primarily to individual characteristics, behaviors, or traits without recognizing the process of leadership and without placing them within an organizational context. These externally defined, or etic, perspectives, examine leadership as if it were a phenomenon occurring independently of the context of administrative and organizational collaboration. That leadership in a complex organization requires dynamic collaboration between individuals is overlooked by individualist paradigms that limit leadership to “person, role or process” (Friedrich et al., 2009, p. 933).

Rost (1997) termed his assessment of 20<sup>th</sup> century leadership literature and leadership thought the “industrial paradigm of leadership because it is part and parcel of the larger, more global industrial paradigm that has permeated Western society during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries” (p. 9). Elements of Rost’s “industrial paradigm” of leadership include “an understanding of leadership . . . (as) a structural-functional view of organizations . . . dominated by goal achievement, . . . accept(ing) a male model of behavior and power, . . . and assert(ing) a managerial perspective as to what makes organizations tick” (ibid.). More recently, Richmon and Allison (2003) arrived at a similar conclusion to that of Rost more than a decade ago. Rost

(1997) defined “the industrial paradigm of leadership” as “at its core, individualistic” (p. 10), leadership in Richmon and Allison’s 2003 review was generally described as resulting from or attributed to a particular person. Both Rost (1997) and Richmon and Allison mentioned attempts in literature they reviewed to define a type of “participative leadership” involving group decision-making that required reaching a collective decision; however, literature they reviewed did not address collaborative leadership and collective effort of leading beyond mere consensus-building. Similarly, Woodfield and Kennie (2008) point out that much literature they reviewed, both corporate and academic, appeared to miss the distinction between “team members working effectively together” (p. 401) and individuals working independently but with a collective focus. Thus, distinctions between true collective and collaborative leadership and leadership that is simply carried out jointly or in parallel are also missed when the locus of leadership remains with an individual and is not generally viewed as being shared among a leadership team.

Perhaps these limitations in existing literature result from a larger cultural phenomenon wherein authority and influence are often attributed to a single person or position of stature within an organization (Giessner & Schubert, 2007). Although a single person is rarely solely responsible for success or failure of an organization as a whole, seminal leadership literature indicates that individual leaders are often held responsible for overall organization performance, suffering alone if that performance falters or benefitting most if that performance excels. Although executives tend to be removed from day-to-day operation of organizational function (Blau, 1968), they are the face of the organization, and, as such, make an obvious target for praise or blame (Hammond & Miller, 1985). Due to emphasis on effects of individual leadership in the literature, contributing effects on organizational performance such as environment or situational favorableness tended to be overlooked (Fiedler, 1971; Lieberson & O’Connor, 1972;

Thomas, 1988). It is worth considering that traditional practices of rewarding and punishing individuals depending on team or company performance may continue to influence overall cultural perception of leadership and thus, the resultant definitions thereof throughout the literature.

More recent literature reveals shifts in perspectives of leadership. Faris and Outcalt (2001) summarize an evolving perception of leadership when they describe “the emergence of inclusive, process-oriented leadership” (p. 9), noting a paradigmatic shift from conventional “industrial models” of leadership, such as trait models, behavioral models and style theories to “post-industrial” paradigms that include consideration of processes and collaboration. Their review highlighted progression from the “military model,” wherein an individual leader exerts control within a hierarchical structure over an organization, to a model similar to Rost’s (1991) characterization of leadership as an “influence relationship among leaders and their collaborators . . . that reflect(s) their mutual purposes” (p. 99). Despite shifting conceptualizations of leadership in some literature from individual responsibility to an “emerging post-industrial imperative . . . of mutual responsibility” (Faris & Outcalt, p. 14) and a developing sense of leadership as an interdependent process “embedded in social interaction” (Fletcher & Kaufer, 2003, p. 23), most literature retains bias toward individualistic conceptions of leadership (Bolman & Deal, 2003; Kouzes & Posner, 2006, 2007; Trevion, Brown, & Hartman, 2003; Zhu, May, & Avolio, 2004). Notwithstanding movement toward greater interactive focus in recent literature, the majority of work on leadership to date retains an individualist perspective. Most theories portray leadership as belonging to an individual, depending on a situation, or consisting in a hierarchical interaction. Many are focused on individuals operating independently of organizational context, generative relationships, or collective input.

## Individualist Views of Leadership

Leadership paradigms that focus on followers (Avolio, Bass, & Jung, 1999; Bass, Avolio, Jung, & Berson, 2003; Caldwell, Bischoff, & Karri, 2002; Simmons-Welburn & Welburn, 2006), situational influence and leaders' moral orientation (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999; Richmon & Allison, 2003) neglect leader response to constituent concerns, the leader's role in the overall effectiveness of the entire organization and differences between individual and collective leadership. Simply exploring characteristics of an individual leader or functions of a specific role neglects the systemic nature of leadership within higher education organizations and, more importantly, misses fluid and dynamic processes of collective leading and shared governance. Paradigms examining followers as indicators of leadership effectiveness, situational influences on individual leadership behavior or values of an individual leader, while useful in describing some aspects of individual leadership, overlook complex factors of the leadership process in practice within higher education.

Several authors posit that primary determinants of effective academic leadership consist of personal traits in combination with individual behavioral traits (Bisbee, 2007; Darling & Ishler, 1992; Maak & Pless, 2006; Richmon & Allison, 2003). Intelligence, extroversion, empathy, and self-confidence comprised the most widely recognized personal traits considered necessary for effective leadership (Bono & Judge, 2004; Bowers & Seashore, 1966; Darling & Ishler). In conjunction, behavioral traits such as an ability to utilize an interpersonal and situational perspective, ability to influence others, and ability to modify leadership style to adapt to environmental changes emerged as important to successful leadership (Bass et al., 2003; Bisbee, 2007; Darling & Ishler; Henkel, 2002; Maak & Pless, 2006; Oyinlade, 2006; Richmon & Allison).

In addition to leader behavior and personal traits, leader personality has been linked to leader effectiveness (Hogan & Kaiser, 2005; Judge, Bono, Ilies, & Gerhardt, 2002). Along a five-factor model using extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, emotional stability and openness, Judge et al. (2002) conducted a meta-analysis of seventy eight studies and found personality to be linked to indices of leadership effectiveness. The authors found that, in particular, extraversion was most consistently correlated with leader traits and leader effectiveness. Conscientiousness and openness to experience were also found to be consistent correlates of leadership.

In the extant research, leadership is often also described as relying on such specific skills as interpersonal communication and the development of effective relationships. Much of the work identifies as crucial leadership abilities such as fostering lateral coordination or cooperation among peers, clarifying roles, utilizing consultative decision-making, and developing trust, fostering productive interpersonal dynamics, negotiating, and possessing the ability to influence and be sensitive to group process (Cangemi, 2001; Kezar & Eckel, 2004; Maak & Pless, 2006; Oyinlade, 2006; Richmon & Allison, 2003). This work identifies individual skills necessary to facilitating group efforts and influencing others, approximating a conceptualization of leadership as the facilitation of collaborative process. It does not explore the possibility that leadership itself could be the result of an intentional collective effort to influence organizational change. Individualist paradigms are limited in their ability to portray leadership as joint effort and meshing personalities of several individuals in leadership roles working together. These perspectives retain the individual as the locus of leadership rather than expand conception of leadership to be a product of communal effort.

### *Leader Roles and Function*

Role identity and function have long been associated with leadership. In their 1966 review of leadership research, Bowers and Seashore suggested that using a multi-factor conceptualization of leadership would be applicable in predicting organizational effectiveness. By identifying four group-focused orientations for leader behavior that related to organizational outcomes and effectiveness -- support for group members, emphasis on group goals, facilitation of group member interaction, and support of the group's work -- and equating leadership in "business enterprises" with "supervision" and "management" (Bowers & Seashore, p. 239), they support the role-centered paradigm of leadership. While they did identify the organizational "ideal . . . (as) a group of people working effectively together toward the accomplishment of some common aim" (ibid.), their study focused on the conceptualization of leadership as "a large aggregation of separate behaviors" (Bowers & Seashore, p. 240). These behaviors were aimed at directing and facilitating a common goal and emanated from the positional influence of an individual in a supervisory role within the organization. Bowers and Seashore reviewed literature published between 1951 and 1962, outlining the historical conceptualization of leadership as an autonomous endeavor and relating leadership to individuals in organizational leadership positions. They noted that in literature they reviewed, leadership concepts were derived from individual behaviors, traits, relational and facilitation skills, roles, and technical knowledge located with particular individuals. This early work illustrates the long-dominant perspective of leadership as leader-centric, setting the stage for an ongoing conceptualization of leadership as an individual enterprise.

A recent segment of the body of work on leadership examines the function of individuals in both informal and formalized leadership roles. Maak and Pless (2006), in their "roles model,"

parsed leadership into a series of informal roles: citizen, visionary, servant, coach, architect, storyteller and “meaning enabler.” Despite bringing the concept of leaders from great men to that of “equal human beings” who facilitate relationships (Maak & Pless, p. 112), the authors segregated leaders in specific individual roles that distinguished them from stakeholders rather than integrating them as members of a collective and intentionally collaborative group.

Pless (2007) found important the group-focused leadership roles of facilitator, supporter and coach, focusing on leader roles and relationships as the essence of leadership. In her narrative biographical case study of Anita Roddick, Founder of The Body Shop, Pless explored the importance of leader role identity – a leader’s conception of how to enact the function of leadership within the organization. Pless found that effective leadership occurred when leadership role and internal motivators of the individual leader were congruent and leader character and responsibility were consistently coupled with self-awareness and a sense of responsibility for others. Leader conceptions of his or her roles and responsibilities appeared to influence leader effectiveness, both individually and within organizational context. Pless found that alignment of leader role understanding and roles adopted combined with leader relationship with the group in determining whether others assessed leadership to be effective. Self-awareness, role focus and perception by others comprised the measure of leadership and were situated in an individual in a formal leadership role.

Exploring formalized leadership roles, Birnbaum (1992) noted that “69 percent of the (Institutional Leadership Project) ILP respondents identified their president as an important campus leader” (p. 121). For many, the definition of leadership was based on perceptions of leader position and roles, and, according to ILP participants, “people (were) more likely to be thought of as leaders if they occup(ied) positions in the campus hierarchy” (Birnbaum, p. 121).

Of note in the same study, Birnbaum also found support for the idea that institutional operation did not rely solely on work of the leader, noting that “much of what happens in a college is due to the effectiveness of people in follower roles, who . . . take initiative to do what they believe has to be done” (p. 120). Despite the perception of the president as an important campus leader, institutional effectiveness was not viewed as dependent on the president, but on those not endowed with a formalized leadership role. If, as Birnbaum noted, “the college becomes a cauldron of ideas and interaction” (ibid.), higher education leadership could be explored as non-positional and as the result of a collective effort between organizational members in collaboration.

### *Leadership Style*

In addition to leader roles, the nature of leadership has also been explored through attempts to categorize leadership styles. In their definitive work on the subject, Lewin, Lippitt, and White (1939) led social psychological studies examining leadership decision-making processes. Experimental results identified three styles of leadership -- autocratic, democratic, and laissez-faire -- based on the decision-making processes of individuals in leadership positions. Autocratic leaders unilaterally made decisions without consultation or input. Laissez-faire leaders delegated to others accomplishment of particular outcomes but did not direct how those should be accomplished. Democratic leaders were defined as those involving others in the decision-making process, facilitating group consensus and making decisions based on group input. Lewin et al. (1939) found the democratic style to be most effective, associating collaborative processes with effective leadership. Theoretical paradigms of democratic style leave the locus of leadership and influence with one person, rather than as distributed across the team or group.

Aligned with concepts of ethical leadership and leadership that are responsible to the organization, its members, and its environment, much research has examined transformational, charismatic, or inspirational leadership styles (Avolio et al., 1999; Bass et al., 2003; Bono & Judge, 2004; Simons, 1999). In contrast to quid pro quo bargaining and exchange in transactional leadership, transformational leadership is defined as the development and inspiration of followers to “transcend their own self-interests for a higher collective purpose, mission or vision” (Howell & Avolio, 1993, p. 891). In contrast to a directive command and control style of managing, transformational leaders motivate organization members through inspiration to work for the good of the organizational community and, rather than to simply operate within an existing system, change the system as necessary to accomplish collective goals. Here, again, the locus of leadership and influence resides in a particular positional leader and is not conceived as distributed across or emanating from an entire group.

#### Relational and Collective Views of Leadership

Placing leader behavior within the broader context of a social system, relational aspects of leadership appear in both seasoned and recent work (Bensimon & Neumann, 1992; Bowers & Seashore, 1966; Henkel, 2002; Howell & Avolio, 1993; Kezar & Eckel, 2004; Maak & Pless, 2006; Richmon & Allison, 2003; Rost, 1991, 1997). In some of the earliest research in this area, Bowers and Seashore suggested that leadership as a concept relied on existence of groups and shared goals. This work did not explore leadership itself as a collaborative process between and among several group members, but rather identified it as an interaction toward others. The conception of the separateness and hierarchical nature of leadership in practice remained throughout the body of literature and continued to more recent work, as well.

Bayles and Parks-Doyle (1995) suggested a “Collaborative Leadership Paradigm” in which the “leader is on the sidelines, coaching the team to work together” (p. 66). While this paradigm promoted collaborative decision-making, teamwork, and interdependence among group members, the leader was still seen as a primary individual, separate from the group and in a hierarchical position of guiding, facilitating and coaching. The authors did not identify leadership itself as a non-hierarchical result of people working together. Nearing the concept of “collaborative leadership,” a participative decision-making model proposed by Vroom and Yetton (1973) suggested subordinates would be involved in the process of decision-making. Similarly, Friedrich et al. (2009) suggest that leadership may be shared and that the leadership process is an exchange within a network of individuals in which their expertise relative to a given situation facilitates their “selective and dynamic emergence” (p. 933) as leaders. Individuals, in response to organizational or group circumstances, ebb and flow into and out of leadership roles according to their talents and organizational needs. While this perspective appears to be closest to the practice of leadership in consultation with an advisory group, it still indicates that at any given moment, it is the expertise of an individual that predominates, rather than collaborative effort of a group that emerges as leadership. Rost’s (1997) comparison between the “industrial” or individual-centered paradigm of leadership and the “post-industrial” or relationship-centered paradigm highlighted differences between individual and interactive conceptualizations of leadership and the leadership process. Rost (1997) noted that leadership scholars and practitioners in the “industrial paradigm” “seldom write about leaders in the plural; the emphasis is on the individual leader in the singular” (p. 9). More recent work has continued to address leadership and leadership events as emergent, dynamic and interactive. Uhl-Bien et al. (2007) and Lichtenstein et al. (2006) recognize modern organizations as complex and interactive

systems within which organizational leadership emerges amid both formal bureaucratic functions and informal, emergent sub-systems. Proposing expanding consideration of the locus of leadership from “role-based actions of individuals to . . . contextual interactions that occur across an entire social system,” Lichtenstein et al. (p. 2) propose leadership to be understood as an “emergent event” that may be shared rather than as a set of characteristics or behaviors attached to a particular person. The idea that leadership could be conceived as a “team property” (Carson et al., 2007) allows team members to “provide leadership influence to one another” (p. 1220) as well as to influence team outcomes. Emerging perspectives of leadership as “an outcome at the team level of analysis,” (Day, Gronn, & Salas, 2004, p. 858) reflect a new consideration of team leadership beyond “attributes that are brought to a team by an individual . . . (and) consider leadership that emerges within a team” (p. 858). While these “new-genre” leadership theories (Avolio, Walumbwa, & Weber, 2009) suggest that leadership is collective, distributed and shared and reflect an emerging focus on the dynamic and interactive properties of leadership in complex organizations (Avolio et al., 2009; Carson et al.; Lichtenstein et al.; O’Connor & Quinn, 2004; Pearce & Conger, 2003), there remain opportunities for additional research exploring leadership within a plural framework, particularly for higher education organizations.

Bensimon and Neumann (1992), acknowledged the reality of leadership by teams, particularly in higher education. In their study of the interaction of and communication within institutional leadership as part of the National Center for Postsecondary Governance and Finance, they became “intrigued with the idea of leadership as interactive, collaborative, and shared” (Bensimon & Neumann, p. xiii). Their interviews of presidents, vice presidents, faculty and trustees provided rich data from which their “interest in the balance and tension between individual and collective leadership” (Bensimon & Neumann, p. xiv) was born. In their 1992

study, Bensimon and Neumann pointed out that leadership literature in higher education tends to define leadership in individualistic terms, in contrast to the collaborative nature of academic leadership. Empowerment was an important result of collaboration in several studies they reviewed; however, despite identifying collaboration and empowerment as important elements of leadership team function, the authors found several barriers to the incorporation of more collaborative practices. Presidents “remain(ed) deeply committed to authoritarian leadership and their own controlling voice and hand” (Bensimon & Neumann, p. 217) and tended to perpetuate team climates that encouraged combativeness or competition. Additionally, the authors identified turf protection as an issue with many leadership teams (Bensimon & Neumann, pp. 218-219) as contributing members protected individual areas of expertise. Other participants in the study defined “good leadership” as “forceful and directive, and as lodged in just themselves” (Bensimon & Neumann, p. 220), indicating a prevailing individualistic conceptualization of leadership within some study participants. This research revealed a continued reversion toward an individualistic conception of leadership by institutional executives and, to a degree, by the authors themselves. They did not explore the possibility that leadership could be, in and of itself, the result of a collaborative process, rather than being conceptualized as a process of collaboration orchestrated by an individual leader.

Other leadership styles and organization theories have touched on collaboration and relationships with leaders in organizations. Hinting at Systems Theory and tenets of ethical leadership, Maak and Pless (2006) defined leadership as a “social-relational and ethical phenomenon that occurs in interactions between a leader and a broader group of followers, inside and outside the organization” (p. 112). For them, leadership is based in relationships, values, norms and ethics, and is a predominantly individual endeavor enacted between a leader and her

or his followers. Although these authors acknowledged social influences of the system on leader behavior, they attributed resultant outcomes to an individual in a particular leadership role. Despite their hinting at relational and group process, leadership in these contexts remained a largely individual endeavor, enacted within the context of a group by a leader, rather than occurring as a result of collaboration or collective efforts of a group of non-positional leaders to influence the group and meet group goals.

#### Summary of Dominant Popular Literature

Within the vast body of literature focused on the seemingly elusive concept of leadership, Hogan and Kaiser (2005) have divided the works into two primary categories, the “troubadour tradition” and the “academic tradition.” “Troubadour” pertains to popular mainstream literature consisting of anecdotal evidence and “memoirs of former CEOs and politicians . . . with very little supporting evidence” (Hogan & Kaiser, p. 171). Similarly to the academic literature, much of the popular, or “troubadour,” literature on leadership has focused almost exclusively on individuals in leadership roles. Hogan and Kaiser identified several concepts of leadership that emerge both in popular and academic literature, noting that it was often characterized by leader competencies, that leader personality has been linked to leader effectiveness and that reputation, charisma, traits and virtues of the individual leader have emerged as foundations of conceptualizing leadership effectiveness in the “troubadour tradition.” While in their review of literature the authors found effective management teams to be prerequisite to organizational effectiveness, they did not explore a team concept of leadership as a collaborative effort, instead focusing on the actions of managing.

Similarly, Rost (1997) identified the lack of a conceptualization of leadership as pluralistic in mainstream literature, noting that much of the widely sold popular literature framed

leadership in an individual context (Goleman, 2000; Kouzes & Posner, 1993, 2006, 2007; Senge, 1990). Senge even referred to elements of leadership as the “individual disciplines of systems thinking . . . (and) personal mastery” (pp. 359-360). Despite allusion to the importance of systems thinking, developing leaders were encouraged, if not instructed, to accomplish a “personal mastery” in “individual disciplines.”

As in academic literature, popular literature explores leadership in terms of individual styles. Goleman (2000) identified six styles, based on Lewin et al.’s (1939) original three styles. Goleman’s coercive, authoritative, affiliative, democratic, pacesetter, and coaching styles still retained the locus of leadership within an individual leader, suggesting that, from a leadership style perspective, leadership continued to be conceptualized as located within or attached to one leader rather than generated through collaborative leading.

For some academic literature, and particularly in the popular literature, the concept of self-managed or self-directed work teams became more prevalent throughout the 1990s. In a representative overview, Cohen and Bailey (1997) reviewed group effectiveness research over a six-year period and found a great deal of interest in the subject. Despite a self-directed team’s collective drive to manage team performance, its aim was not to collectively influence processes or people outside the team itself, as was the aim of collaborative leadership teams in practice. Focus on group effectiveness perhaps illustrates a shift toward new industrial models of teams as geared toward producing collaborative work, but the essence of collaboration for production of leadership of others or of organizations has not been the focus of the self-directed work team in the literature. Accordingly, the practice of collaboration, while yielding products or project outcomes, has not been observed as performing with the intention of influencing organizational

change. Thus, both popular and academic literature reveals gaps in exploration of leadership as the result of a collaborative process undertaken by a team of leaders.

### Leadership in Higher Education

In their attempt to identify a relevant conceptual framework of leadership for higher education, Richmon and Allison (2003) observed an increase in role flexibility for leaders, recognizing that administrators are being required “to transcend the hierarchical functionalism” of organizations. The authors sought to answer the seemingly as yet unanswered question of what leadership is and how it can be better understood. Their review of literature led them to determine that scholars defined, framed and understood leadership in myriad ways, concluding that there is a “lack of a broadly shared understanding of what leadership means” in higher education study (Richmon & Allison, p. 32). Richmon and Allison found that while a complete analysis of the diverse field of theoretical approaches to leadership in higher education is difficult and still forthcoming, they did identify “fundamental issues” as important to be considered by “any viable theory of leadership” (p. 44). They suggested viable leadership theory answers the questions of “(a) who are identified . . . as actual or potential leaders? (b) in what setting(s) does the theory place leadership? (c) what kinds of data are required by the theory to investigate hypotheses or other claims? and (d) how does the theory distinguish leadership from non-leadership behaviors or actions?” (ibid.). These questions address concepts of leadership that are not determined by position or hierarchy and suggest that collaborative effort rather than a particular individual leadership style, method or locus of influence could be explored as the locus of effective organizational leadership.

In addition to broad characterization and understanding of leadership and its relation to higher education, authors have noted rapidly changing demands on institutions and on

institutional leaders. These rapidly changing demands include an increased emphasis on quality assessment and accountability, specific demands from external constituents, evolving challenges of shared governance, renewed focus on institutional role within and responsibility to society, and characterization of students as customers (Bensimon et al., 1989; Birnbaum, 1992; Bisbee, 2007; Darling & Ishler, 1992; Eddy & VanDerLinden, 2006; Henkel, 2002; Kezar & Eckel, 2004; Richmon & Allison, 2003; Rowley & Sherman, 2003). As corporate management development and organization studies have grown more prevalent, so has their application to higher education administrative practice. An increased focus on students as customers, a perspective traditionally embedded in corporate organizational models, is increasingly prevalent in academic administration and higher education leadership practice and study (Bensimon & Neumann, 1992; Birnbaum; Bisbee; Cangemi, 2001; Darling & Ishler; Heck & Hallinger, 2005; Henkel; Kezar & Eckel; Richmon & Allison). Gilley, Fulmer and Reithlingshoefer (1986), in their observation of the relationship between presidential success and presidential acceptance by key constituents, reinforced the principle that assessment of leadership effectiveness is influenced by constituent perceptions of that leadership.

#### Organization Leadership – A Systems Approach

With the emergence of Open Systems perspectives following World War II (Scott & Davis, 2007), new opportunities for organizational discourse evolved. Biologist Ludwig von Bertalanffy began to discuss the applicability of general system theory to many disciplines, as Scott and Davis observe, and incorporated this concept into a definition of organizations as “first and foremost, systems of elements, each of which affects and is affected by the other” (p. 24). Daft and Weick (1984) utilized the working assumptions about organizations as “open social

systems that process information from the environment” (p. 285), exploring organization as process-focused and with systemic, reciprocal interaction among organizational components.

In concert with consideration of constituents, several authors have explored systems theory as related to organizational leadership. March and Simon (1958) defined organizations as “assemblages of interacting human beings” (p. 4), while Blau and Scott (1962) distinguished organizations as having “been formally established for the explicit purpose of achieving certain goals” (p. 5), using Systems Theory as context for interdependent organizational sub-systems and defining organizations as collections of results-focused participants, coordinated to achieve a particular end. In combination with purposeful existence, as described in developing organization theory by March and Simon, Blau and Scott, and more recently by Scott and Davis (2007), reciprocal, interactive processes began to illustrate the importance of leadership within those processes. With the conceptualization of organizations as purposeful systems, the importance of organization leadership to achievement of organizational purpose and interactions between and among the sub-systems emerged as critical to efficacy of the system at large. By considering leadership as a system and its output in terms of a collective effort, Bensimon and Neumann’s (1992) study of college and university presidents and their use of leadership teams lent support to the possibility that leadership could be defined as the result of collaboration. Understanding how members define leadership and how executive leadership teams function may inform understanding of an alternative form of leadership, not often studied, but commonly seen in practice in higher education organizations.

## Responsible Leadership for Performance

### *Background and Development*

The Responsible Leadership for Performance (RLP) model (Lynham & Chermack, 2006) was borne from the need to develop an “integrative theoretical framework of leadership” that not only addresses the “nature and challenges of leadership that are both responsible and focused on performance” (Lynham & Chermack, p. 74), but that also considers that “leadership is itself a system consisting of purposeful, integrated inputs, processes, outputs, feedback and boundaries” (ibid.), incorporating constituency interests as leadership system influences. Lynham and Chermack identified deficiencies in the literature regarding the study of leadership as it related to organizational performance, finding that leadership had not previously been examined in a way that linked leadership practices to individual, group, process and organizational indicators of performance, “objective outputs of the leadership system” (p. 73), or to the “multidimensional notion of responsibility” (p. 74). Additionally, they argued that the literature failed to demonstrate an “agreement on the dependent variable of leadership” (Lynham & Chermack, p. 74), which their model attempts to address.

### *Overview of RLP Theory/Model*

Responsible Leadership for Performance (Lynham & Chermack, 2006) is a recently developed theoretical framework integrating a systems approach for the study and evaluation of leadership. The authors framed leadership in terms of interactive groups and processes, environmental influences and non-hierarchical leadership. Their development of the framework included (1) identifying theory concepts or units, (2) determination of “laws of interaction” between units, (3) defining theoretical application limits, (4) describing “system states” in which the system would operate, (5) proposing logical statements about the way the theory would

operate, (6) identifying “empirical indicators” upon which the theory could be tested, (7) stating hypotheses about predicted relationships between units, and (8) outlining recommendations for testing hypotheses.

The primary concepts of the RLP framework are (1) “considerations of constituency,” (2) “framework of responsibility,” (3) “domains of performance” (Lynham & Chermack, 2006). By including constituents, both within and outside the system, the model identifies catalyzing forces acting upon the organization and upon the leadership unit. “Responsibility” is drawn from “action that is based on careful, reflective thought about which response is professionally right in a particular situation” (p. 298). The third concept, domains of performance, accounts for work done, or leadership unit or system outputs, and is guided by constituency demands. For RLP, performance may be generated anywhere within the organization and is not tied to a hierarchical structure or a particular position within the organization, important elements of collaborative organizational leadership relevant to higher education institutions. By framing leadership as a system, the RLP model allows for exploration of executive leadership as a collaborative system and links it to purposeful achievement of collective goals.

### Synthesis of the Literature

With the exception of recent and emerging perspectives of participative leadership and “interactive theories,” the virtually wholly individualist perceptions Richmon and Allison (2003) gathered from their review reflect the content of the majority of extant literature. This leaves largely unaddressed collective leadership processes in practice, particularly in higher education. Even Richmon and Allison’s “interactive” leadership theories and Rost’s (1991) conceptualization of leadership as an interactive, relational process did not address the possibility of leadership emerging as a result of collaborative effort among several individuals as much as

they described it as “residing in relationships between leader and follower” (Richmon & Allison, p. 43). Leadership in traditional literature remains conceptualized as a by-product of hierarchical activity or as a collection of qualities and/or behaviors of an individual rather than as a dynamic process occurring purposefully within a group.

Birnbaum (1992) came close to describing leadership as the result of collective action in his “consideration of the large number of different leaders seen by various campus constituents” and suggested this conceptualization to be “a useful corrective to the idea that all leadership in academic organizations comes from the top” (p. 120). Even so, participants in the ILP research study indicated their perception of leadership as linked to an individual in a formalized leadership role. Participants in that study identified particular individual characteristics as evidence of leadership and their “perceptions and assessments of leadership (were) embedded in (a leader’s) values” (Birnbaum, p. 121), indicating their perception that leadership resides with the individual and depends on individual characteristics, traits and position. While assessments of personality factors and their relationship to leadership provided a glimpse into the hidden traits of leadership, the authors failed to connect leadership to a collaborative process and left leadership isolated in the individual and removed from group interaction and collective contribution.

Relying on a definition of leadership limited to leader traits and behavior or individual leader outcomes presents several challenges to informative exploration of the nature of leadership, particularly within an organization utilizing shared governance and leadership teams. A focus on the individual limits leadership scope and disregards system environment as it affects and is affected by the leadership process. It misses collective contributions of a leadership team to that process of institutional leadership that exists in higher education. Conceptualization of

leadership as a collaborative process independent of organizational position or title, particularly within higher education, may inform understanding of leadership in higher education administration in a way that includes leadership teams and is generated by a collective effort.

Research of followership neglected to explore the process of leadership in collaboration despite illustrating effects of leadership on a limited sample of constituents. Study of followers as the defining focus of leadership missed collaborative efforts of teams in action, collective results of several individuals working together and environmental influences inherent in leading an organization with diverse and multiple constituents. The study of followers did not enhance understanding of how leadership affects or is manifest for organizational constituents who are not direct followers of the leader under examination yet nevertheless are affected by organizational leadership.

Literature focused on leader roles in organizations fails to inform conceptualization of leadership as a result of roles and behavior of more than one person acting together and neglect possibility of using a systems paradigm for understanding leadership team processes and collective outputs. In addition to constituent responsiveness and the coordinating role of a university leader, general systems theories lend support to the idea that leadership is a collaborative process stemming from the nature of the university as a complex system. Scott and Davis (2007) observed that general systems theories stressed a hierarchical nature of complex systems, not in terms of power structures but “as a mechanism of clustering” (p. 97), implying that “connections and interdependencies within a system component are apt to be tighter and of greater density than those between system components” (p. 98). Given these observations, connections and interdependencies within the leadership system would be apt to be “tighter and of greater density” than those between the leadership system and the rest of the organizational

system, or tighter within the leadership team than between the leadership team and the rest of the university. With tight and dense connections between individual members of the leadership team, their collective efforts within this leadership system may produce collective results, namely, collective leadership. It would therefore make sense to examine university leadership as a collective effort, investigating the multifaceted entity as a subsystem of a larger whole, exploring perspectives of recent literature suggesting leadership is an emergent and shared process occurring among an interactive group.

### *Implications and Opportunities*

Existing literature reveals gaps in development and application of an effective higher education leadership model that can facilitate a common understanding of the nature and process of leadership. Bensimon and Neumann come close in their 1992 study of university presidents and their use of leadership teams, but stop short of developing a model that enhances understanding of the collaborative nature of leadership within the context of a university. Richmon and Allison (2003) identified Participative Leadership as a mode of leadership that included contributions to decision-making from constituents as well as leaders; however, it retained the sense of individuals within a hierarchy and did not describe the purposeful collaboration of a leadership team with the intention of organizational influence. There have been few, if any, frameworks of leadership that have included collaboration as part of the leadership process. For example, Oyinlade's (2006) leadership effectiveness assessment, the Essential Behavioral Leadership Qualities (ELBQ), retained focus on the individual leader her- or himself, which may or may not include consideration of the rest of the leadership team and their collective efforts at university governance. Since higher education institutions appear to be comprised of systems of systems, and, in particular, the sub-system of the Executive Leadership

Team, there is a need for exploration of leadership that facilitates understanding complexities of collaborative leadership and shared governance and that informs understanding of higher education administrative leadership in practice.

### *Applicability of RLP to Leadership and Organization Study in Higher Education*

For higher education, institutional governance and leadership respond to the institutional environment, a large component of which exists in institutional constituents. As defined, RLP provides an ideal framework for examination of leadership as a “system of joint, coordinated and purposeful action (which) can therefore be conceived of as a system of interacting inputs, processes, outputs and feedback that derive meaning, direction and purpose from the larger performance system and environment within which it occurs” (Lynham & Chermack, 2006, p. 75). This implicates the RLP model and theory as an appropriate framework for examining leadership structure and process in higher education to inform conceptualization of leadership as the result of intentional, collaborative leading.

### Introduction of Chapter III

Review of relevant literature on leadership, organization theory and leadership in higher education revealed opportunities to examine and assess leadership as a collaborative effort and illuminated a void in the work on leadership in higher education in particular. Chapter three outlines the methodology, protocol and research methods used in exploring applicability to higher education of a new model approaching leadership as a system and allowing for environmental influence and collective processes on leadership outcomes. Chapter three describes how this study explores the locus of organizational leadership within higher education, in particular, within a university executive administrative leadership team.

### CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the design, case selection, participant protocols, data collection procedures, coding and analysis and validity and reliability concerns of this study. The chapter outlines the uniqueness of the study and its limitations. As Kezar observed in her 1996 doctoral dissertation, much of the research on leadership has tended “to impose a definition and understanding of leadership on the social actors (while) fewer studies have asked social actors to define what they feel leadership is and who they believe is a part of this process” (Kezar, p. 118). Inquiry into the nature of leadership is appropriate for continued study through qualitative research. Qualitative methods, in particular, the case study, not only allow for, but rely on, the “social actors” and participants in the studied phenomenon to provide their perspectives on that phenomenon, generating an insider, or emic, perspective often missed by methods relying on an outsider’s view (Patton, 2002; Yin, 2009).

Using a single case study design and elite interview subjects, I examined executive leadership in higher education, in particular, the Chancellor’s Executive Council at a public doctoral university in the southeastern United States. Informants were chosen based on their membership in the executive council, and they were briefed by the chancellor and given a broad overview of the scope of the study prior to interviews. After providing informed consent, they participated in individual interviews in August, 2009. The Interview Protocol is included in Appendix A. Following the completion of initial interviews, I observed informants in an executive council meeting on August 24, 2009.

I employed the Responsible Leadership for Performance (RLP) Model (Lynham & Chermack, 2006) as the lens through which to explore this case. Lynham and Chermack’s description of leadership as “a system . . . of purposeful, integrated inputs, processes, outputs,

feedback and boundaries” (p. 74) inspired its selection as a framework for analysis in this study. Recognizing leadership within an organization as a system, the RLP framework includes three primary theoretical concepts: (1) “considerations of constituency,” (2) “framework of responsibility,” and (3) “domains of performance”. By including constituents, both inside and outside the system, RLP offers the opportunity to consider catalyzing forces acting upon the system and upon the leadership unit. Lynham and Chermack suggest that action is not only based on desired effect or outcome, but is also directed toward and guided by purposeful intention. Considering domains of performance rather than individual leaders or positions allows study of non-hierarchical leadership action not defined by a particular position or title within the organization, providing an appropriate lens through which to explore leadership as a process enacted individually or collectively.

#### Design of the Study

This study utilized a single case study method to explore analytic generalizability of the RLP model in a public, doctoral-granting state university. This study offered opportunities for emergent design flexibility and for naturalistic inquiry into the phenomenon of leadership in an institution of higher education (Patton, 2002). A single-case study method was chosen for its strengths as the best method with which to explore in depth higher education leadership as a contemporary phenomenon within its operational context (Yin, 2009). Additionally, the case study method encompasses multiple variables of interest, incorporates several sources of data – interviews, documents, observations and artifacts - and benefits from the development of prior theoretical models that guide data collection and analysis (Yin). This study focused on a representative case -- a public, four-year, doctoral university -- where a snapshot of the ongoing,

daily institutional leadership could be observed and explored within its natural context and ordinary functioning (Yin).

### *Purpose of the Study*

In order to explore the applicability of the RLP model to higher education and illuminate what the RLP framework tells us and fails to tell us about leadership in the context of higher education, I used the framework as one lens through which to examine the executive leadership body of a public, four-year doctoral university. Since Lynham and Chermack (2006) approached leadership from a dynamic, systems-centered perspective with the RLP model, its application afforded exploration of collective leadership as an alternative to the predominant individualist view.

### *Data Collection*

Elite informants were chosen for their membership in the Chancellor's Executive Council, which represents executive leadership at the university. I collected data through informant interviews and observation, examination of institutional documents, artifacts and correspondence. The RLP model provided a framework for exploring the structure, function and operation of the executive council as it engaged in daily organizational leadership and helped organize perspectives of study participants. RLP framework units informed lines of inquiry and coding categories. One informant responded to a written version of interview questions as an in-person interview was not possible. Interview questions guided informants in discussion of their definition of leadership and leadership effectiveness within the institution, leadership structure and function, and their perceptions of the leadership process, results and overall effectiveness. Informants were asked to describe how executive team members are selected, how they work together in collaboration and in conflict, and their understanding of perceptions of the leadership

team outside of the team itself. The interview protocol is included in Appendix A. I conducted several follow-up interviews with key informants throughout the process of data collection and interpretation as a means to clarify, verify and supplement my observations.

### *Observation, Documents and Artifacts*

I observed an executive council meeting on August 24, 2009, using the interview protocol as a tool for organizing and categorizing observations. Over the course of six months subsequent to the interviews and council meeting observation, I continued to observe organizational processes and leadership decision-making through opportunities arising in the course of day-to-day institutional operation. Documents and artifacts included a list of expectations for leadership characteristics of executive administrators, organizational charts, minutes from Faculty Senate and Faculty Council meetings, reports generated to aid in university system and institutional planning, institutional responses to those reports, and archived documents and newspaper articles from the institutional archives collection. Some are included as appendices.

### Case Selection

The sample case university was purposively selected through critical case and criterion sampling, to include its use of an executive leadership team and for university size and type. Attention to informant accessibility and availability of triangulation data also affected the selection of the case to be studied. Criteria for selection were based, in part, on the following:

1. The institution is a public, doctoral-granting university, comparable to other institutions of its size and focus. The institution is considered large by the Carnegie Foundation classifications, with the number of students in 2004 around 24,000.

2. The academic administrative leadership includes an executive leadership team or council.
3. The researcher has extensive knowledge and understanding of the context within which the informants are operating.
4. Key informants were accessible for interviews.
5. Sources of information external to the executive leadership team were readily available with which to ascertain veracity of informant responses.
6. Institutional documents, archives and artifacts were readily available for examination.
7. The institution was accessible with limited or no travel funding required.

### Participants

Participation was obtained through informed consent, with the project approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the protection of human subjects. Appropriate IRB approval materials appear in Appendix B. Participants were informed that their participation was voluntary and that their identities will be kept confidential throughout the study and after its completion. To protect participant confidentiality, informants interviewed were referred to as “informant,” “council member(s),” “interviewees,” or “observers.” The university was referred to in the generic where possible, or as “Case Study University” to further protect participant and institution identity. Raw data was not attributable to particular individuals, except by the interviewer. Raw data will only be available to the researcher, chair and methodologist.

### Data Collection

Individual semi-structured interviews and follow-up interviews, review of pertinent documents and artifacts, and observation of the leadership team in vivo comprised methods of data collection. With permission of study participants, their interviews were recorded on a

portable digital audio recorder. Interviews were transcribed to documents in Microsoft Word and uploaded into NVivo software.

### Data Coding and Analysis

Using a coding scheme reflective of the definition of collective leadership derived from the work of Lynham and Chermack's (2006) RLP model, I examined informant responses in context of the three primary conceptual categories outlined in the RLP model: (1) considerations of the constituencies affected by leadership processes, (2) framework of responsibility, or the justification for leadership decisions and processes, and (3) domains of performance, or how decisions and processes of the leadership team are manifest in the particular task they have identified for study. I explored each of these arenas from the perspective within the leadership team itself, in the context of the university campus, and in the context of the larger community outside the university campus. I explored and documented emergent categories as they developed through interviews and data collection. Several themes emerged during the study, including evaluation of the council as a whole, conflict between council members and the reconciliation of competing constituent demands, and effects of a highly restrictive budget. I analyzed the data for content and themes using inductive and deductive strategies and with text search and tagging procedures available in the analytic software.

As distinguished from statistical significance, I assessed results for verisimilitude, identifying whether using the RLP framework provided additional information about leadership processes in the case institution and whether the leadership processes of the case helped to illuminate the RLP model as a framework for exploring leadership in higher education, in order "to make better sense of patterns and relationships with which (we may) already be familiar" (Birnbaum, 1992, p. 21).

## Validity and Reliability

Yin (2009) provided guidance for establishing validity and reliability for this study. To ensure validity, multiple sources of data were utilized in gathering evidence in this study. The protocol outlined for this study is specific and operational and able to be replicated; therefore, the study exhibits reliability if used again.

## Uniqueness of the Study

Informant interviews offered council members' collective interpretation of their experiences within a leadership entity, providing a variety of perspectives on a singular phenomenon and illustrating the need to utilize a shared leadership framework in exploring the data. This study differs from other studies in that it applied a newly-developed model of institutional leadership that could be applied to leadership as a team property. I used Lynham and Chermack's (2006) Responsible Leadership for Performance (RLP) model for the first time as a framework through which to examine a leadership team in higher education. This model has not been previously applied to the conceptualization of leadership in an actual organization; in particular, it has not been applied to an institution of higher education. As Lynham and Chermack observed, the preponderance of leadership theory presents "diverse and competing theoretical perspectives" (p. 84), leaving the field of leadership study fragmented rather than unified. They assert that theories to "integrate and demystify this body of knowledge and understanding" (ibid.) need to be "further developed, confirmed and refined" (ibid.). For that reason, this study has the potential to add to the body of research by exploring a theoretical framework not yet examined in relation to the phenomenon of leadership in the context of higher education and by using a case study to illuminate the model, providing an opportunity to

develop, confirm and refine the RLP model and the conceptualization of leadership in higher education.

In anticipation of informant concern over potential visibility of data outside the study, I expected some limitations to respondent candidness, particularly regarding conflict among council members or between informants and influential constituents. I designed research protocols and data collection and storage processes to protect identities of informants and will refer to the case institution with the pseudonym “Case Study University.” Limitations were balanced by accessibility to institutional archives and additional sources of information about respondents, the institution, and institutional history, allowing additional data mining to supplement informant responses.

#### Additional Study Protocol

##### *Site Visit Preparation*

Before site visits, I reviewed organizational charts, organizational mission, vision and strategic plan, and any recent documentation relevant to overall organizational leadership, such as minutes from Board of Trustees and Board of Directors Meetings, Faculty and Staff Senate Meetings, or other documentation suggested by key participants. Members of the executive leadership team were identified to secure appropriate IRB materials and participant permissions.

##### *Interview Preparation*

Interviews began with an introduction and overview of interview process and obtaining informed consent. Initial interviews were approximately one hour, with the option for follow up interviews as needed. I used a digital recording device to record interviews for verification of data collected, and no informants refused recording. Individual identities of participants are confidential, and their responses have been coded so that they will not be attributable to a

particular individual. I was most interested in gathering personal stories, perspectives and experiences. I did not focus on performance reviews or peer assessments of performance.

#### Introduction of Chapter IV

As a background for interpretation of data gathered through document review and informant interviews and observation, chapter four provides an overview of institutional history and current structure, highlighting development of its orientation to constituent needs.

## CHAPTER IV: CASE DESCRIPTION

Since it was founded as a teacher training school, administrators and academic leaders at this institution have grappled with defining its institutional identity. Constituent interests became the driving force in determining institutional scope and direction even as the sociopolitical context engendered conflict between those interests and standards of institutional prestige. Chapter four presents an overview of university history that highlights influence of external constituencies and growing complexity of university leadership components. Institutional background, structural evolution and overview of contemporary structure lay the groundwork for exploration of the Responsible Leadership for Performance theory and its application in chapter five.

### Institutional Background

#### *Historical and Social Context*

Ratification in 1870 of the 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the United States Constitution granted the right to vote for both black and white male citizens, but statutes designed to favor white voters prevented practice from keeping up with federal law. In 1899, a state Voter Literacy Law required voters to pass literacy tests in order to vote, ensuring only white middle class citizens could vote (Beeby, 2008). With that law, legislation in the home state of Case Study University effectively disenfranchised citizens who could not read and tied development of public education to legislative action and state politics (Kousser, 1980; Tokaji, 2008). In 1900, the state's governor built his political reputation on his efforts to develop the state's public education system in the interest of preparing future voters for literacy tests. At the time, however, quality of public education was significantly unequal and was divided along racial and socioeconomic lines (Beeby; Kousser; Prather, 1977, 1979). Dominant political philosophy espoused distributing

public funds according to tax revenues collected. Schools in areas with limited revenue operated on what little taxes were collected from taxpayers. The economic divide followed racial divides, with schools for black children receiving least funding (Kousser; Walters, James, & McCammon, 1997). Lawmakers had ensured that only those who could read could vote with literacy tests linking education to voting, dividing the population by race as well as literacy. Despite social and legislative action during the civil rights movement in the 1960s, disenfranchising effects of this system remained (Beeby). Creating more public schools created the need to train more teachers and thus, the need to open more colleges emphasizing teacher preparation.

Legislative mandates continued to influence formation of the state higher education system as colleges were established to prepare more teachers. As elementary and high schools emerged, post-secondary students faced disparities between institutions in higher education similar to those created in elementary and secondary schools. Teacher training schools established in some parts of the state were designated for white students only and there were no teacher training schools in other regions. Several historically black colleges had been established, some for training teachers, in response to legislative mandate creating public schools for non-white children.

The first public university founded in Case Study University's home state opened its doors in the early 1790s. For nearly a century, it was the only public higher education institution in the state. Other public colleges and universities began to open from the late 1870s through the early 1900s. These additional public institutions opened with a variety of purposes, some founded for the purpose of training teachers. In the early 1930s, three of these public institutions -- the first campus to open, a land grant college and a teacher training college -- were

consolidated under centralized oversight. One board of trustees and one president governed this three-campus system. These three campuses were located within the most populous region of the state, granting them an advantage with the legislature for strong support.

The three-campus system grew as the need for access to higher education within the state grew. By the late 1960s, legislative action incorporated three additional colleges into the system of state universities and two years later, legislators brought the remaining ten public higher education institutions, including five historically black universities, into the growing system. In 2007, a residential high school for academically gifted students was incorporated into the system, as well.

### *Institutional History*

Case Study University has struggled for recognition throughout its history. When officials from the eastern region of the state proposed a normal college for granting four-year teaching degrees, legislators from the central, more populous, part of the state fought against chartering it and opposed the bill authorizing its funding (Ferrell, 2007). A compromise bill passed, reducing the proposal for a normal college to a two-year teacher training school that could grant teacher certificates.

Established at the beginning of the Twentieth Century to train teachers, the school grew rapidly amid a national trend in which enrollment in higher education doubled through the 1920s (Geiger, 2005). As education beyond secondary school became more universally accessible, higher education curricula shifted from a focus on liberal education founded in classics, philosophy, sciences, math and languages, to a focus on vocational preparation such as teacher training. Ongoing debate about the purpose of the university continues as proponents of vocationally-based and professional programs of study defend their perspective of higher

education as responsive and constituent-driven while advocates of a liberal arts education decry what they see as resistance to higher education's role in defining intellectual competence and developing students as intellectual generalists (Altbach, Berdahl, & Gumport, 2005; Altbach, Gumport, & Johnstone, 2001; Anderson, 1993; Brubacher & Rudy, 2004; Newman, 1960; Shapiro, 2005).

Throughout the history of this institution, state political interests have influenced its identity and purpose. Federal legislation and events of national importance have also contributed to its development. The onset of World War I increased the need to educate more teachers as existing educators left their positions in schools for high-paying wartime employment. Growing numbers of high school graduates with poor academic skills revealed the need for teachers with stronger skills. As a result, education reform in 1919 established four-year diplomas as the desired standard for stricter teacher certification requirements (Ferrell, 2007) and drove demand for teachers to earn baccalaureate college degrees over two-year training school programs.

For this teacher training school, responding to reformed education standards and broader student interests supported its growth and led institutional leaders to expand the curriculum. Student preferences drove expanded curricula and opened the door to elevating institution status from school to college in 1921 with the addition to teacher certificates of two- and four-year degrees (Ferrell, 2007). By the time of its twenty-fifth anniversary, the institution had grown to 1,000 students and offered a variety of educational tracks reflecting increasing demands from students to study according to their interests (Ferrell). The expanding curriculum brought increasing diversity of faculty expertise, and the faculty began to include more trained at the doctoral level.

Local economic hardships continued to influence enrollment, shifting the student population from primarily women training to become teachers to one including both men and women seeking a variety of course offerings and degrees. To keep up with the growing student population and their interests, the college added additional academic programs, extracurricular activities, intramural sports and intercollegiate sports, including football (Ferrell, 2007). A new interest in athletic competition, both from students and prospective fans, engaged additional constituencies and increased complexity of institutional leadership as administrators addressed competing demands for academic and athletic programs. Constituents began to include sports fans both within and outside the institution as the college provided a venue for athletic competition previously unavailable in the region.

When the G.I. Bill passed in 1946, soldiers returning from service were encouraged to pursue higher education, and men continued to enroll in the college. Returning veterans from World War II expanded demand for professional and non-teaching degrees and the institutional charter was amended in 1951 to reflect institutional growth and a focus beyond teacher training (Ferrell, 2007). Thus, the demands of a changing student body drove growth in institutional structure and shifted its identity from teacher training school to college.

The state funded about half the annual operating costs and salaries for the college at that time, putting financial pressure on the legislature as the institution grew. Public colleges expanding to meet enrollment and campus building needs made state budget allocations more precious, prompting the legislature to exert more control over those allocations. The state commissioned an examination of the growth and duplication within its public higher education system and attempted to control budgets by instituting a Board of Higher Education. Colleges outside the three originally consolidated university campuses were required to go through this

board in order to obtain approval for their funding requests. This approval requirement may have been intended to systematize a potentially unwieldy process, but institutional histories suggest it was perceived by university members as a means to favor the original three colleges in the system while hindering the growth and potential competition of extra-system institutions. In 1959, the state allocated \$3.2 million to the three schools in the Consolidated University, while the other nine public universities shared a total allocation of \$1.39 million (Ferrell, 2007). A growing sense that the legislature favored the Consolidated University above non-system schools fueled advocates of this institution to pursue changing from college to university status in the hope of obtaining additional funding and prestige.

Despite the interests of influential politicians from the eastern part of the state and the efforts of the college's chancellor at that time to establish a medical school, the governing board of the Consolidated University required a legislative override in order to obtain university status for this institution (Ferrell, 2007). Expanding demands on legislative appropriations and state resources made overrides difficult and required politicians to produce compelling reasons to elevate the status from college to university and support its demand of additional state funds. Advocates of Case Study University faced resistance from those favoring the institutions within the consolidated university system, finding the stage set for what was described locally as a battle. Several additional regional colleges that had originally been founded to train teachers in the state sought to achieve university status. In an undated Position Paper on university status for Case Study University, proponents pointed to the mission of educating teachers for public schools and beyond, linking university status to the institution's capacity for improving and expanding public education in the state and training educators for elementary, middle and secondary schools as well as colleges (Retrieved from:

[http://media.lib.ecu.edu/archives/pr\\_display.cfm?id=609&CFID=105449349&CFTOKEN=19290243&jsessionid=f0306ef0a30f1efff5156619426127731276](http://media.lib.ecu.edu/archives/pr_display.cfm?id=609&CFID=105449349&CFTOKEN=19290243&jsessionid=f0306ef0a30f1efff5156619426127731276), April, 2010). In order to train college teachers, the institution would need university status to award degrees at the graduate level. Case Study University finally gained university status amid a system of colleges and universities still divided by status. Only the original consolidated University and its branches were authorized to grant doctoral degrees, and even with elevated academic status, the newly classified universities were only able to provide six-year programs and master's degrees. Despite growth in stature from school to university, Case Study University appeared to retain its secondary status within the state higher education system compared to the original campus in the consolidated University and its branch campuses. Earlier that year, a report from the State Board of Higher Education recommended that university status not be granted to Case Study University and that the college should continue to develop its master's level programs and secure sufficient funding to fulfill its program development. Nevertheless, the institution received university status, and after three quarters of a century, demonstrated considerable institutional growth and change. What began as a two-year teacher training school enrolling mostly women had achieved university status, established a presence in collegiate athletics, increased male student enrollment and extended the faculty. These significant compositional changes required correlated structural changes.

### *Structural Evolution*

Early administrators appear to have struggled with organizational structure and identity as much as contemporary university leaders do. In a letter to the Case Study University president, its treasurer outlined his recommendations for the structure of the burgeoning teacher college and sketched an organization chart illustrating them. The college president oversaw three

divisions -- Academic, Social and Business. In the Academic Division, a dean oversaw the faculty, the library and the registrar. In the Social Division, a Lady Principal was responsible for student behavior and their social comportment and activities. A business manager oversaw the treasurer, building and grounds, steward (dining and rectory) and the power plant. The business manager was also responsible for the budget, physical plant and equipment, and the laundry. Each division was “responsible to the president only” in terms of reporting structure. The organization chart outlined seven components of the institution -- buildings and grounds, physical equipment, available funds, business administrative staff, faculty, academic administrative staff and students. The diagram and description are attached in Appendix E.

By 1947, and as the college grew, its organizational structure became more complex. An organization chart created by the college president at that time is included in Appendix F. This chart included a block at the top labeled by the phrase “People of State Elect Governor Who Appoints Board of Trustees Who Appoint President (also Public Relations Officer) who Recommends,” followed on the next level by the Dean and Counselor to Men and the Business Manager and Treasurer. Inclusion of the “people of the state” and the governor, and the board of trustees and their authority to appoint the president represents these entities as influential constituents of the institution. For the first time, constituents were included on the organization chart. The president illustrated additional levels of the organization with the Dean and Counselor to Men overseeing the Director of Student Affairs and the Dean of Women. The Dormitory Counselors reported to the Dean of Women. The Business Manager oversaw the Business Office, Building and Grounds, Retail Stores and Post Office, dormitory operations, power plant, kitchen and dining halls, and the laundry. The Registrar and Director of Admissions comprised the third level on the chart. Conspicuous in this chart compared to the chart from 1926 was the

inclusion of a Policies Committee of the Faculty and Staff, which included heads of all academic departments, the college president, dean and registrar. A hand-written note above the block labeled for this committee read, “new,” suggesting this structure for shared, or contributing, governance may not have been recognized on previous organization charts. Contemporary charts do not include reference to constituents, advisory bodies or cabinets, or to the Faculty or Staff Senates.

Efforts to elevate the status of the college to that of university, increase degree programs, recruit faculty, and gain additional funding initiated changes in governance and leadership on the growing campus. The faculty became more involved in shared governance, and consequently, a larger factor in institutional leadership and oversight. The expanding institution required a more complex structure, and its leadership appeared to be evolving toward more complex and collaborative processes. Both the chart from 1947 and the chart from 1926 represent the traditional division between academic and curricular interests, concerns of student life outside the classroom, and the support and maintenance of the institution itself. As the training school evolved into a teachers’ college and then a university, it developed increasingly complex leadership components to respond to constituent interests and facilitate collaborative leadership and shared governance. These components, including the Chancellor’s Executive Council, are present in the current university structure.

#### Contemporary Institutional Structure and Profile

Institutional data as of fall, 2008 indicates institutional enrollment of 27,677 and according to the Carnegie Foundation institutional classification of 2003 – 2004, is a large four-year, primarily residential, full-time, selective doctoral/research university (Retrieved December 18, 2009, from [http://classifications.carnegiefoundation.org/lookup\\_listings/](http://classifications.carnegiefoundation.org/lookup_listings/)). Professional

degrees predominate among graduate degrees awarded by the institution. In 2007, the institution was awarded the Carnegie classification of Community Engagement Institution, which means that it utilizes community partnerships and community engagement within the curriculum and reports active community outreach involvement.

According to the institution's Faculty Manual, it "is one of sixteen constituent institutions of the multi-campus state university" governed by a system Board of Governors, "the policy-making body legally charged with the general determination, control, supervision, management, and governance of all affairs of the constituent institutions" (Part II-3, Section I paragraph 1, Faculty Senate Resolution #03-31, April, 2003, amended by Faculty Senate Resolution #03-50, November, 2003). The Board of Governors is comprised of thirty-two voting members elected by the General Assembly (Part II-3, Section I paragraph 1, Faculty Senate Resolution #03-31, April, 2003, amended by Faculty Senate Resolution #03-50, November, 2003). The most recent organizational chart available at the time of this study is dated July, 2008 and is presented in Appendix G. According to this organization chart, institutional leadership consists of the chancellor, five vice chancellors, nineteen associate vice chancellors, twelve assistant vice chancellors and an acting assistant vice chancellor. The current structure and appointment process of senior executives reinforces institutional reliance on the state legislature. Legislators are constituents from whom the executive council receives the majority of its inputs as directives, but these are often at odds with wants of constituents within the institution such as students and faculty, or with fans of university athletic teams.

A Board of Trustees for the university and an internal auditor oversee the work of the chancellor. Five vice chancellors report to the chancellor, one of whom serves as provost and oversees a combined Division of Academic and Student Affairs. The remaining vice chancellors

oversee Administration and Finance, Research and Graduate Studies, Health Sciences and University Advancement. Additional executive administrators most closely linked to institutional leadership include a director of Athletics, a senior executive director of Enrollment Management, a chief university attorney, a chief of staff, an assistant secretary to the Board of Trustees and executive director of University Communications, and a vice provost of Institutional Planning, Research and Effectiveness.

At the time of this study, the institution consisted of several primary organizational divisions, some related to the core function of the university to educate students and others related to supporting that core function. A combined Division of Academic and Student Affairs is responsible for academic concerns of undergraduate curriculum and co-curricular, student life and student services for all students. The Division of Administration and Finance oversees functions responsible for financial, personnel and institutional operations. The Division of Research and Graduate Studies is responsible for graduate curricular issues and degrees, general research and economic development and outreach. The Division of Health Sciences oversees medical, dental, nursing and allied health colleges and schools and health clinics and medical research initiatives. Finally, the Division of University Advancement is responsible for institutional fundraising and development initiatives.

The primary leadership bodies engaged in institution-wide governance are the Chancellor's Executive Council, the Faculty Senate, the Staff Senate, and the Student Government Association. Various committees and working groups comprised of members from across disciplines and divisions are convened to address projects related to work of the primary leadership bodies and entities. Since its founding, this university has grown rapidly, and during this process, changes in leadership have been frequent. Between 2000 and the time of this study,

there had been several significant changes in institutional executive leadership, all of which have affected the composition of the executive council. Four different chancellors were at the helm between 2000 and 2004. Four vice chancellors for Academic Affairs served during that same time period, and at mid-academic year 2004-2005, four of six vice chancellorships of the institution were held by interim officers (Smith & Rose, 2006). Significant leadership changes since 2003 include the vice chancellor for Health Sciences, vice provost for Student Affairs, athletic director, vice chancellor for Development and the university attorney.

At the time of this study, the Chancellor's Executive Council was composed of the five vice chancellors, the university attorney, the athletic director, an associate provost for Equity, Diversity and Community Relations, the executive director for University Communications/assistant secretary to the Board of Trustees, the associate vice chancellor of Environmental Health and Safety and Parking and Transportation, and the chancellor's executive assistant. The vice provost for Student Affairs had just been removed and a search was pending for a replacement. Following this study, the position was filled and its incumbent resumed membership on the executive council.

#### Current Institutional Objectives

The institution's current focus has broadened beyond its original purpose of training teachers to include regional service and partnerships, institutional innovation and leadership development for students and university members. The mission statement suggests an attempt by institutional leaders to meet a broad range of needs and interests of a broad range of constituents and was approved by the Board of Trustees in November, 2009. The institutional mission of Case Study University is:

To serve as a national model for public service and regional transformation by:

- Preparing our students to compete and succeed in the global economy and multicultural society,
- Distinguishing ourselves by the ability to train and prepare leaders,
- Creating a strong, sustainable future for (the eastern part of the state) through education, research, innovation, investment, and outreach,
- Saving lives, curing diseases, and positively transforming health and health care, and
- Providing cultural enrichment and powerful inspiration as we work to sustain and improve quality of life. (Retrieved from: <http://www.ecu.edu/cs-ecu/mission.cfm>, January, 2010)

In what may represent a way to distinguish the institution, university leaders have focused on leadership development and the idea that the institution itself can serve a leadership role in the region through providing health care and education, preparing students to compete internationally for jobs and graduate school admissions, and fostering community economic development. Offering the institution and its leadership body as the subject of this study on leadership in higher education may have appealed to the chancellor since leadership is an institutional strategic direction and is emphasized in the institutional mission statement. The processes by which the executive council responds to directives from system administration and state legislators, interests of students and needs of other constituents are of interest as they relate to the applicability of the RLP theory to leadership within higher education. Chapter five will examine the Chancellor's Executive Council in terms of the RLP theoretical framework,

considering the council as a leadership system within the university, exploring its inputs, processes and outputs, and examining the nature of leadership within the council.

## CHAPTER V: APPLYING RLP IN EXAMINING THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Following an overview of informant perceptions of the executive council, chapter five will use the RLP theory as a framework for examination of the Chancellor's Executive Council as a leadership system with "interacting inputs, processes, outputs and feedback" (Lynham & Chermack, 2006, p. 75). The chapter outlines the RLP theoretical framework and presents an application of its theoretical concepts -- consideration of constituencies, framework of responsibility, and domains of performance -- as they relate to the executive council. Examination of the nature of leadership within the council follows, and the chapter concludes with an introduction of emergent themes and elements of the executive council that were not addressed by the theory. The RLP model was informative in its depiction of constituent influence on organization action, its treatment of the leadership entity as a sub-system of the institution, and in providing a potential framework for exploration of collective leadership. It was limited, however, by its treatment of the organization as primarily reactive to its environment, by its failure to recognize individual council member agency and influence, and by its failure to consider organization culture as it affects leadership decisions and outputs. By focusing on organization response to its environment and leadership responsibility to constituents, RLP neglects components of the leadership system and organization that influence leadership outcomes and the effect the organization has on its environment apart from satisfying constituent demands. Implications of these strengths and weaknesses and recommendations for further research and exploration follow in chapter six.

### Overview of Informant Perceptions of the Executive Council

Charged with stewardship of institutional objectives amid conflicting constituent interests, members of the Chancellor's Executive Council represent diverse sectors of the

institution and face potential conflict within the council as well as from their external constituencies. In interviews, informants generally described their work on the council as collegial, cooperative, and focused on the institutional good, but members expressed contrasting views of conflict among themselves. Overall, informants agreed that communication among them is professional, respectful and appropriate. Whereas some reported the council experienced either adequate or limited conflict, and that this represented their ability to collaborate effectively and reach consensus, others expressed their belief that greater exploration of dissenting views would be beneficial to getting “into the weeds” on issues and more thoroughly delving in to important institutional questions to discover more meaningful answers.

Presenting mixed perceptions of conflict, some council members viewed it positively, describing it as a useful process toward understanding, collaboration and progress. Some council members acknowledged they “don’t always agree,” they “have very productive discussions” and are “able to state (their) cases” when in disagreement. In contrast, others described their perceptions that the council worked well because they did not experience conflict and they functioned as a “well-oiled machine.” A desire to be “well-oiled” and avoid friction suggests these members may actively avoid conflict. These divergent sentiments arose among others expressed by some informants that they “have not seen any high levels of conflict in the group” and that “heavy debates don’t occur very often.” Some informants reported that they felt going into more depth of discussion within the meetings would help ensure all perspectives could be heard and that conflicting views can contribute to a carefully considered plan of action. Members of the academic council, the provost, vice chancellor for Health Sciences and the vice chancellor for Research and Graduate Study, tended to view conflict within the council more similarly and more positively than executive council members not on the academic council. If the academic

council is examined as a sub-culture within the executive council, these differing views from within the council are consistent with other research on conflict as an artifact of sub-cultural diversity and fragmentation within organizational culture as cited earlier (Morgan, 2006; Pelled, 1996; Walton & Dutton, 1969).

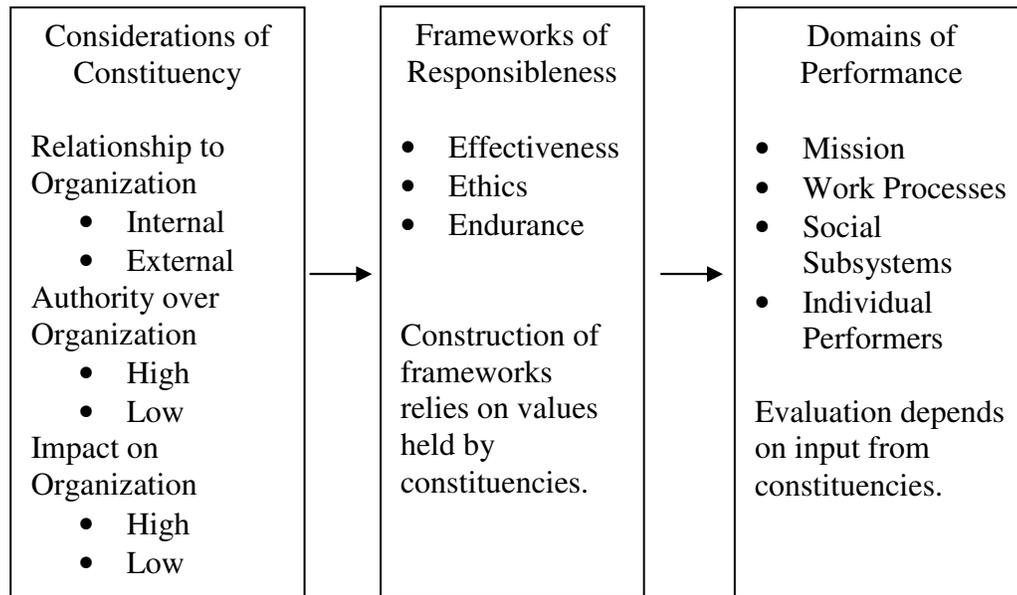
Similarly to their views of conflict, informants diverged in their perceptions of the function of the council itself, describing the executive council as both a reactive and a leading body. Despite some informants reporting they are influenced greatly by demands, interests and considerations of constituents, others saw themselves as the genesis of policy, practice and institutional strategy. Even while members recognized their role as a collaboratively leading body, there remained a sobering recognition of the bureaucratic constraints of hierarchy, politics, and the reactive nature of their roles as stewards of one university in a state system. Members of the executive council portrayed the leadership body as both conduit and generator of policy and as having to balance between action and reaction.

As what Mintzberg (1979) identifies as “Professional Bureaucracies,” universities are characterized by an “operating core” of highly trained specialists such as faculty and other professionals who deliver the core function of education and development opportunities to students. The professional bureaucracy is managed by what Mintzberg terms “professional administrators.” In order to be effective in this role, these professional administrators require autonomy and “considerable control over their own work” (Mintzberg, p. 50). In the context of Mintzberg’s Professional Bureaucracy, administrators understand themselves as agents of organizational action with individual discretion. In practice, administrators are also operating within an organization driven by constituent demands, their sense of professional autonomy and control in conflict with the need to respond to constituency demands. The practical realities of

leading at the boundary between system and system input may contribute to council member perceptions of their roles as both leaders and followers as they operate at the intersection between institution and constituencies, planning and practice and agency and reactivity.

### Overview of the Theoretical Framework

As one view of organizational structure and process, the Responsible Leadership for Performance theoretical framework depicts influence of constituent demands on leadership objectives and responses and provides a view of relationships among members of the executive council and between the council and the rest of the university and their constituencies. The RLP framework includes three principal concepts: (1) “considerations of constituency,” (2) “frameworks of responsibility,” and (3) “domains of performance” (Lynham & Chermack, 2006). By seeking and expecting service from the university, constituents influence the institution and its leaders. For the Chancellor’s Executive Council, constituents are people and entities for whom work of the university is done. “Responsibility” in RLP refers to leader behavior that can be characterized as ethical and effective and is done with consideration of others. According to Lynham and Chermack, a responsible leadership framework is one that is measured by constituent perception of the leadership system as ethical, effective and able to endure over time. While this may address concerns of constituency, this qualification of responsible remains dependent on perceptions of constituents and leaves out agency of those within the leadership system itself. The third unit, domains of performance, identifies work as system outputs and describes them as oriented to addressing constituent demands and needs. Figure 1 represents Lynham and Chermack’s model of the Responsible Leadership for Performance theoretical framework. The model identifies constituents as either internal or



*Figure 1.* The responsible leadership for performance theoretical framework.

*Note.* Rectangles denote theoretical units. They are connected by the RLP theory’s Laws of Interaction representing their sequential relationship. Categories of each unit are denoted within the unit rectangle. (Adapted from Lynham & Chermack, 2006).

external to the organization and as low or high influence and low or high authority over the leadership system.

RLP theory defines organizational leadership as an organizational sub-system with the purpose of serving needs and interests of organizational constituencies rather than as an individual or a process managed by an individual. Applied in this case, the executive council is the leadership sub-system, consisting of interacting and interdependent administrative executives functioning as an integrated unit. Each council member represents the division of which he or she is the designated executive head, and as a group, the council is charged with advising the chancellor in university leadership and management. Their purpose is to ensure an appropriate and adequate university response to constituencies. If the RLP model is applied to the executive council, the council produces outputs based on constituent input that defines council objectives. In considering the RLP theoretical framework for use in this study, it offered two useful perspectives: treatment of organizational leadership as a system rather than an individual endeavor and identification of the dependence of leadership and organization direction on constituency demands. Applying the RLP framework to an examination of the executive council as a leadership system tests viability of conceptualizing leadership in a plural and collective form and facilitates investigation of what RLP suggests about leadership at this university and in similar higher education institutions.

#### Application of RLP to the Chancellor's Executive Council

##### *Considerations of Constituency*

Considerations of constituency comprise the first concept of the theoretical framework. Fitting this concept, council members, in setting priorities, consider directives from the university board of trustees, directives from the university system Board of Governors and

system president, requests from departments and schools on campus, suggestions from students and alumni, and issues arising from events or occurrences on campus or in the community surrounding campus. RLP allows for internal organization members to be considered constituents, as well, implicating their demands and concerns as influential in some measure to the leadership team. However, unless members of the team itself are also considered to be constituents, their concerns will be missed using the theoretical framework. Several themes in the data reflect the attention council members pay to constituency concerns within this unit of the theory.

Informants described their view that the university is a source of positive social change. Within the RLP framework, constituent demands are a primary source of system input. For the executive council, those demands define how the institution serves society. Council members identified university service to include providing educational access, preparing students for jobs, expanding cultural diversity, showcasing fine arts, developing local economies, supporting research, and training health care professionals for service in rural areas. One informant described the purpose of the university as “solv(ing) societal problems,” “ameliorating conditions,” and “enhancing human capital.”

A salient example of the university relying on constituencies to provide definition of societal good emerged in examining the Case State University response to a system-wide report representing a compilation of what system constituents expect from the component universities. The report was developed through an “ongoing process” that began in February, 2007 to identify issues faced by the state that can be addressed through the public university system. Each campus in the system solicited input from “people across the state through a series of . . . Community Listening Forums,” from faculty, staff and students of each university, and through

“conversations with business, nonprofit, community, policy, and governmental leaders.” The results of these conversations were compiled into reports and given to the system Board of Governors. These reports provided the basis for generating individual institutional objectives. The Board of Governors instructed institution leaders to implement these objectives from January, 2009 through January, 2012 and to integrate them into institutional mission statements and strategic plans. Informant descriptions of university purpose fit those identified through Community Listening sessions. In terms of RLP theory, constituencies of the university define problems and conditions to be addressed by the university, and University leadership uses that constituent input to guide strategic planning.

Thus, input from constituents and the public served as the foundation for not only system-wide planning, but for individual institutional planning, as well. This process of gathering environmental input provided the impetus for the case institution to develop its own strategic plan based on the university system report. That plan was informed, to a large degree, by a focus on constituent needs, as stated by Case Study University, the institution “is committed to . . . further devoting the university to the public good.” Using constituent needs to develop strategic initiatives is a process included in RLP as shaping leadership focus and direction based on constituent inputs. The university identifies “new century opportunities” that were derived from constituent interests such as student success, community partnerships, and “the greatest needs of communities and individuals” and are to be pursued by universities in the system. The System’s General Administration has instructed constituent institutions to use these constituent needs as the basis for developing institutional plans and determining objectives. The university may generate policy about how to address constituent interests, but it does not generate the definition of public good in this case and is, therefore, reactive to constituent needs in that

regard. As diverse constituent interests define “public good,” institutional attempts to respond to public needs generate potential for conflict between constituent inputs and between constituent inputs and university objectives. As the leadership system, the executive council must filter constituent input and measure those demands against their own understanding of ethics, institutional concerns, priorities of constituents and organization members and available resources. RLP was not explicit in depicting this process so using it as a lens through which to view this case gave short shrift to an exploration of these vital processes working within the leadership system.

While conflict between constituent interests and organization objectives was evident in interviews and observation, RLP would benefit from supplementation here to fully account for the measured approach leadership team members must take in negotiating the boundary between constituent and organization needs. Tension between constituent interests and institutional objectives emerged in institutional commitment to educational accessibility. The System identified access to higher education as an important service to citizens. Therefore, it became an important institutional objective while system administrators simultaneously mandated increasing retention and graduation rates. These goals -- broad access and increased academic success rates -- appear to contradict each other, making both difficult to achieve. Particularly within constrained budget conditions, enrollment management has become a concern to institutional leadership. An Enrollment Management Task Force has been formed with the charge to develop recommendations to address access, retention and graduation rates, and to develop academic programs that meet the interests of students and the needs of the institution (Strategic Enrollment Management Task Force, 2008). This charge to the Enrollment

Management Task Force to meet student interests and institutional needs establishes additional contradictory objectives.

As more students apply for admission and are accepted in the interest of meeting objectives of broad access to education, the university must balance student population with resources to support them. Some council members expressed interests in increasing prestige and selectivity in institutional reputation, both of which are difficult amid efforts to increase educational opportunities and expand access to higher education. While increasing enrollment generates additional tuition and fee revenue and legislative appropriations, a growing student population also decreases institutional selectivity and taxes residence hall and classroom capacity, parking space, instructional resources and faculty, and campus safety. One informant noted that enrollment growth becomes a burden when institutional resources cannot keep up with the influx of students and service to them suffers. In order to limit admissions and increase selectivity, admissions standards need to be raised, upsetting students who are no longer admissible under the new standards and these students' parents. As one informant observed, some of these parents are "very powerful," making it difficult to maintain admissions decisions in those cases. Whether they are potentially large donors or are influential with legislators, constituent power carries implications that influence university leadership to make exceptions to standards set in the interest of serving students and elevating institutional reputation. As more selective admissions may support improved student graduation and retention rates and an improved institutional academic reputation, more selective admission processes challenge individual constituent expectations and compete with institutional objectives to ensure greater access to higher education. Here RLP illuminates the interests of constituents – access to education – and informants revealed the stress this places on organization resources; however,

the model offers no depiction of a process for resolution of these conflicting demands on the university.

Continued examination of constituent influence on institutional planning led to an example of internal organization members who could be considered organization constituents, as well. Faculty were involved in developing the institutional response, bringing another set of interests to bear on the process. The university's Faculty Senate convened several committees to develop recommendations for addressing needs identified by the Commission report. According to minutes from the Faculty Senate meeting of April 22, 2008, part of the Report addressed academic planning processes, curricular duplication and integration of course credits across system institutions. The Educational Policies and Planning Committee of the Faculty Senate identified tensions between faculty interests and institution objectives. In response to the Report, Case Study University was to address curricular duplication between programs. Since curriculum and program review and development are clearly identified as "a faculty responsibility" and that "any system-wide changes to the planning process must reflect that principle" (Retrieved from: <http://www.ecu.edu/cs-acad/fsonline/customcf/fsminute/fsm408.htm> on March 18, 2010); institutional planning regarding curriculum efficiencies must involve faculty. Their interests in maintaining programs may conflict with administrative objectives to streamline programs in response to system directives. RLP does offer the opportunity to identify organization members as internal constituents, allowing for consideration of their interests as leadership system inputs. To more fully explore the processes behind leadership consideration of internal and external constituents, additional theory regarding institutional culture as it influences priorities and planning may prove useful.

Within the Professional Bureaucracy (Mintzberg, 1979), professional university administrators serve key functions as filters and interpreters at institutional boundaries with constituents. As professional administrators, the executive council must weigh the interests of faculty and university system administration along with interests of external constituents as they respond to university system directives and demands from other constituents. These administrators must ensure continued support of these constituents even as they respond to conflicting directives and demands (Mintzberg). Not only is the executive council responsible for addressing the interests of constituents external to the university, but they must also use inputs of constituents within the university as part of their “frameworks of responsibility,” or their guiding norms and practices which, according to the RLP theory, must be determined by constituents to be ethical. The Educational Policies and Planning Committee was clear in that faculty involvement is required in any decision regarding curriculum. Thus, faculty input becomes one of the factors of the “framework of responsibility” needed for leadership action on curriculum planning and decision-making.

Several informants identified constituent influence on institutional leadership in describing their “responsiveness to constituent groups” and describing council efforts to “bring all the different constituencies into the equation” when making decisions. Interviews and university documents indicate that informants were clear in their understanding that the institutional response of this university to the Commission Report on constituent needs was influenced by “all the major constituencies of the university.” Informants described the response to the Report as having been informed by “feedback sessions from every single aspect of the university including the community, the faculty, the staff, the students, . . . (who) had their input and influence in (the development of the) document.” This process has, so far, followed the

process of constituent influence and input outlined by the RLP theory. As external constituent interests often exert powerful influence on the university's purpose and function, the work of the executive council, as described by the members, is "reactive," and often in competing directions. According to one informant, they "have these other issues that are pressing, due to (the university system administration) (or) due to politics."

In the admissions example, RLP depicts the interplay of constituent influence and authority. RLP identifies constituents as having high or low authority over the leadership system and as having high or low potential to influence the leadership system. Factors of influence and authority do not always occur together, nor do they necessarily predict one another. The model exposes sources of influence on university leadership and illuminates areas of constituent involvement.

In interviews, council members used the development of an institutional strategic planning process to illustrate their response to constituent influence. Development of this institution's strategic plan mirrors development of the System plan with a similar process of response to the Commission recommendations, describing how this institution will address the needs identified by the constituencies of the university system across the state. Informant discussions of their institutional and system documents describe influence and direction constituent groups exert on strategic planning. Further illustrating informant perceptions of the executive council as a reactive body, one informant noted that as members of this council, "(they) face a lot of external dynamics that (they) don't have any control over, budget issues and things like that." While the Board of Trustees and the university system president figured prominently in constituencies described by informants, the community, parents of students and

alumni also emerged as groups to whom the council is responsive, as illustrated in the admissions scenario.

### *Influence and Authority*

Some constituents have, as recognized by the RLP model, stronger influence upon the executive council than others. When constituents perceive their needs to be met, the leadership system is seen as effective. RLP would imply that in order to be seen as effective, the leadership system must be responsive to constituents. When the leadership system satisfies constituents of greatest authority or influence, it is measured as effective by those constituents and would, therefore, stand to benefit more than when satisfying constituents of little influence or authority. Constituents holding the most authority or influence over the leadership system will most likely have their interests met by the leadership system. Basic ordering of constituent interests based on constituent authority and influence appears to be the model's method for resolving conflict among constituent demands on the leadership system.

Processes outlined in the RLP model are consistent with institutional processes of responding to the Commission Report. The community conversations served as a process for collecting input from significant constituent groups for the institution and are the most prominent example of formalized feedback from constituents to the executive council. Through community conversations and the process of developing an institutional response, university leadership identified what services and outputs were found to be important to constituents. This process follows the sequence outlined by the RLP framework when constituent input determines the focus of the leadership system and defines priorities.

Viewed in terms of the RLP framework, constituent groups participating in community conversations carried varying levels of authority and influence over the leadership system. If

conflicting constituent needs are ordered simply based on influence, the most influential constituents are endowed with power to dictate needs on which the institution is most focused. RLP's "frameworks of responsibility" must account for ethical guidance such that institutional leadership attends to needs of the greater good and works to "ameliorate conditions" of constituents unable to exert influence or authority but still in need of support from the university. The response to the report concentrated primarily on support and service to the rural part of the state, as outlined by the Preface to the institutional planning document. In it, the institutional strategic plan is defined as "responsive to state needs" and focuses on student access and success, partnerships with community colleges, education and research designed to assist military families and teacher preparation and retention. "Rural prosperity," including community and economic development and technological skill development, is an additional focus, as well as providing health care and research for "the underserved," populations that "have difficulty with access, affordability, (or) illness" (Retrieved from: [http://www.ecu.edu/cs-acad/rgs/upload/ECU\\_Response.pdf](http://www.ecu.edu/cs-acad/rgs/upload/ECU_Response.pdf)). Constituents of high authority, such as legislators and the university system president, supported this focus, thus influencing institutional planning to include addressing the needs of the underserved.

#### *Responsibility – Effectiveness, Ethics and Endurance*

According to the RLP theory, while individual leadership team members may view their purpose as facilitating positive social change, limited treatment of individual members within the RLP framework diminishes understanding the power of their convictions in determining their leadership decisions. Despite potential for portraying results of leadership response to constituents, this model misses processes behind their generation. We miss seeing the capacity of individual leaders within the group to influence social change if we cannot understand the

processes by which the leadership team produces its output. Within the RLP model, leadership is “responsible” when it is guided by “moral norms agreed upon by the constituents” (Lynham & Chermack, 2006, p. 78). Using RLP must include council members themselves as constituents in order to represent their own ethical standards as influencing their leadership behavior. The executive council uses input from the Board of Governors, the chancellor and the Faculty to guide their work processes. Work processes that enable the leadership system to operate productively and professionally are identified in RLP theory as “effective leadership practices.” For members of this council, effective leadership practices include “helping each other,” working according to their belief that “every idea is important, even if it’s not the one that gets agreed on,” and “doing things together for the good of the university,” according to their interview responses.

Within the RLP framework, examples of “ethical leadership habits” include what informants described as cornerstones of their work with each other. Informants identified trust, mutual respect, effective communication and collaboration as important. One council member described a “commitment to some values that . . . have almost certainly come from the chancellor’s vision and the chancellor’s goals,” indicating that values identified by the chancellor provide guidance for working together and are important to them in setting the tone for their joint work as a leadership body. Collaboration within the executive council is encouraged among members and is led by the chancellor. RLP defines frameworks of responsibility as norms determined by constituents. As council members depend on the chancellor for these norms of working together, he functions as a constituent of the executive council according to the RLP model.

The RLP theory indicates that “frameworks of responsibility” include “enduring leadership resources” such as factors contributing to maintaining interpersonal dynamics and work processes over time. For the executive council, the chancellor guides members by providing a framework of expected leader behaviors and by acting as advisor and facilitator. In such roles, as one informant reported, the chancellor has “worked very hard” at “keeping everyone involved.” Another informant reported the chancellor helped to create “an environment that makes the best of the situation and the best of the available time.” Additionally, he provided council members with a list of Characteristics of Executive Leaders, included in Appendix D. This list serves as a guide to some expectations the chancellor has for individual members of the executive council and forms the basis for their conceptualization of leadership within the group. Guidance by the chancellor is important to the group as informants referred to that guidance in describing their understanding that all council members are “functioning under a unit with the same . . . priorities and the same characteristics, integrity, quality, all of those items he listed on the Characteristics of a Leader.” Supplementing the RLP view of interpersonal dynamics with a consideration of organization culture may enhance exploration of executive council member perspectives on collaboration and conflict and illuminate their approaches to considering, negotiating, filtering constituent demands.

Interpersonal relationships within the leadership team serve to support “enduring leadership resources” identified by the RLP framework as important to leadership effectiveness. For informants, group dynamics are an important aspect of council function and are affected by changes in group composition. Group dynamics figured in their decisions “whether to add somebody to executive council,” making it important for them to understand how a change in composition might affect the group. Members of the group see themselves as involved in

membership decisions, linking their interpersonal relationships to decisions about group composition. As members described their conception of the council, one informant described it “as a continuous unit moving together in the same direction” and as a “leading body within the university.” Another described the council as “greater than the sum of the parts.” Members conceive of the group as a unified whole involved in institutional leadership in a significant way, implicating the need for effective collaboration. Informants indicated that collaborative and purposeful work is important to council members; however, it has been several years since they have taken a planning retreat. Several informants said that they thought it would be useful to do so not only for developing an organized and strategic work plan for the year, but that it would also be beneficial to the development of a sense of teamwork and understanding of each other. These members advocated airing more dissonant views in inter-group discussion. Here the RLP model highlights group member relationships as a critical element of collaborative leadership, supporting RLP applicability to a collective conception of leadership.

### *Domains of Performance*

The third major concept in the RLP theoretical model is “domains of performance.” RLP defines organization performance as dependent upon demands and assessment by constituencies. In addition, there are “significant domains of performance” (Lynham & Chermack, 2006, p. 77) common among organizations that provide a framework for this conceptual unit. These domains include organizational mission and purpose, work processes, and individual performers. Applying RLP to what informants described as “transferring of important messages,” “articulat(ing) decisions” and “filter(ing) the ideas and decisions out through good communication,” these council communication functions are some domains of performance. While these functions are reactive, one informant described the generative function of the

executive council as the place where ideas and strategy are developed, identifying one group output as that of serving as the seat of ideas, strategy and implementation. According to executive council members, institutional operation, security, campus safety, admission and retention initiatives, strategic planning and budget management are additional performance areas determined by constituent interests.

An example of the performance domain related to institutional operations and safety emerged during my observation of the council in session. An upcoming home football game was to be televised nationally and was scheduled for 7:00 p.m. on a Thursday evening. National exposure and a good record in the conference added weight to the importance and popularity of the game, and campus leaders anticipated a great deal of fan attendance and traffic. In order for parking lots to be ready for game attendees and traffic around campus to subside, lots needed to be cleared out by 5:00 p.m. as the influx of game traffic was increasing. The council was faced with the decision to cancel late afternoon classes. Since this decision had implications for academic standards, class scheduling, student and staff safety, general traffic flow around campus, and availability of parking for football game attendees, it required consideration from multiple perspectives. Parking lots normally used for staff and student parking would be transitioning to event parking just as the highest level of traffic leaving the university would have been met with a high volume of event traffic entering the same parking lots.

The decision to cancel classes required balancing disparate needs of several constituent groups, and each council member represented interests of these groups. Informants discussed safety of campus staff and students, academic concern over maintaining class schedules, and the need to make event parking easily accessible to fans, many of whom represent important and financially influential members of the alumni and local community. Executive council members

on the Academic Council addressed consistency in class schedules and integrity of academic standards in the interest of students and faculty. Council members representing the athletic division advocated for accommodating fans in access to the game, citing benefits and publicity the televised game would provide. Competing concerns for the academic interests of students and faculty, safe accessibility to the football game and institutional publicity were compelling concerns and generated some discussion. Disagreement was handled as informants had described in interviews -- respectfully and professionally. Ultimately, safety was cited as the primary consideration for cancelling classes; however, the importance of the game was clear from a standpoint of national exposure and revenue generated for the athletic program, making it important to accommodate fans. In the meeting, executive council members leading academic or support units acknowledged the connection between fan support and success of the athletic programs and appeared to support the importance of athletics to the university overall. That the participants reached their decision without a great deal of conflict either supports their earlier claims that they work readily toward collaborative decisions without significant conflict, or indicates a mutual understanding that the benefits to the athletic program and the university from supporting the football game outweighed maintaining afternoon class schedules in this instance. A decision with more significantly disparate views and more dire consequences may engender more conflict within the council. A football game scheduled earlier in the afternoon with the possibility of cancelling more classes might have sparked greater disagreement within the council as the Academic Council members anticipated greater academic impact.

#### *Evaluation and Constituent Feedback*

Within the RLP framework, leadership is “performance based,” aiming “toward the achievement of . . . output agreed on by the constituency” (Lynham & Chermack, 2006, p. 78).

Given this definition, constituent needs appear to determine leadership action and assess effectiveness of their results. Informants described “work(ing) very hard to be data driven in terms of decision-making,” “ordering of priorities,” and being “strategic in (their) decisions,” but did not discuss how they evaluate alternatives in making decisions. For this executive council in this study, the RLP model illuminates sources of input to the council as constituent demands, but the council lacked a process by which constituent feedback contributed to their data in evaluating their output.

Despite using analytical language, members do not appear to have a way to analyze collective performance of their group. Informants use mechanistic metaphors in describing their work but do not appear to have a feedback process for the leadership system as a whole. When asked how the executive council becomes aware that expectations of the group are being met, it was difficult for respondents to identify specific formal indicators and measures, identifying the institutional mission as a yardstick against which they measure their outputs. Collectively, they have a sense that closure on an issue represents success in dealing with that issue or in making a particular decision, but their responses were inconclusive about how that success might be measured systematically. While there did not appear to be a mechanism with which to assess the council as a whole, members of the council indicated their annual individual evaluations were important elements to their own leadership development with a focus on “how they would improve upon their own leadership qualities.” Although individual evaluation appears to be formalized within institutional evaluation processes for middle and upper level administrators, evaluation appears to be primarily informal for the council as a collective body. Informants believe that to university members outside the council, they are perceived as a leadership body within the university. Nevertheless, there are no formal feedback mechanisms in place to alert

members to problems or indicate achievements. Informal feedback from outside the council seems to occur with some frequency, but not through formalized processes. According to informants, most feedback about their performance as a group is derived through meetings with the chancellor, through their own perceptions within the council, or as university members outside the council comment about issues or initiatives being handled by council members. As a leadership body, they are concerned with “trying to measure how (they’re) doing in regards to fulfilling the mission,” or “trying to make sure that (they’re) making progress on the strategic plan,” but they did not speak about specific indicators that would illustrate their accomplishment along this measure or about formalized mechanisms by which they measure their collective effectiveness. When asked what happens if expectations of the group are not met, one respondent indicated that they “redouble (their) efforts . . . and try something else and see if (they) can put together a plan that will do it better.” The council as a whole shares expectations and understands their own evaluation of their efforts, but the approach to improvement is not systematic as much as it appears to be a process of trial and error.

In further describing work processes, informants referenced the university system strategic plan as the “document which really drives how (they) function.” Consistent with the input aspect of the RLP theory, the Commission Final Report Executive Summary document outlines the system-wide planning process, which was informed by information the Commission collected from university system constituent groups. The report suggests that individual institutions will assess themselves on how they address constituent concerns, but it does not outline methods for evaluation or guidelines for determining whether institutions achieved results according to constituents. Applying RLP to examination of the executive council allowed

exploration of collective evaluation as a part of “domains of performance;” however, that exploration is not specifically facilitated by the RLP model.

#### Elements Missed by the RLP Theoretical Framework

##### *Reconciling Competing Constituent Interests*

Several organizational tensions and potential conflicts emerged in this study. While members of the institutional leadership system use machine metaphors to describe some aspects of their work such as decision-making or evaluation, they appear to conceptualize the executive council as an organic system with permeable boundaries between system elements. They understand constituent input as the source of direction for their work and they respond to influences from their environment. The RLP theory reflects some of their system paradigms, but depicts the leadership system as more mechanical than organic in its nature. Despite the blend of machine and organic metaphor within interviews with council members, the professional bureaucracy model appears applicable as a supplement to RLP as the institution embodies a professional bureaucracy within a larger state system bureaucracy. While university system directives can be categorized as constituent demands, in practice these directives are part of the bureaucratic organizational function where rules are implemented within a hierarchical structure. Executive team members are professionals in respective fields, requiring some level of autonomy to work effectively, but there is little room for interpretation of these rules from members of the institutional leadership team. Often, tensions between constituent interests are resolved either by system directives that require particular action regardless of constituency preference or by attention to preferences of influential constituents.

The RLP framework did offer the means to categorize constituents as internal or external to the leadership system and as having high or low influence and authority over the leadership

system, providing a means to depict influence of constituents on leadership responses. RLP did not outline a process by which the leadership body might reconcile these conflicting considerations. The theory does not account for conflict between individual council members and how conflicting interests among members or between constituents may affect the outcomes of the leadership system. The theoretical unit addressing values, work processes, teamwork and ethics, termed “frameworks of responsibility,” has potential to inform development of processes for reaching consensus, setting priorities and resolving conflict within the council and among constituent interests. Unless those processes are consistent with constituent and council member values, the theory may fail to identify processes for their resolution. Alternative theories addressing conflict will be discussed in chapter six.

External constituents such as the legislature, taxpayers and the System Board of Governors are institutionally important, but their interests are often at odds with each other. Internal constituents, or those in the divisions the council members represent, are also important for members to consider. Their interests are often at odds with those of external constituents, particularly in times of limited budgets. In the interest of maintaining credibility and power in the university, the executive council attends to how they are perceived by their constituents. It may be that to ensure constituents perceive executive team members as effectively addressing their interests, and thus to retain power, council members are motivated to avoid overt conflict where possible. Identifying conflict between council members, among constituent interests and using conflict to enhance council understanding of issues represent areas for further exploration.

### *Political Factors*

While the RLP model offers a way to identify distinctions between the strength of constituent influence and authority over the executive council, the model misses much subtler

political aspects of those distinctions. RLP was unable to depict organizational tensions council members experience between directives of a bureaucratic organization (Morgan, 2006) and the participatory nature of the executive team and their expectation to participate in shared governance. RLP does not illustrate alliances and coalitions among constituents and among institutional units, which Bolman and Deal (1991) have indicated are part of the organization as an “arena of continuing conflict and competition among . . . interests for scarce resources.” In a professional bureaucracy, administrators serve key functions as buffers to the professional core from external pressure while simultaneously ensuring outside support for the organization, “both morally and financially” (Mintzberg, 1979, p. 58). Consistent with that model in this study, the chancellor serves the roles of filter and interpreter between external constituents and council members. Inclusion of those roles in greater specificity within the RLP framework could more fully support applying that model to higher education.

The executive council has clear political implications, in more than one sense of the term, “political.” The chancellor provides an interpretive function in aiding team members in their understanding of those implications. “Political” in one sense implicates university reliance on and influence from the state government, elected officials and the political processes of electing state legislators, the governor and other executives. “Political” also describes the fight for shares of scarce resources, formation of coalitions of interested parties and stakeholders, and “jockeying for position among competing stakeholders” (Bolman & Deal, 2003, p. 186). For this institution, from within its organizational boundaries and outside them, stakeholders and constituents compete for service from the institution and for resources made scarce in the current limited budget. Throughout the university’s existence, political factors and processes have exerted a large measure of influence on this institution. The RLP model does not illuminate how factors of

influence and perceived influence affect leadership system responses to constituents, although depiction in RLP of distinctions between high and low influence and authority of constituents alludes to political aspects of responding to constituent demands.

As a public university, reliance on legislative support for fiscal resources and on elected officials for selection of key members of governing bodies has forged the basis of the link to one of its most influential constituent groups. The decisions and preferences of legislators and the office of the governor affect this institution as political forces influencing those decisions and preferences affect elected officials. State political and governmental process and politics of social influence are attached to members of the Board of Governors, the Board of Trustees, donors, and alumni and influence university stewardship. Even influential parents of students may sway institutional leadership decisions.

From the perspectives of interviewed informants, executive council members understand the university must be accountable to legislators, the governor, and ultimately, to taxpayers. According to the chancellor, accountability to the public trust is one hallmark of public education and to this university, in particular (personal communication, committee members, November 30, 2009). Accountability to the public may establish stronger links with external constituents who are more influential but are not of high authority over the university, such as parents or alumni, than with those of less influence but who are directly involved in authority over the university, such as legislators. In between, faculty, staff and students have limited voice in relation to issues of interest to the public. Groups that have wielded the most influence on public resources or leadership decisions have become those to whom the executive council has been responsive first. The politics of government and the politics of resource allocation and influence

have played out in this public university throughout its history and continue as the executive council attempts to recognize and address the needs of as many constituents as possible.

### *Collective Leadership*

Informants spoke of the council as “collectively leading,” as a “collective leader,” as “the primary operational leadership team for the university,” as a “continuous unit,” and as a “leading body,” even referring to themselves collectively as “we as an executive council;” however, developing a conceptualization of the phenomenon of leadership as a result of non-hierarchical and collaborating peers proved elusive. As one informant observed, “no matter what signal is given about ‘we are a collaborative whole,’ . . . in the final analysis, you still have a bureaucracy,” acknowledging the tension between the conceptualization of the executive council as a collaborative leading body and its function as one of many layers of a bureaucratic system responding to directives from above. Despite their perception of the executive team and their work as collaborative, informants describe a hierarchical and role-driven organization where hierarchy and political forces influence how council members work and interact with each other. RLP provides a window to the potential for depicting a collective locus of leadership, but in the reality of this institution, leadership without hierarchy may simply not be possible. This study failed to illuminate individual agency of leadership team members, either because they did not exercise it or because the model limits opportunities for its exploration. As the RLP model illustrates, the leadership system is influenced by constituent interests as the impetus for leadership action, rather than leadership action being generated from within the system itself. Additionally, the model does not account for hierarchical organizational structure or differentiate among individual members within the leadership system, instead, portraying the leadership system as a homogenous entity, comprised of members who are equally empowered.

### *Roles Within the Executive Council*

Within the RLP framework, the leadership system is a unit without role distinction among its members. For the executive council, informal and formal role distinctions do exist and informants reported them to be important to group function. Their roles as divisional leaders and representatives as well as their roles within the council were prominent in data gathered from interviews with informants and in observations of members in vivo. The dependency on the chancellor for guiding the process and structure of the council indicates his role as a singular leadership figure and may indicate that leadership in this case, while collaborative in practice, is not itself the result of a system of collaborative members. Leadership here consists in an individual leader supported by the collective input of council members who are working collaboratively. Members rely on the chancellor for guidance, structure and direction for their work, and he serves as intermediary between external constituencies and the executive council. Similarly, the council serves as intermediary between the university and the chancellor, facilitating and funneling interaction between external and internal constituents. In that regard, the chancellor and executive council serve as filters for each other.

Exploring the ability of RLP to depict a collective locus of leadership yielded mixed results. Collaborative leadership occurs between the chancellor and the executive council and between the executive council members as they work together. The role of the chancellor as intermediary between external constituents and the executive council is not illuminated by the RLP model but is instrumental to executive council function. That leadership itself could be defined as the result of collaborative action within a non-hierarchical structure is not readily illustrated by RLP alone in this case.

## Emergent Themes

Interviews with informants reveal several emergent themes. Conversations with study participants generated discussion of collective evaluation, conflict and budget as important in their work on the executive council. Informants discussed unity and collaboration as a leadership body and their common external influence from the budget “crisis.” The budget provided an external force affecting them similarly and influencing them to adopt a common institutional perspective as they worked with a reduction in campus-wide financial resources. The effect of guidance, influence and advice from the chancellor also emerged in interviews with and observation of informants, providing a noteworthy addition to the conceptualization of how to define constituents and collaboration. That the chancellor is at once a constituent and a leader within the executive council reveals additional challenges and opportunities for the RLP framework in portraying collective leadership and whether the concept of collective leadership could accommodate individual roles or individual leaders.

### *Conflict Among Council Members*

While not the focus of this study, elements of conflict are relevant to executive council function and process and will be important to recognize in considering the units of the RLP theoretical model as they relate to inputs, processes and performance. Evidence of interpersonal conflict was rare in observations. Some informants discussed experiencing interpersonal conflict with other council members, but that in practice, disagreement was handled one on one and was not generally aired in front of the group. In individual interviews, informants spoke of occasions of intense conversation among council members regarding more controversial decisions; however, during observation of one meeting, topics focused only on benign issues. I was limited in opportunities to observe the council in more than one meeting, so several members

participated in follow-up interviews to verify their general perceptions of interpersonal conflict within council meetings. Follow-up interviews indicated conflict occurred primarily between one or two members privately rather than among the group as a whole and that the meeting I observed was representative of the limited conflict they experience as a group.

Several authors provide perspectives on aspects of conflict as integrated within organization culture that may relate to conflict within the executive council, between constituency groups, and between divisions of the institution. Within this institution, faculty, staff, students and non-teaching professionals create unique subcultures. Conflict arises when members of these subcultures are integrated to work together or when subculture units work with other subculture units. In her review of organizational culture research, Joanne Martin (2002) observed conflict as naturally occurring in organization studies from several perspectives. Subcultures related to demographics, ethnicity, professional orientation, and length of time with the organization created subcultures within a single organization and thus, conflict when members of those subcultures interacted. Walton and Dutton (1969) have also addressed interdepartmental and inter-unit conflict as inherent in transactions between units within an organization. Pelled (1996) recognized that demographic diversity among members of a working group affected workgroup turnover and performance. Whether diversity of organizational subcultures or of members within a working unit, heterogeneous groups experience conflict as a natural outgrowth of organizational function and culture. Even as sub-cultural conflict may be a natural artifact of organization, this executive council demonstrated limited visible interpersonal conflict and appeared to address and resolve conflict away from the team as a whole. In considering the role of conflict within council and institutional culture, informants appear to hold conflicting underlying assumptions about conflict -- some felt that it should be avoided while

some embraced it. Schein's (1992) model outlining levels of culture indicates that both underlying assumptions and espoused values comprise an organizational cultural belief. In this study, statements about the value of conflict were inconsistent with the fact that there were few visible manifestations of interpersonal conflict. The inconsistencies among underlying assumptions, espoused values and cultural artifacts were not addressed by the RLP model so use of the model in this study revealed little about interpersonal conflict from the perspective of organization culture. Conflicting perspectives held by council members of constituency priorities may be attributable to diversity within the team in professional experience, individual backgrounds and affiliation with subcultures or units within the institution. That diversity of council membership is valued by both the chancellor and council members suggests their expectation that conflict is possible. From observation, it appears to be managed according to their stated values of respect and professionalism. One well-placed informant indicated that open conflict was, in fact, rare in council meetings and that disagreements arise from interpersonal differences, but they are handled outside of meetings between the disputing parties. Either organization-level interests rarely present conflict within group meetings or leadership system members have not aired those in the venue of the executive council.

While it is worth considering that reluctance to discuss feelings about conflict may stem from my membership in the organization of which they are the executive leadership entity, well-placed observers within the council did confirm my observations that informants generally do not express conflict in front of other members. Informants may avoid conflict in the interest of what they view to be diplomacy, as they reported that is of importance for them. While some report seeing no benefit to the group of additional opportunities to address conflicting interests and views, it would be useful to consider the possibility that avoiding conflict is a strategy

designed to ensure safety of some kind, if the culture of the council or of the university reinforces a negative view of risk involved in significant disagreement among administrative leaders.

### *Leadership Specificity in the Chancellor*

Related to roles within the team, the collaborative nature of the council and their leadership styles could be attributed to this particular chancellor. Most respondents attributed development of their consideration of institutional goals over individual goals to the influence of the chancellor and his guidance. The attribution to the chancellor of their effectiveness is consistent with findings that his presence may be necessary for effective function, supporting conceptualization of the chancellor as both member and key constituent of the executive council in terms of the RLP theoretical framework. Members guide their work according to the expectations they understand the chancellor to have. To accommodate the RLP model, the chancellor has to be removed as a participating member from the executive council. He becomes external to the leadership system in that he provides inputs and expectations for outputs. For the RLP theory, inputs come from outside the system and are evaluated from outside, as well, consistent with the role of the chancellor. Thus, to examine the council as free from role definition and as the seat of collective leading, the chancellor needs to be removed from the collectivity of the group and considered as one of many constituents exerting influence on the council.

### *Budget as a Common Enemy*

As the executive council members work with limited resources, the budget emerged as a key issue for the group and was woven throughout their discourse. It holds strong influence, particularly in the context of national and global recession. Informants cited budget concerns as

common external factors in influencing the majority of decisions for this group. Budget was often described as restrictive in its limitation of desired and required initiatives. Further exploration here might help to reveal the effects on the leadership system of highly restrictive budget guidelines. Given the political nature of the leadership system and of the institution, competition for scarce resources will be more contentious when scarce resources become more precious. Budget constraints in this fiscal year were clearly a factor in determination of institutional priorities and were cited when discussing the need for negotiation among council members about particular constituent interests they support.

### *Institutional Culture*

Institutional focus on interests of rural and underserved members of the regional community has strengthened its reputation as focused on service. Explicit manifestations of the culture of service and response to constituent needs are clear in the institutional mission statement and in interview responses of informants. That the chancellor is influential with individual members in their leadership style and practices suggests he may influence aspects of the organization's latent culture, such as in how conflict is resolved or addressed, perspectives on criticism, or optimism or pessimism about change. Because RLP does not illuminate experiences of individual members of the leadership system, it misses consideration of how influences from constituents, organizational experiences and interpersonal relationship between members affect participants and contribute to creating their organizational culture.

As members of the executive council respond to constituent demands, some aspects of institutional culture may be deduced by examining the theoretical units of frameworks of responsibility and domains of performance. RLP frameworks of responsibility illustrate collective values of the leadership system while domains of performance portray responses to

demands and interests of those who are identified as being served by the university. Institutional traditions involving conflict, proposing or reacting to new initiatives, and perceptions of diverse professional, experiential or cultural backgrounds comprise elements of organizational culture not captured by the RLP model. While institutional identity and culture are reflected in the institutional mission, culture includes elements of organizational character that are outside the performance-oriented scope of the RLP theory and must be deduced using other models or organization theories.

Given the focus of RLP on constituent needs and interests and the responsive nature of the leadership system within that theory, Morgan's (2006) suggestion of an "organismic" metaphor of organization may be useful to supplement conceptualization using the RLP focus on inputs, process and outputs. The organism metaphor "encourages us to see organizations as interacting processes that have to be balanced internally as well as in relation to the environment" (Morgan, p. 65). Within the university, the executive council must interact with other entities and individuals and must balance the needs of the institution with the needs of its constituencies. The subsystems of the institution have "needs that must be satisfied in a mutually acceptable way" (ibid.) in order for the system to survive and prosper. Nevertheless, both the RLP theory and organismic approaches to understanding the university have their limitations in their concreteness. The organization-as-system and organization-as-organism models both imply organizations exist as tangible entities with measurable properties but miss consideration of organizations as socially constructed and dependent on members within to define them. As RLP does not capture the experiences of the members of the leadership system or the performance system, it also does not capture the aspect of organization as social construct within which the members are "active agents" creating and operating within the organization (Morgan, p. 67).

### *Concluding the Case Study*

Chapter six will conclude this case study with an examination of the implications of the study and suggestions for further research and exploration. It will explore the informative power and limitations of the Responsible Leadership for Performance model within the context of the executive council and will examine what this study reveals about the difficulty of conceptualizing leadership as the result of collaborative action rather than as the action or attribute of an individual. The study will close with an exploration of possibilities for further research, how the specificity of leadership styles of the chancellor may influence the executive council, exploration of how the RLP model might be used to inform development of an assessment process for collaborative leadership entities, and suggestions for complementary theories applicable to the study of leadership in higher education.

## CHAPTER VI: CONCLUSION

This study sought to answer two key questions: Can leadership be conceptualized as resulting from a collective and collaborative process, and does RLP apply to higher education organizations as a theoretical model of leadership? The challenges in answering either question are great. To consider pluralistic generation of leadership requires using traditional paradigms in exploring a novel concept. Traditional models of leadership take an individualist view and guide thinking of leadership as attributable to one person, either through character, values, position or abilities. Exploring leadership as occurring through efforts of several individuals requires a model that allows for plural forms of leadership; however, pluralistic models are limited since the concept is relatively new. Examining applicability of any theoretical model to leadership in higher education requires that it strike a balance between constituent demands and their evaluation of leadership and institutional values, agency and purpose in society. The exploration of the Responsible Leadership for Performance theoretical framework (Lynham & Chermack, 2006) is the beginning of work to answer those two questions. This study examines an executive leadership team using the Responsible Leadership for Performance theory as a framework in an effort to inform understanding of leadership in higher education and of the RLP theoretical framework itself. In identifying issues and considerations missed by the theory, this study suggests areas of further exploration.

### Informative Power and Limitations of the RLP Model

The ecological orientation and systems perspective of the RLP model highlight environmental influences on the university and on its executive council. The informative power of RLP lies in its portrayal of the influential nature of organizational constituents and their effect on actions of the executive council. The model differentiates among constituents according to

their location within or outside the institution, and it provides a means to categorize constituents according to their levels of authority and influence over the leadership council. RLP depicts constituent influence and authority, illustrating constituent potential to affect leadership decisions made by the executive leadership team. The framework portrays domains of organization performance as institutional mission, work processes, social sub-systems and individual performance, representing organization output that constituent appraisal addresses. When constituents perceive the leadership system to achieve their expectations, it is considered effective within the RLP paradigm. In that regard, RLP provides a framework with which to develop a constituent-based assessment of executive council function.

RLP focuses on constituent interests as they influence institutional leadership and constituent feedback as it provides assessment of institutional leadership performance. Although illustrative in identifying how institutional environment affects leadership and performance, the Responsible Leadership for Performance framework is limited to a constituent perspective. While RLP includes individual performance of members as one output of institutional performance, the model overlooks consideration of the influence individual experiences, values and actions have in shaping collaborative action and in creating, resolving, or failing to address interpersonal or interdepartmental conflict within the council. Focus on constituent interests as inputs to the council limits RLP ability to identify how individuals within the executive leadership team affect policy development and implementation and define and prioritize constituent interests. By using constituents to define ethics, organizational members and their understanding and practice of ethical leadership are left unaccounted for. The framework's reliance on constituent input and assessment of organization function paints a rather unidirectional picture of the university and its executive council as a passive receptacle of

constituent requests. RLP neglects consideration of the agency of university members in generating and influencing organization objectives, creating and implementing policies, evaluating institution output, determining university ethics and contribution to society and categorizing constituent needs.

In categorizing institution outputs as mission, work processes, social sub-systems and individual performers, the model fails to illuminate effects the institution has on its environment. Beyond constituent feedback about how the institution addresses concerns and interests, there is no account of how the university affects constituents apart from instigating an evaluation, or how it affects communities or society at large. This unidirectional stance illuminates university responsiveness to constituents but fails to depict how the institution affects society beyond providing what constituents request. The model does not provide insight into experiences of individual council members and thus does not afford consideration of organization culture, sub-cultures or interpersonal dynamics as influences on the executive council.

#### Organizational Tensions

The RLP theoretical model is limited in its treatment of several organizational tensions. Although executive council members conceive of themselves as generators of policy, they are very much subject to policy directives from the university system, as they indicated in interviews. University system directives are generated by constituent demands and members must be responsive to these constituent interests. RLP is thus limited in its capacity to allow consideration of leadership system members and their interpretations of constituency interests, priorities of their work, conflict among council members and between council members and the chancellor, and council member views of the institution. While the model emerged from the systems perspective and includes consideration of input and output, it leaves out system member

interpretations and the influence of individuals on implementing organizational policies (Lipsky, 1993). In contrast to the agency over their work of autonomous professionals within a professional bureaucracy, RLP presents organization members as subject to the input of and evaluation by constituents.

RLP does not address role definition within the leadership system such that a singular leader in a hierarchical role emerges as necessary for the leadership system to function effectively. For this university, the role of the chancellor as a facilitator, mentor and guide is critical to fulfilling what informants perceive as the function of the executive leadership team. For this executive council, the chancellor's role facilitates understanding for members of their work. While they may participate in collective leadership, according to council members, the role of the chancellor is not optional and thus warrants consideration as an important element of their function as a collectivity.

Using RLP in examination of the executive council illustrates that the RLP framework presents a collective rather than hierarchical view of leadership, portraying the leadership entity as a system without delineating roles. Informants reported that the chancellor plays a significant role in shaping what the RLP theory describes as their "frameworks of responsibility" and indicated the necessity of his role as an interface and filter between the executive council and constituents, particularly constituents with high levels of authority such as the system president or the institution's Board of Trustees. Exploration of the RLP model in this case illustrates that leadership for this institution may be collaborative but still requires a hierarchical context within which to function. While the model itself was not intended to identify leadership as a product of collective action, it did reveal some promise as a potential aid in identifying how and where leadership sub-systems may occur within the institution. For this case, it portrays collective

aspects of the executive council even as it operates within a hierarchical, bureaucratic context. That leadership can be collaborative is supported by RLP, but collaboration here lies in the interdependent relationship between chancellor and executive council. The group operates collaboratively but retains the distinct role of the chancellor within it. For the executive council, leadership resulting from collaborative action occurs between chancellor and council, and among members of the council. While collaboration and collective effort emerge in this case study, the leadership group still relies on guidance and direction from a singular source. Incorporation of hierarchy, member roles and individual differences within the RLP model may help it better illuminate leadership within the bureaucratic structure of higher education and illustrate the effects of organization culture on organization function.

Grounded in Systems Theory, RLP provides a leadership framework that captures constituent influence on the executive council at this university. RLP distinguishes between internal and external constituents and between constituents of high and low influence and authority, providing insight into the nature of constituent influence. By identifying and categorizing inputs to the leadership system, it offers a way to visualize influence constituents have on council objectives. Unexpectedly, examining the RLP framework in relation to this executive council illuminates the vital role of the chancellor as sense-maker, filter and interpreter of inputs to the council, indicating the importance to this council of a hierarchy and role definition within the group. For constituents of high authority and influence, it may be important to have a highly positioned organizational representative with whom they interact and by whom inputs are interpreted for the council. This aspect of hierarchically defined constituent-council interaction is one of several issues warranting further exploration and illustrates the bureaucratic nature of leadership in this case.

## For Further Exploration

### *Conflict*

Processes for resolving conflicting constituent needs are not represented by the RLP theoretical framework. RLP does illuminate potential sources of conflict between constituency interests, providing data about competing external sources of input. Since it does not represent individuals within the group as sources of input, RLP does not illuminate interpersonal dynamics and conflicting interests among units or divisions. While attempting exploration of conflict in this case revealed differences among participants in their views of conflict, informants were consistent in describing their commitment to focus on the greater good of the university over their individual concerns, in their recognition that the mission of the university is to serve citizens of the region, and in their appreciation of the leadership guidance provided by the chancellor. Teamwork was identified as important to council members; however, when pressed about how conflict was handled, several informants avoided the subject by indicating significant conflict occurs rarely within the council, while others reported they felt more of it would be helpful. Consideration of informant descriptions that they experience little, not enough, or what they view to be “enough” conflict, raises the question of how council members define conflict and how they differ in their perceptions of its value, suggesting that further exploration of conflict among council members would be of interest in this case and how their perceptions of conflict relate to their understanding of their roles as divisional advocates within the group.

### *Assessment*

Executive council members are evaluated individually by the chancellor and there are informal avenues of feedback about their collective work as a group. There does not appear to be a formal feedback or evaluation process assessing effectiveness of the executive council as a

whole. Often, constituent assessment appears to be transmitted through informal conversations or comments incidental to events such as through a chance meeting on campus. Exploration of the RLP model illuminates the opportunity, and perhaps the need, to develop a formalized feedback process for the council that addresses their work as a collectivity.

Lynham and Chermack (2006), in developing the RLP theory, generated several hypotheses about effective leadership systems. According to the RLP theory, when the leadership system follows RLP principles, constituents have positive perceptions of leadership sub-system and organizational performance. If the theory is applicable to developing an evaluation tool or process, there should be a positive relationship between achievement of organizational objectives and constituent perceptions of the value of the executive council to the university. Further exploration here would be informative as was suggested by the theory's authors and presents a unique opportunity to apply the RLP framework in developing assessment of the executive council.

### Implications and Conclusion

Analytic generalization from this study (Yin, 2009) illuminates potential applicability of the RLP theoretical framework to examine some elements of leadership in higher education organizations and indicates that the RLP theoretical model is useful for exploring some aspects of leadership within the executive council at this university. However, as suggested by emergent complexity theories of leadership, comprehensive exploration of the leadership system is incomplete without consideration of institutional resources, interpersonal dynamics and organizational culture and sub-cultural influences missed by the RLP theoretical framework. The Responsible Leadership for Performance theory provides a mechanism for distinguishing between location, high or low influence and high or low authority of university and executive

council constituents and locates conflicting interests among constituents. Additionally, the model presents a framework potentially useful in developing a collective assessment process. Since the model does not include internal influences on the leadership system, it misses dimensions of organizational culture. In relying on constituent assessment as a determinant of effectiveness, the theory over-simplifies organizational factors of performance and misses elements such as effectiveness of leadership system members, regulation and policy, societal needs and ethical standards and financial constraints.

RLP does represent the structure and components of leadership as a system, illustrating the executive council as an aggregate of members working together. By considering organization culture as an “aspect of (the) collectivit(y),” Martin (2002, p. 330) suggests the need for supplemental theories addressing culture and sub-culture influences on member behavior and on the group as a whole. Several theories could supplement the RLP theoretical model in order to develop a clearer picture of cultural aspects and the political nature of this leadership system. Using Bolman and Deal’s (2003) Political Frame could illuminate resolution of conflicting constituent needs as they relate to university units and unit leaders competing for scarce resources to satisfy constituent demands, while Mintzberg’s (1979) illustration of the Professional Bureaucracy facilitates exploration of conflict arising from competing interests of professionals of differing expertise and authority.

This study illuminates several additional avenues of exploration not directly related to examining applicability of the RLP theory. First, responsiveness to constituencies is a prominent theme for the executive council as well as within the framework of the RLP theory. Further exploration comparing the degree of leadership system responsiveness to constituencies of public versus private institutions and of higher education leadership compared to other organizational

types would be of interest and might illuminate effects of organization type on institutional responsiveness to constituents.

Within the RLP framework, when constituents perceive their needs to be met, they view the leadership system as effective. Satisfying constituents may thus motivate the leadership system to respond to constituent demands and render it vulnerable to special interests. If the leadership system satisfies constituents of greatest authority or influence, it is measured as effective by those constituents and would likely stand to benefit more than when satisfying constituents of little influence or authority. Using RLP in consideration of societal needs suggests that unless concerns of the disenfranchised or those of little influence are taken up by constituencies with power or influence, their needs may not be served by the institution. A basic ordering of constituent interests based on constituent authority and influence appears to be the model's method for resolving conflict among constituent demands on the leadership system, but this method misses consideration of the critical role of the university and its leadership in defining and contributing to the greater good and addressing societal needs. The model would benefit from supplementation with a model allowing for input and agency of leadership system members themselves in contributing to determination of institutional priorities, rather than relying only on influential constituencies to direct the focus of the university.

Second, integration of role definition into leadership system function appears important for this council. Informants indicated the chancellor's role as critical to their understanding and accomplishing their work. Great Man theories of leadership may inform role definition within the leadership system. Exploration of role definition within a collective leadership group may prove to be a useful addition to the RLP framework, since roles within the executive leadership team and within the university are related to the council's interaction with constituencies.

Initially, a simple distinction between group leader and group participant roles could help to inform the processes described under the RLP theoretical concept of “frameworks of responsibility.” Additionally, since the chancellor’s involvement includes a facilitative and managerial role, it follows that his individual leadership style might influence the style of leadership taken by council members. A comparison between this executive council and executive leadership teams in similar institutions could reveal a specificity of leadership style, exploring whether leadership styles of chancellors influence the collective leadership style of the group and to what degree.

Marcus (1998) hinted at a relationship between perceptions of leadership emergence by group members and personality traits of a perceived emerging leader using the Social Relations Model. Additional exploration of this model in relation to the executive council might be useful in highlighting factors other than role or position that contribute to distinguishing a leader from the rest of a collaborative group, further examining whether individual leaders are an intractable part of collaborative groups due to group member perceptions. The Social Relations Model may also inform understanding of leadership traits and perceptions that have emerged within the executive council and how a group’s perceived leader influences the character of the group. While this case study did not reveal the executive council to be a collective locus of leadership without role distribution, it did reveal the importance of the chancellor’s role as the locus of leadership within the executive council. Further exploration of collaborative leading between an individual and a collaborative group might help to further describe influence of an individual leader on the leadership style of the group and the degree to which a group can lead collectively.

Third, conflict emerged as a prominent theme in this study, primarily due to avoidance of it within the group, both in practice and in interviews. A tightly restrictive budget during the

academic year in which this study occurred provided a common enemy against which the executive council attempted to protect divisional and university interests. Exploration of effects of a “common enemy” on interpersonal and interdepartmental conflict would be of interest and may further illuminate interpersonal dynamics of this executive council.

Pelled (1996) suggests that a multi-dimensional approach is important in examining group performance in light of conflict. Her research was consistent with other work supporting the division of conflict into task conflict and affective conflict, distinguishing task-related conflict from interpersonal, emotion-related conflict between group members. This work may be of use in further exploration of conflict within the executive council, since several council members perceive little or no conflict among them despite the potential for both affective and task-related conflict due to the conflicting interests of university constituents and divisions, particularly with limited resources.

As Martin (2002) suggests, separating organization culture from aspects of the organization as a collectivity affords deeper understanding of the importance of both structural processes and individual experience within study of an organization. The RLP model appears to capture aspects of organization as a collectivity, presenting a framework with which to examine inputs and outputs of the executive council yet leaving individual members largely unexamined beyond their membership in the council. Additional models addressing influence of group member experience on the group, group members as sources of input for the system, attitudes toward conflict, and elements of organization culture that affect perception of conflict would be useful to supplement RLP in conceptualizing and studying this leadership system and similar leadership systems in higher education organizations.

As the first effort in examining the RLP theoretical framework, this study suggests that the theory has some applicability in this case and that further research and exploration would be valuable. As the essential elements of RLP appear to have informative power for the executive council in terms of identifying sources of input, it would be reasonable to continue to explore the utility of using the RLP framework to provide insight into work of the council and to develop a feedback and assessment process for them as a collective unit. As a means to begin establishing the “general adequacy of the theoretical model” (Lynham & Chermack, 2006), the authors’ hypotheses could be applied to further investigation of the RLP model. These hypotheses suggest further research on the theory would be useful in expanding understanding about leadership in this case, developing needed assessment tools or processes for this executive council, and continuing to explore potential applicability and limitations of this model to general study of leadership in higher education. Further evaluation of the theory itself was suggested by its authors (Lynham & Chermack) and appears viable after applying the theory in this case.

Applicability of a systems-based theory to a bureaucratic organizational type is of interest to the study of higher education. There are parallels between RLP and Mintzberg’s (1979) Professional Bureaucracy model. Both RLP and the professional bureaucracy models describe leadership entities as reactive to external influence and dependant on constituents for validation of their effectiveness while providing alternative perspectives for examining environmental influences on organizational function.

Application of RLP in this study illuminates the model’s portrayal of leadership as passive in relying on constituents for direction and feedback despite executive council member perceptions of themselves as generators of policy within the university. This contrast between executive council member perception and theoretical framework portrayal of leadership

highlights the need for further examination of agency and autonomy of individuals within a leadership collectivity and within the professional bureaucracy. Dependence on constituencies for direction and evaluation may discount the agency of institutional leaders and the character of the institution, but it may also present opportunities for partnership with constituents once their needs and evaluative contributions are identified.

As institutional governance in higher education becomes more responsive to both internal and external institutional constituencies, it becomes more important to develop and identify theoretical frameworks that augment understanding of how that responsiveness is manifest and how institutions recognize and address interests of constituents. The Responsible Leadership for Performance theory provided a reasonable framework for beginning exploration of leadership within a collectivity and could be supplemented by other models addressing aspects of organizational culture and particularly by those offering a conceptualization of leadership as a dynamic and emergent event.

While intra-institutional collaboration among members and constituents is not new for higher education, universities and other organizations are increasingly engaging in “organization-level alliances” (Siegel, 2010, p. 35) to address cross-sector social problems. Siegel contends that these partnerships engender a dynamic relationship between institutional stance on the social issue with the partnership’s “mode of organizing” to address the issue. If institutional stance on social issues is collectively determined and shaped by institutional members (Dutton & Dukerich, 1991) and organizational capacity for partnership by its leaders, conceptualizing leadership as a system of institutional members becomes useful in facilitating partnerships and understanding the collective effect of the driving forces behind institutional action. In this study, informants describe their role to be that of leading an organization engaged

in “solving social problems,” indicating executive council members’ understanding of their role as agents of social change. Collaboration at the organization level will compel development of potentially complex relationships between organization leadership system members around institutional action and member conceptualizations of social issues, requiring understanding of increasingly complex leadership systems and their components.

Most leadership literature defines leadership from the individualist view, identifying individual leaders or characteristics as objects of study and individual behaviors as forms of practice, providing a basis for the development of theory about individual characteristics, skills or behaviors. Given traditional leadership paradigms, I sought to explore the possibility of expanding the individual-focused perspective to a group-focused view, attempting to breach reconsideration of leadership in a new, collectivist paradigm. This study represents an early attempt to see higher education leadership in a new way. Challenging traditional individualist paradigms of leadership to find new frameworks congruent with evolving and collaborative organizations, it represents the beginning of that effort. It is an invitation to take up the challenge of meeting new conceptualizations of organizing with new paradigms of leadership.

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## APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW GUIDE

- 1) Opening/Introductions/appreciation for participants' time
- 2) Explanation of interview process, permission to record interviews
- 3) General Leadership/Institutional Context
  - a) Describe your understanding of what leadership means here.
  - b) How do you know it when you see it?
  - c) Who are the members of the formal leadership team?
  - d) Describe how you work together.
    - i. How does the team coordinate its efforts?
    - ii. How do you know when it is working well?
    - iii. Not well?
    - iv. What happens?
    - v. How is conflict handled?
    - vi. How are agreements made?
- 4) Considerations of Constituency
  - a) To whom do you feel most accountable when participating on this team?
  - b) What do they value?
  - c) To whom are the other team members most accountable?
  - d) What do they value?
  - e) What do the other members of the team value?

5) Considerations of Responsibleness

- a) How do you determine your priorities within this team as related to the specified task?
- b) How does the team determine its priorities?
- c) How is does the team get back on track when it is off course?
- d) What directs/guides key leadership decisions/actions?
- e) How are expectations of the leadership team determined and communicated?
- f) How does the team know it is satisfying its priorities?
- g) What happens when those expectations are met well?
- h) What happens when those expectations are not met?

# APPENDIX B: IRB LETTER OF APPROVAL FOR THE USE OF HUMAN SUBJECTS



**University and Medical Center Institutional Review Board**  
East Carolina University • Brody School of Medicine  
609 Moye Boulevard • Old Health Sciences Library, Room 11-09 • Greenville, NC 27834  
Office 252-744-2914 • Fax 252-744-2284 • www.ecu.edu/irb  
Chair and Director of Biomedical IRB: L. Wiley Nifong, MD  
Chair and Director of Behavioral and Social Science IRB: Susan L. McCammon, PhD

TO: Kaudin Harris, 106 Ripley Dr., Greenville, NC 27834

FROM: UMCIRB ~~2009~~

DATE: July 2, 2009

**MAILED**

7-6-09

RE: Expedited Category Research Study

TITLE: "A Collective Locus of Leadership: Exploring Leadership in Higher Education Through a Paradigm of Collaborative Effect"

UMCIRB #09-0529

This research study has undergone review and approval using expedited review on 7.1.09. This research study is eligible for review under an expedited category because it is on collection of data from voice, video, digital, or image recordings made for research purposes. It is also a research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies. (NOTE: Some research in this category may be exempt from the HHS regulations for the protection of human subjects, 45 CFR 46.101(5)(2) and (6)(3). This listing refers only to research that is not exempt.)

The Chairperson (or designee) deems this **unfunded** study **no more than minimal risk** requiring a continuing review in **12 months**. Changes to this approved research may not be initiated without UMCIRB review except when necessary to eliminate an apparent immediate hazard to the participant. All unanticipated problems involving risks to participants and others must be promptly reported to the UMCIRB. The investigator must submit a continuing review/closure application to the UMCIRB prior to the date of study expiration. The investigator must adhere to all reporting requirements for this study.

The above referenced research study has been given approval for the period of 7.1.09 to 6.30.10. The approval includes the following items:

- Internal Processing Form
- Informed Consent (Received 6.29.09)
- COI Disclosure Form (dated 6.15.09)
- Interview Protocol
- Dissertation Proposal (dated 6.2.09)
- Letter of Support from Steve Ballard, Chancellor (dated 6.16.09)

The Chairperson (or designee) does not have a potential for conflict of interest on this study.

The UMCIRB applies 45 CFR 46, Subparts A-D, to all research reviewed by the UMCIRB regardless of the funding source. 21 CFR 50 and 21 CFR 56 are applied to all research studies under the Food and Drug Administration regulation. The UMCIRB follows applicable International Conference on Harmonisation Good Clinical Practice guidelines.

## APPENDIX C: CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH INTERVIEWS

### Consent Form

1. Subject Name: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Title of Research: A Collective Locus of Leadership: Exploring Leadership in Higher Education Through a Paradigm of Collaborative Effort
3. Research Entity: Kendra E. Harris, doctoral candidate, Education Leadership (LEED), College of Education, East Carolina University  
Email harrisk@ecu.edu 252-737-2718
4. Purpose:  
The purpose of this study is to explore leadership in higher education through a collaborative model and explore the applicability of the Responsible Leadership for Performance model (Lynham & Chermack, 2006) to leadership in higher education.
5. Procedures:  
The research will be conducted at your institution. You will be interviewed at a location of your choosing. The interview will take approximately 60 minutes and will be recorded and transcribed.
6. Possible Risks:  
All responses will be confidential and pseudonyms will be used for respondents and the institution's name. Raw data will be kept separate from any analysis and will not be attributable to any individuals.
7. Possible Benefits:  
Your institution will have access to the study results which may assist in enhancing collaborative leadership practices.
8. Confidentiality of Research Records:  
Your records will be private. Access to the tapes will be limited to the researcher, the dissertation methodologist and the transcriptionist. The tapes will be stored in a locked filing cabinet for five years at which time they will be destroyed. Interview notes will be treated in the same manner.
9. Participation is voluntary and you may stop the interviews at any time.
10. Consenting to the Research Study:  
By signing this consent form, you agree to participate in this study.

Participant (Print Name) \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX D: CHARACTERISTICS OF EXECUTIVE ADMINISTRATORS

### **Leadership Characteristics for Senior Administrators**

June 2004

#### A. Character and Integrity

- High integrity, honesty, trustworthiness
- Direct and open in communications
- Compassionate and understanding
- Understands and practices responsibility and accountability
- Self-awareness: understanding of personal strengths and weaknesses
- Continuously seeks to learn and develop

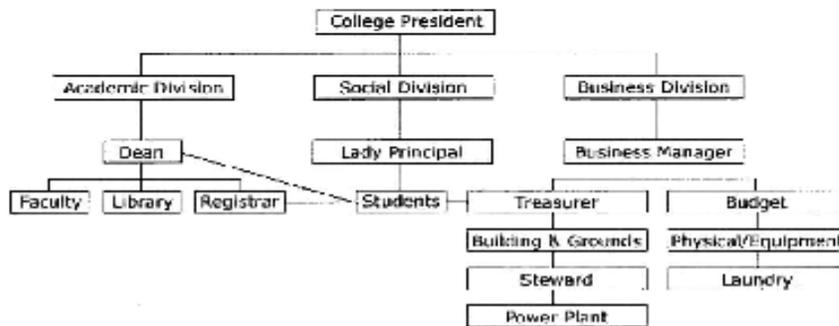
#### B. Team Behaviors

- Builds high performance teams
- Strong in building relationships and empowerment
- Uses rewards, incentives and evaluations openly and effectively
- Celebrates success and learns from failures
- Collaborative: an effective and reliable partner
- Excellent listening skills

#### C. Organizational Competencies

- Capacity to develop a vision and enroll others in the vision
- Results-oriented: capacity to focus on outcomes for the organization as a whole
- Capacity to use different leadership styles depending on context and opportunity
- Loyalty to the institution

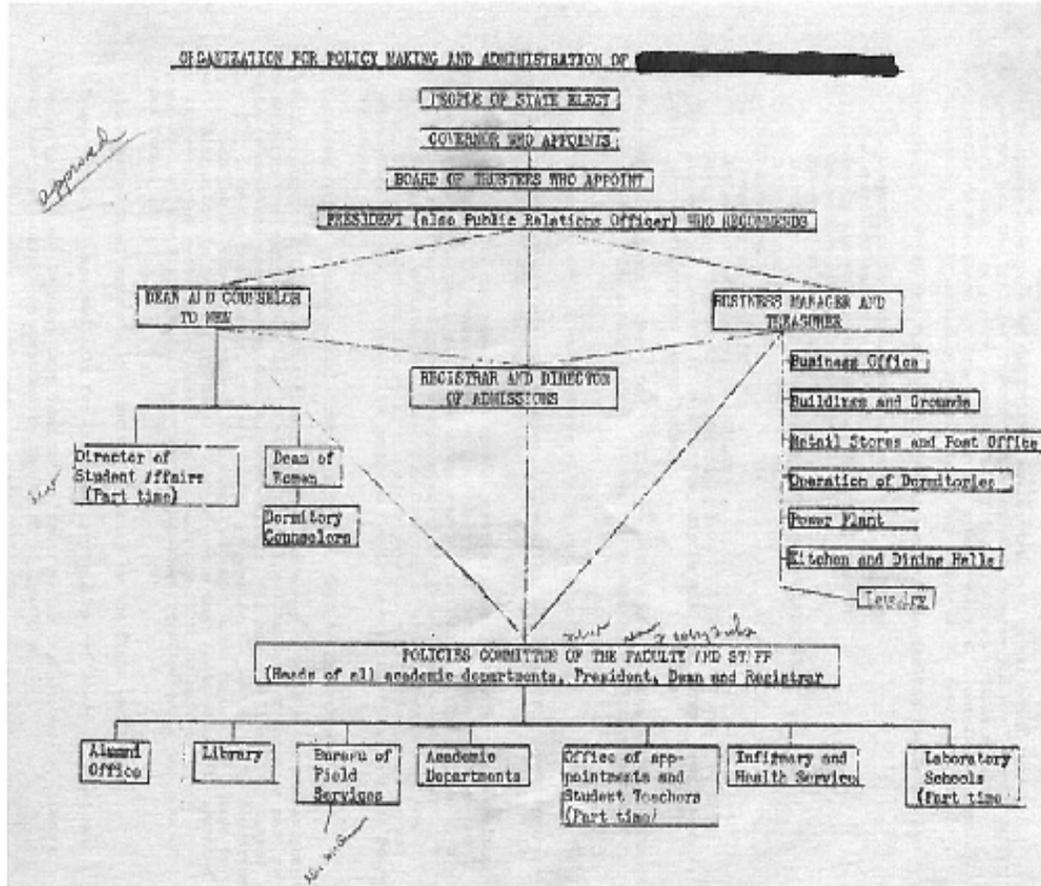
APPENDIX E: "CASE STUDY UNIVERSITY" ORGANIZATION CHART – 1926



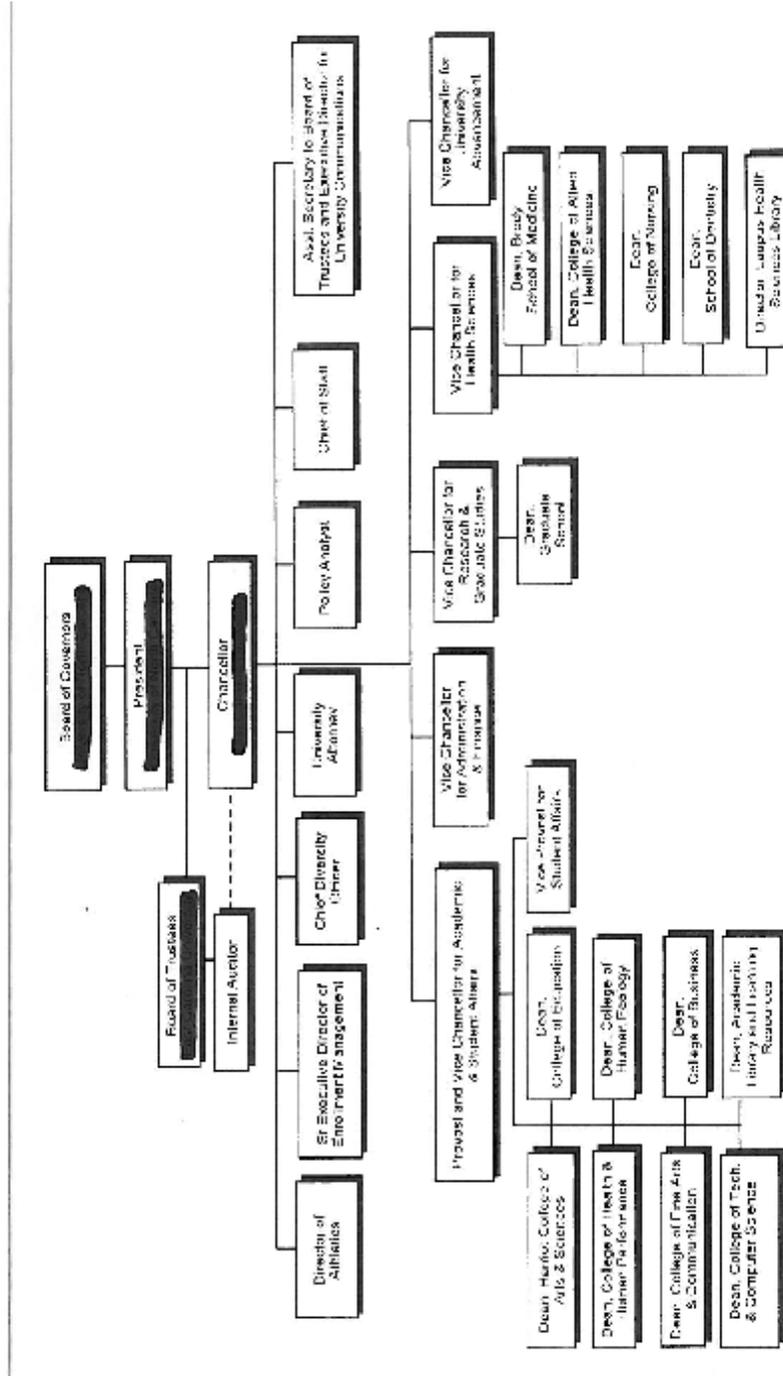
The College Institution is made up of these elements:

1. Buildings and grounds
2. Physical equipment
3. Available Funds
4. The Business administrative staff
5. The Faculty
6. Academic Adm. Staff
7. The student

APPENDIX F: "CASE STUDY UNIVERSITY" ORGANIZATION CHART - 1947



APPENDIX G: "CASE STUDY UNIVERSITY" ORGANIZATION CHART – JULY 2008



July 2008