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# Climbing the Ladder: The Experiences of Women Senior Leaders in Southern Baptist Colleges and Universities

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**CLIMBING THE LADDER: THE EXPERIENCES OF WOMEN SENIOR  
LEADERS IN SOUTHERN BAPTIST COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES**

CLIMBING THE LADDER: THE EXPERIENCES OF WOMEN SENIOR  
LEADERS IN SOUTHERN BAPTIST COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

A Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Education in Higher Education

By

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## **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this interview study was to explore the career pathways, barriers, and keys to success experienced by women senior administrators in Southern Baptist colleges and universities. The researcher conducted an interview study with both open-ended and closed survey questions. The interviews primarily involved open-ended questions without response options and were conducted via the telephone. The researcher targeted the population of 42 women senior-level administrators. From this population, 20 women participated in the study. The researcher interviewed the 20 participants and collected a vita for 16 of the 20 women in the sample. Interviews were recorded and transcribed. Member check and triangulation were used to address validity concerns. The researcher formed seven conclusions: (a) Women are underrepresented in senior leadership in SBCUs when compared to institutions nationwide. (b) The personal demographics of women senior administrators in SBCUs differ slightly from the national profile of women senior administrators. (c) Women senior administrators in SBCUs are likely to be promoted from within and to be “known” candidates to the institution. (d) Women senior administrators in SBCUs do not follow the traditional career pathway through the academic ranks. (e) Women senior administrators in SBCUs face all of the barriers that are found in the literature related to women in leadership, with some additional barriers that are specific to SBCUs. (f) Although there are many factors that contribute to the success of women leaders in SBCUs, presidents play a key role in creating institutional cultures that welcome women in leadership roles. (g) Women leaders in SBCUs are better positioned to become presidents now than at any other time; however, this breakthrough may not occur soon.

This dissertation is approved for  
Recommendation to the  
Graduate Council

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**DEDICATION**

This dissertation is dedicated to my mother, Barbara Ellen Barritt (1963-2009). From preschool to graduate school, she never failed to provide encouragement, advice, support, and love. Her sparkle and passion for life continues to inspire me each and every day.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### Statement of the Problem

Over the past few decades, more women have joined the ranks of administration in the nation's colleges and universities. From the office of provost and other cabinet-level positions, women are positioned to lead institutions as tomorrow's presidents. Women are most likely to acquire the executive office at two-year institutions, liberal arts colleges (American Council on Education, 2007; Corrigan, 2002), or all-female colleges (ACE 2007; Brown, 2000). The increase of women presidents at four-year and research institutions is slower but still positive (ACE; Corrigan; Ross & Green, 2000).

In other subsets of higher education, however, the advancement of women into administration has been less progressive. Among the institutions that are members of the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCCU), there have been few women in top leadership positions ("New Generation," 2008). In a 2002 study profiling chief academic officers (CAOs) at CCCCU institutions, researchers found that 14.3% were female, while at non-CCCCU institutions, 26.2% of CAOs were women (Cejda, Bush, & Rewey, 2002). In the CCCCU, women were much less likely to be presidents. In 2001, even though 21.1% of all presidencies nationwide were held by women, only 2.2% of CCCCU institutions had women presidents (Smith, Filkins, Schmeltekopf, & Bateman, 2005). Thus, Christian colleges appear to have lagged behind the rest of the nation's institutions in promoting women to executive positions.

Another subpopulation of Christian higher education is Southern Baptist colleges and universities (SBCUs). SBCUs are affiliated with individual state conventions rather than the national Southern Baptist Convention. Although the national convention does



not provide funding or appoint trustees to any SBCU, the national organization does maintain a “cooperative relationship” with the institutions, and each institution is associated with one of the “partnering Baptist state conventions” (Southern Baptist Convention Home, n.d., para. 1). Of the 54 member institutions, only one Southern Baptist institution currently has a woman at the helm (Blue Mountain College, n.d.). Although women also serve as provosts and vice-presidents in SBCUs, as a whole, very little data exists regarding these women.

A myriad of research has been conducted on subpopulations of women administrators throughout higher education. Fobbs (1988) published *Barriers and Biases Toward Women: Impediments to Administrative Progression* and identified institutional problems facing women such as differential reward systems and a lack of professional growth. More recently, Naholi (2008) conducted a case study of women leaders at East Tennessee State University regarding the perceived barriers influencing their ability to lead. T. M. Brown (2000) utilized survey techniques to study the career pathways and experiences of women presidents of independent colleges. Terry (2008) identified keys to success for women presidents in associate-granting institutions in Georgia. Research regarding women administrators commonly focused on their career pathways to leadership, the barriers they faced, and their keys to success.

Women administrators in the CCCU have also been the focus of many researchers. For example, Adams (1995) explored the life experiences of two senior women administrators in Christian colleges to describe the relationship between their life experiences, career pathways, and theological beliefs. Diaz-Bolet (1999) studied the impact of mentoring relationships on the success of CCCU women administrators.

Moreton (2001) profiled the career pathways of female CAOs in CCCU institutions. Tate (2009) interviewed African American women administrators in the CCCU regarding the challenges and barriers faced in their higher education careers. Santee (2006) studied the factors that contributed to the success of senior women administrators in CCCU institutions. Thus, the challenges faced by women, the career pathways of women administrators, and the keys to success for women leaders have been the focus of research within CCCU institutions.

Although many subpopulations of women in higher education administration have been the focus of research, there is a gap in the literature regarding women administrators at Southern Baptist colleges and universities. They remain a largely untargeted population for study.

#### Significance of the Study

The current president of Blue Mountain College, Dr. Bettye Rogers Coward, is the only female president of a Southern Baptist member institution (Blue Mountain College, n.d.). This singular occurrence contrasts the well-documented involvement of women at these same institutions. According to 2008 IPEDS data from 41 SBCUs, more than half of the student bodies were comprised of women, and 41% of full-time faculty positions were filled by women. The obvious lack of advancement toward the presidency by women in SBCUs is a cause for concern and needs to be examined. Unfortunately, no data can be found regarding women administrators in SBCUs. While they may be a small group, women senior leaders in SBCUs possess a wealth of knowledge and experience that may assist other women in advancing on the administrative track.

At the time of this study, no research focused on senior-level women administrators within Southern Baptist colleges and universities. This missing information is vital to women aspiring to the position of chief executive officer, because they are likely to hold positions as department chairs, deans, vice-presidents and provosts prior to achieving this goal (Lively, June 16, 2000). The intent of this study is to accumulate data regarding this untargeted population group and to provide insight into the pathways traveled by current SBCU women administrators, the barriers faced in their journeys, and the factors that significantly contributed to their successes. The findings may then assist women in future journeys toward becoming administrators in SBCUs.

#### Definition of Terms

The following definitions were specific to this study:

1. Within the context of this study, a *senior administrator* included in the targeted population holds a position that reports directly to the president. This included provosts, vice-presidents, and chief financial officers.
2. A *barrier* is “something that acts to hinder or restrict; a boundary or a limit” (Berube, et al., 1985, p. 159).
3. A *career pathway* is the “mobility process by which individuals move through careers” (Twombly, 1986, p. 3), or more specifically, the “movement from one job to another through a sequence of jobs” (Twombly, p. 4).
4. The *glass ceiling* is a set of “unstated norms and distorted expectations” that “hinder women from reaching the top of academe” (Bain & Cummings, 2000, p. 493).

5. A *mentor* is “an individual in a position of formal or informal influence who advises, counsels, encourages, teaches, and coaches another” (Madsen, 2008, p. 155).
6. *Southern Baptist colleges and universities* is a group of 54 institutions having a “cooperative relationship” with the Southern Baptist Convention. The national convention does not provide funding or elect trustees to these institutions. The institutions are generally supported by one of the state conventions. Support from the state convention may include monetary funding and election of trustees (Southern Baptist Convention Home, n.d.).

#### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this interview study was to explore the career pathways, barriers faced, and keys to success experienced by women senior administrators in Southern Baptist colleges and universities.

#### Research Questions

In order to fulfill the purpose of the study, it was necessary to formulate and answer several research questions:

1. What are the personal, educational, and professional demographics and religious affiliations of women senior administrators in Southern Baptist colleges and universities?
2. What are the career pathways that women follow to become senior administrators in SBCUs?
3. What barriers do women administrators face prior to and during their tenures as administrators in SBCUs?

4. What are the keys to success that women senior administrators in SBCUs identify from their own experiences?
5. What advice do women senior administrators in SBCUs have for future women administrators?

### Overview of Research Design

The researcher conducted an interview study with both open-ended and closed survey questions. The interviews primarily involved open-ended questions without response options and were conducted via the telephone. The researcher targeted the population of 42 women senior-level administrators. From this population, 20 women participated in the study. The researcher interviewed the 20 participants and collected a vita for 16 of the 20 women in the sample. Interviews were recorded and transcribed. Single-case analysis and cross-case analysis were used in analyzing the data and in determining emergent themes, recurring ideas, similarities, and differences. Member check and triangulation were used to address validity concerns. A detailed description of and rationale for the research design is provided in Chapter Three.

### Organization of Study

The challenges and barriers faced by women seeking to advance to senior administration, the career pathways of women administrators, and the keys to success for women leaders have been the focus of research for a variety of subpopulations of women administrators in higher education. However, there is a gap in the literature regarding these issues related to women administrators in Southern Baptist colleges and universities. Thus, the purpose of this interview study was to explore the career pathways,

barriers, and keys to success experienced by women senior administrators in Southern Baptist colleges and universities.

The following chapter presents a review of the literature related to this study. This review includes an historical overview of women faculty, senior administrators, and presidents. The impact of women administrators at four-year institutions, two-year institutions, and CCCU institutions is summarized. In addition, a review of the literature regarding barriers faced by women in higher education, the career pathways taken by women administrators, and the keys to success identified by women leaders is described in Chapter 2. Finally, a framework for understanding Christian higher education, the role of women in Christian higher education, and specific findings related to the contributions and experiences of women in CCCU institutions and SBCUs are provided.

Chapter 3 describes the methodological approach utilized by the researcher, including decisions related to sampling, data collection, and data analysis. Chapter 4 provides a detailed analysis of the interview data. Finally, Chapter 5 addresses the research questions, enumerates the conclusions drawn from the data, lists limitations and delimitations of the study, makes recommendations for improved practice, and provides suggestions for future research.

## CHAPTER TWO

### Introduction

This chapter reviews the body of literature related to a study of the career pathways, barriers, and keys to success experienced by women senior administrators in Southern Baptist colleges and universities. The chapter is divided into three parts focusing on women in higher education, women in Christian higher education, and women in Southern Baptist higher education.

Part I, a historical overview of women in higher education, provides a background of the role of women in American higher education. The literature related to demographics of women presidents and senior administrators is reviewed for leaders in four-year institutions, two-year institutions, and member institutions of the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCU). A summary of the literature related to barriers, career pathways, and keys to success is also included. The barriers faced by women administrators include types of gender discrimination, barriers related to family, and barriers related to institutional culture and societal expectations. The career pathways for women leaders focus on higher education as a whole and specific subpopulations such as Christian institutions and CCCU institutions. Finally, the keys to success were categorized into three groups: mentoring relationships, leadership development, and support networks. Overall, Part I of the literature review summarizes the literature related to historical perspectives, barriers, career pathways, and keys to success of women administrators in higher education.

The second part of the literature review, women in Christian higher education, provides a framework for understanding the philosophies and characteristics of Christian

institutions of higher education. The combined works of Gangel (1978), Schwen (1999), and Scrivner (1999) establish the pillars of the Christian university: Christian higher education cannot be separated from the identity of the church, is countercultural, and supports the integration of God's truth into all disciplines and areas of life. This theory, along with a discussion of the traditional and egalitarian views of the role of women, provides a perspective to understanding the role of women in Christian higher education. The theoretical discussion concludes with an analysis of the actual experiences of women administrators, faculty, and students in Christian institutions and in the CCCU.

Finally, Part III of the chapter focuses on women in Southern Baptist higher education. The section begins with a discussion of the historical overview of women in the Southern Baptist Convention. The relationship between the Southern Baptist Convention, the Southern Baptist state conventions, and Southern Baptist institutions is analyzed. Finally, the current role of women in Southern Baptist colleges and universities is examined using statistics from a national database.

#### Part I: Historical Overview of Women in Higher Education

The participation by women in all levels and in all types of higher education today reflects a significant change in the culture of the United States of America and specifically in the culture of higher education. During the colonial era, colleges did not accept women, and there was no record of any female graduates (Thelin, 2004). In the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, there were 14 institutions who accepted women for what was deemed college-level coursework and prepared women for practical work within society (Thelin). This education was provided in a single-sex environment and patterned after men's



colleges, but the atmosphere and academic difficulty were often less rigorous (Nidiffer, 2002).

Oberlin College introduced collegiate coeducation to the United States in 1837 (Micheletti, 2004; Thelin, 2004). The societal response to coeducation was mixed. American culture, at the time, was deeply influenced by Judeo-Christian views regarding the role of women. Some individuals, organizations, and churches thought women were less intellectually capable than men or thought that women should only be trained in practical subjects (Nidiffer & Bashaw, 2001). Eventually, the opponents to higher education for women decided to open their own institutions that were aligned with their views. Thus, by 1860, with the increase in both coeducational and all-women colleges, there were 45 institutions that offered degrees for female students (Thelin).

In the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, women's colleges and coeducational colleges experienced growth both in the number of institutions and in their size. Although women's colleges were considered successful in the social realm, women faced discrimination at both single-sex and coeducational institutions (Thelin, 2004). Examples of discriminatory practices included requiring female students to pay activity fees but not allowing them to join campus organizations, restricting women from choosing particular majors, and financially supporting fraternities and not sororities. In spite of these educational inequities, by 1910 40% of undergraduate enrollment was female students (Thelin), and 70% of these women attended coeducational institutions (Nidiffer, 2002).

During this time, women also made progress in overcoming some of the intellectual stereotypes prevalent in society. For example, from 1892 to 1902 at the

University of Chicago, 46% of the baccalaureate degrees were granted to women while 56.3% of Phi Beta Kappa keys were awarded to female students (Nidiffer, 2002).

The prevalence of female students and the formation of the land grant colleges in the late 1800's expanded the role of women into the professoriate (Eddy, 2002). Women who had previously been considered disciplinarians or matrons for female students were given more influence and filled the role of dean of women students (Nidiffer & Bashaw, 2001). According to Nidiffer and Bashaw, there "has been a direct correlation between the presence of female students and number of women in faculty or administration" (p. 6). Thus, within one century, access to higher education for women increased, women demonstrated academic success in the classroom, and the role of women expanded into the faculty and administration.

During the 20<sup>th</sup> century, women experienced both success and limitations within the sphere of higher education. For example, between the world wars, enrollment numbers for female students declined (Thelin, 2004). The societal view of educated women impacted this trend. Many considered being educated an unattractive characteristic for a wife. In addition, as institutions tried to define the purpose and traits of a woman's undergraduate experience, they lost sight of their institutional missions. Similar to the cultural pressure for women to return to their traditional, non-wartime, occupations, there was a reversion in the cultural attitude toward higher education for women. By 1950, the proportion of women enrolled decreased to 32% of all undergraduates (Thelin).

During this time, women faculty also faced barriers that reflected a problem called "the higher, the fewer" (Nidiffer, 2002, p. 14). Although representation of women

within the faculty ranks grew during the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, they were most likely to be found in institutions or positions that were considered less prestigious. In 1974, 34% of non-tenure track faculty were women compared to 45% in 2004 (White, 2005). In contrast to that growth, women experienced a decline from 24% to 20% of tenure track positions over the same time period (White). By the end of the century, 50% of community college faculty were women compared to 34% of faculty at four-year institutions (Nidiffer). VanDerLinden (2002) suggested that these statistics serve as “evidence of the marginalization of women in a sector that has low institutional status” (p. 27). Bain and Cummings (2000) concluded that, “Within any academic system, the higher the prestige of a university, the lower the proportion of professors who are women” (p. 509).

Although much progress has been made by women students and faculty to expand their influence within higher education, there is still evidence that barriers exist. To fully understand the barriers faced by women, the history of women administrators in higher education also needs to be examined.

#### *Historical Overview of Women Administrators*

The role of administrator, whether male or female, has evolved since the colonial era. By the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, female administrators were found in American colleges and universities, and these women typically served as disciplinarians or matrons for the female student body (Nidiffer & Bashaw, 2001). Eventually, these women expanded their influence and affected both the academic and material lives of female students. This mission led to a new position, often called the dean of women students. These female deans played a key role in responding to the critics of higher education for women and

served as activists in fighting for opportunities for women including campus living space, sports teams, and social venues (Nidiffer & Bashaw). Although the dean of women position had disappeared by the 1970's, the women serving in these positions made a lasting difference and paved the way for future women administrators (Nidiffer, 2001a).

Over the past 30 years, opportunities for administrators have expanded as deans, directors, and vice-presidents emerged in a variety of non-academic and academic areas. In a 1995-96 study, 25.4% of deans were women, although distribution among academic areas varied significantly (Glazer-Raymo, 1999). In the same survey, women administrators were the minority in all five categories: external affairs, student services, executive, administrative, and academic affairs. However, the proportions were “reversed in middle management: two-thirds of associate directors (61.3%) [were] women, and more than half of all registrars (56.4%) [were female]” (Glazer-Raymo, p. 154). Although women were promoted to middle levels at the same rate as men, they were promoted to senior leadership at a slower rate than their male counterparts (Eddy, 2002).

### *The Academic Pipeline*

One metaphor used to describe the promotion of women through the academic ranks is the “pipeline.” White (2005) described the concept by explaining that as the number of women undergraduates and of women graduate students increases over time, then an increasingly larger number of qualified women are eligible for advancement into the academic and administrative ranks. In 2005-2006, although women represented 57% of all undergraduates, 60% of all master's degrees, and 45% of all doctorates (Touchton, 2008), there were “blockages” in the pipeline at the full professor and senior administrative leadership levels (White), and “higher education institutions have been

slow to expand opportunities for women and minorities to enter senior leadership” (ACE, 2007, p. 11).

Although women held 45% of all senior level administrative positions (other than the presidency) across all institutional types in 2007 (King & Gomez, 2008), there were significant variations based on the type of position and the type of institution. Table 1 (King & Gomez) displays the distribution of senior leadership by gender for doctorate-granting, masters, baccalaureate, associates, and all institutional types. These figures demonstrate that women were most likely to be found in community colleges and in chief officer positions in administrative, external, and student affairs. Women were least likely to be executive vice presidents or to be a senior administrator in a research university. The number of women in senior administrative positions led the American Council on Education (ACE) to draw the following conclusion:

Women have made significant inroads into the senior leadership of American higher education, but the parity for women presidents has yet to be reached. If the proportion of women who serve as senior administrators and as full-time faculty provides a standard for equity, then women remain underrepresented as presidents. (ACE, 2007, p. 18)

The advancement of women to the pinnacle of higher education administration, the presidency, requires examination.

### *Women in the Presidency*

In 1877, the first woman was named president of an American institution of higher learning when Alice Freeman became the president of Wellesley College in Massachusetts (Eddy, 2002; C. F. Brown, 2001). A century later, in 1970, only 6% of presidencies were held by women (Eddy). Since the 1970’s, women have made inroads into the presidency, although their progress varies according to institutional type. In

Table 1

*Percentage of Senior Administrators By Gender For Each Institutional Type*

Position	Doctorate- <u>Granting</u>		Master's Institutions		Baccalaureate Institutions		Associate's <u>Institutions</u>		<u>All</u>	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Chief of Staff	38.4	61.6	55.1	44.9	36.4	63.4	46.2	53.8	45.3	54.7
Executive VP	84.0	16.0	68.4	31.6	77.8	22.2	62.1	37.9	69.0	31.0
CAO/Provost	77.0	23.0	62.4	37.6	66.3	33.8	57.0	43.0	62.0	38.0
Sr. Academic										
Affairs Officer	62.9	37.1	54.0	46.0	46.6	53.4	41.1	58.9	49.7	50.3
College Dean	80.7	19.3	71.8	28.2	65.6	34.4	54.9	45.1	64.5	35.5
Sr. Administrative										
Officer	62.2	37.8	61.3	38.7	59.2	40.8	53.0	47.0	57.1	42.9
Sr. External Affairs										
Officer	65.4	34.6	64.2	35.8	60.0	40.0	37.5	62.5	50.9	49.1
Chief Student Affairs										
Or Enrollment Management										
Officer	61.5	38.5	63.3	36.7	61.5	38.5	43.9	56.1	54.6	45.4
Chief Diversity										
Officer	43.9	56.1	43.9	56.1	54.1	45.9	41.1	58.9	44.4	55.6
<u>Total</u>	<u>66.0</u>	<u>34.0</u>	<u>61.7</u>	<u>38.3</u>	<u>58.2</u>	<u>41.8</u>	<u>47.8</u>	<u>52.2</u>	<u>55.4</u>	<u>44.6</u>

*Note.* From *On the Pathway to the Presidency* (pp. 4, 8, 10, 11, 13), by J. E. King and G. G. Gomez, Washington, DC: American Council on Education. Copyright 2008 by ACE. Adapted with permission.

1986, women held 10% of all college and university presidencies, and this proportion grew to 23% in 2006. Over the same time period, in private institutions, women presidencies increased from 14% to 19%, while in public institutions, the change was from 6% to 27%. Women presidents were most commonly found in associate-granting institutions (29%), and women were least likely to hold the chief executive position in doctorate-granting institutions (14%) (ACE, 2007). According to these data, Nidiffer's (2002) theory, "the higher, the fewer," held true.

Beyond the issue of numerical representation, differences in the profiles of male and female presidents also emerged. In 2006, 89% of male presidents were married while only 63% of their female counterparts were married (ACE, 2007). In 2002, these same figures were 93% and 48%, respectively (Eddy, 2002). Thus, although there was still a wide margin between married male and female presidents, this margin has decreased in the past few years. Female presidents often maintained household responsibilities in addition to career duties and were more likely than their male counterparts to be the primary care providers for children (Eddy). Educational achievement resulted in another variance between the profiles. A greater proportion of women presidents held a doctoral degree than male presidents (ACE). In addition, the career pathways of the presidents varied by gender. In 2006, the most common immediate prior position for male presidents was provost or chief academic officer (CAO) with 28.7%, followed by another presidency with 22.4%. Female presidents were more likely to come from provost or CAO positions (39.8%) and less likely to be former presidents (18.2%). In fact, this career path was increasingly traveled. In 1986, 25% of women presidents rose to their position through the CAO, provost, or senior administrator in academic affairs, whereas

in 2006, 53% of women moved from these areas to the presidency (ACE). Although there are differences in the profile of presidents based on gender, the differences have slowly decreased as women have increasingly gained access to senior-level administrative positions.

Over the past two centuries, women have made significant gains in higher education as students, faculty, and administrators. Historians agree that this trend is beneficial to higher education and to society as a whole. In a 1994 publication of the American Council on Education, Retha Clark King stated, “For society to make progress, we do need the talents, the energies, the sensibilities of women.... We need these operating in our public policy and guiding public life” (p. 12). Giannini (2001) agreed when she concluded that “The future has never been brighter nor more promising to accept women in leadership roles. Society is demanding a blend of diversity to reflect the complexion of the world as it really is and will become” (p. 210). The vision, style, and influence of women leaders are significant. In the following sections, the progress of women administrators at various institutional types will be examined.

#### *Women Administrators in Four-year Institutions*

Within the category of four-year institutions, a variety of types exists including private and public and bachelor’s, master’s, and doctoral-granting universities. Over the past two decades, the largest gain in the number of women administrators has been in public institutions (ACE, 2007).

*The presidency.* At baccalaureate colleges, from 1986 to 2006, the percentage of presidencies held by women quadrupled to 34.4% (ACE, 2007). Over the same time period, the percentage of women presidents at master’s institutions almost tripled, while



at doctorate-granting institutions, the proportion more than tripled. The growth at private four-year colleges over the same 20-year period was less dramatic. The percentages of female presidents in private four-year institutions rose from 16.6% to 21.1% with the greatest gain in doctorate-granting universities (ACE). Table 2 (ACE) compares the percentage of presidencies held by women based on institutional type. Private, doctoral-granting institutions were least likely to have a woman president.

T. M. Brown (2000) conducted a survey of female presidents at selected four-year independent colleges. In 1999, 10% of the presidencies at four-year independent colleges were held by women, and Brown's findings reflected the responses of 91 of the 164 female presidents. Brown discovered that the career paths of these women varied greatly and were often not the "traditional" route through the academic ranks. Less than half of the female presidents had served as a department or division chair, and one-third of the women had been a chief academic officer prior to being president. In addition, 44% of the respondents attended an all female college, 32% had to overcome personal obstacles, and 36% reported institutional hindrances as they climbed the promotional ladder. Finally, the women reported that both mentoring and professional development opportunities played a role in facilitating their advancement (T. M. Brown).

*Chief academic roles.* Chief academic officers represent an important population of potential presidential candidates. Walton and McDade (2001) conducted the first study profiling women CAOs when they surveyed female CAOs in four-year institutions in 1991. They discovered that baccalaureate liberal arts colleges boasted the largest percentage of women CAOs at 49.7%. Doctoral and research universities included the smallest percentage of women CAOs with 6.5%. The study revealed that 46% of the

Table 2

*Percentage of Presidencies Held by Women, by Institutional Type, 1986 to 2006*

Institutional Type		Percent in 1986	Percent in 2006
Public and Private	Doctorate-granting	3.8	13.8
	Master's	10.0	21.5
	Baccalaureate	16.1	23.2
	Associate's	7.9	28.8
	Special Focus	6.6	16.6
	All Institutional Types	9.5	23.0
Public	Doctorate-granting	4.3	16.2
	Master's	8.2	22.7
	Baccalaureate	8.6	34.4
	Associate's	5.8	29.1
	Special Focus	4.8	29.7
	All Institutional Types	6.0	26.6
Private	Doctorate-granting	2.9	7.6
	Master's	12.4	20.3
	Baccalaureate	16.6	21.1
	Associate's	21.8	32.6
	Special Focus	7.0	13.6
	All Institutional Types	13.9	18.7

*Note.* From *The American College President* (p. 15), Washington, DC: American Council on Education. Copyright 2007 by ACE. Reprinted with permission.

female CAOs were married, 50% had children, 96% held doctoral degrees, 49% had been tenured faculty, and 80% were in their first CAO position. When asked about moving into a presidency within the next three to five years, “63.1% [of the women CAOs] aspired to the presidency, while only 22.3% thought a presidency was a likely next move” (Walton & McDade, p. 93). The women in the study provided advice to aspiring female administrators which included taking the traditional path through the faculty ranks, seeking a mentor, capitalizing on opportunities for professional development and networking, and focusing on doing a good job rather than focusing on being a woman in the position (Walton & McDade). Lively (June 16, 2000) also reported that women were serving as provosts at four of the eight Ivy League universities and that the number of female provosts at elite privates was steadily increasing. The growing number of women provosts and CAOs in the pipeline may indicate a future increase in presidencies filled by women.

*Other administrative positions.* A 2008 study of female administrators at East Tennessee State University (ETSU) resulted in a profile that included middle managers but no vice presidents (Naholi). The women interviewed conveyed a reliance on mentors, concerns about salary discrepancies with male counterparts, and a need to effectively combine work and family. When the study was conducted, there were no female senior leaders at ETSU, but many women in the study expressed hope that a woman would soon rise to the vice presidential level. By the time the research was published, ETSU had hired a female vice president (Naholi).

*Summary of women in four-year institutions.* The progress by women into the administrative ranks of four-year institutions varies by institutional type and control. At

the baccalaureate level, women have made significant inroads, while in doctorate-granting institutions the prevalence of female senior leadership is more rare. In contrast, “community colleges have proven to be testing grounds for women rising through the ranks and who pride themselves on moving from historical followers to future leaders” (Giannini, 2001, p. 201).

#### *Women Administrators in Two-year Institutions*

Compared to other sectors of higher education, the historical background of two-year colleges in America is short. Two-year colleges originated in the United States in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. This type of institution, “often hailed as a uniquely American invention” (Thelin, 2004, p. 250), was originally referred to as a junior college. By the 1920s, junior colleges commonly offered the first two years of a liberal arts curriculum, were affordable, and were geographically accessible. After World War II, junior colleges experienced a proliferation of missions and constituencies. In 1940, the student enrollment at two-year colleges was 149,584. By 1950, this increased by 13%. From 1950 to 1960, the total enrollment more than doubled, and by 1970, 2.1 million students were enrolled at two-year institutions (Thelin). Over this time period, the mission of two-year institutions expanded, with institutions offering technical degrees, vocational programs, non-credit recreational courses, continuing education, or certification programs. These changes were directed at local constituencies and led to the term “community colleges.” By 1980, more than half of all college freshmen were enrolled in community colleges (Thelin). In the 1970s and 1980s, women became the majority of the student bodies at community colleges, and the presence of women administrators followed (VanDerLinden, 2002).

*The presidency.* In 1986, women held 8% of the community college presidencies; by 1998, this figure almost tripled to 22% (VanDerLinden, 2002). Growth continued through the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In 2001, the percentage of two-year college presidencies filled by women had increased to 28% (Ashburn, 2006) and leveled off to 29% in 2006 (ACE, 2007). The proportion of women presidents in community colleges is larger than in any other institutional type. Some experts suggested that this is due to higher education being a status organization with community colleges at the bottom of the ladder and research institutions at the top. Barriers have usually been broken at the bottom of the ladder first (Lively, September 15, 2000).

*Senior administrative positions.* Even though associate degree colleges boasted the largest proportion of women presidents, Keim and Murray (2008) claimed that women were still underrepresented in the top levels of community college administration. Their sample revealed that 44% of CAOs in community colleges were female. This is a significant increase from 21% in 1990, and a slight increase since 2002 when the percentage of female CAOs was 41%. In 1996, Glazer-Raymo (1999) determined that 24% of deans and academic vice presidents in two-year colleges were female. In addition, women held 51% of full-time community college faculty positions, and female students comprised more than half of the student population (Keim & Murray). Despite having indicators of growth within the upper administration and majorities within the faculty and student body, Keim and Murray argued the number of female administrators was not proportional.

*Summary of women in two-year institutions.* Women are more likely to be found in senior leadership in two-year colleges than in any other institutional type. Additionally,

women hold majority status in the faculty and student body of the two-year institutions. Despite these majorities, the number of women administrators is still disproportionately low, with less than one-third of community college presidencies being held by women.

Having examined the presence of women in the higher educational segments of four-year and two-year institutions, another subpopulation to consider is the women in the member institutions of the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCU).

#### *Women in CCCU Institutions*

*Background of the CCCU.* The Council for Christian Colleges and Universities began in 1976 with 38 members and is currently comprised of 109 “intentionally Christian colleges and universities” (Council for Christian Colleges and Universities, para. 1). Members of the CCCU must be committed to Christ-centered education, be regionally accredited, have a broad liberal arts approach, and have Christians serving in all full-time faculty and administrative roles. The member institutions are primarily four-year colleges and possess a “unique niche in higher education” (Council for Christian Colleges and Universities, n.d., para. 4). The mission of the CCCU is “to advance the cause of Christ-centered higher education and to help our institutions transform lives by faithfully relating scholarship and service to biblical truth” (CCCU, para. 2). The CCCU represents a subpopulation of faith-based institutions and has been the target of several studies regarding women in higher education. In addition, the CCCU initiated the Comprehensive Assessment Project (CAP) in 1994, in part, to help track gender-related issues among its member institutions (Longman, February 2002a).

*Women faculty in the CCCU.* In 2006, women comprised 60% of the student bodies of CCCU institutions (“CCCU Institute,” 2006). However, women did not

represent the majority in either the faculty or administrative ranks. Garlett (1997) conducted a study that included both surveys and interviews of CCCU faculty. She determined that women comprised 22% of the faculty of CCCU institutions in 1970 and 30% of the faculty in 1995. (Note: Although the CCCU did not formally exist in 1970, the author compiled data from each of the member institutions.) Garlett also analyzed the data based on faculty rank. Overall, the largest subpopulation of the faculty was male full professors, representing 30% of the faculty. The smallest subpopulation was female full professors, representing 5% of the total faculty. Male faculty were more likely to hold a higher rank, with 41% of men being full professors and 27% being associate professors. Meanwhile, women faculty were primarily at the middle ranks; 31% of women were associate professors and 37% were assistant professors. Women were equally likely to be full professors as they were to be instructors (Garlett). Thus, in 1995, women were underrepresented in the faculty and were more likely to hold a lower rank than their male counterparts.

Schreiner (2002) summarized the results from 1995 and 1998 faculty surveys at CCCU institutions. In 1995, even though women full professors were less numerous than male full professors, there were more women at the full and associate ranks when compared to non-CCCU institutions. By 1998, however, the proportion of full and associate women professors was almost equal to the proportion at other institutions. Overall, in 1998, 33% of the faculty in CCCU institutions were women (Schreiner). The 1998 results also revealed an increase in the proportion of female instructors when compared to other institutions; in CCCU schools, 16% of women held the instructor rank, while 10% of women were instructors at other institutions. Only 27% of female CCCU

faculty in 1998 held tenure, which is a decrease from 32% in 1995. This is significantly lower than the 46% of CCCU male faculty with tenure and lower than female faculty elsewhere (Longman, February 2002b). Thus, at the close of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the trend in the CCCU faculty ranks reflected an increase in the gap between the genders.

*Women in senior leadership in the CCCU.* In a 2002 study profiling chief academic officers at CCCU institutions, researchers determined that 85.7% of the CAOs were male and 14.3% were female (Cejda, Bush, & Rewey, 2002). At non-CCCU institutions, CAOs were 73.8% male and 26.2% female (Cejda et al.). Thus, women CAOs were less common in CCCU versus non-CCCU institutions. In 2004, Moreton and Newsom identified 18 female CAOs in the 90 member institutions of the CCCU, which was 20% of all CAO positions and an increase from the 2002 study. The authors suggested several reasons for the limited involvement of females in the administrative ranks.

This small percentage might be attributed to the lack of encouragement women receive to pursue such positions. Or, it might be attributed to the fact that many Christian women spend a great portion of their adult lives raising children and are unable to maneuver the necessary academic ladder for a top-level academic position. A further explanation might include the fact that many evangelical organizations simply do not allow women in leadership roles. (Moreton & Newsom, p. 325)

Although the reasons for the limited participation of women in senior leadership will be examined in a section that follows, the focus of this section is that women leaders have been underrepresented in the faculty and administration of CCCU institutions. As discussed in Lafreniere's (2008) study of women leaders on CCCU campuses, only 16.5% of cabinet-level positions in 2004 were held by women. Thus, the number of women senior leaders in the pipeline to the presidency was also disproportionately small.



*Women presidents in the CCCU.* When Lumsden, Plotts, Wells, and Newsom (2000) published their profile of CCCU presidents, there were no female presidents in CCCU member institutions. The authors also posited that because the institutions reflected extensions of the church, the denominational view of the limited role of women in leadership might have been carried from the church to CCCU member schools.

Smith, Filkins, Schmeltekopf, and Bateman (2004) developed a profile of CCCU presidents and compared the findings to the national profile created by ACE. The researchers analyzed the 2001 data and discovered that 21.1% of all presidencies were held by women, compared to 2.2% of presidencies in the CCCU. While the national data indicated an “increasing proportion of college presidents” who were women, this trend was not evident in the CCCU (Smith et al.). According to the CCCU, the proportion of female presidents rose to 3.3% in 2008; that is, women held four presidencies in the 105 member institutions (“New Generation,” 2008). Although the increase was encouraging to women in CCCU institutions, the CCCU significantly lagged behind the 2006 finding that 23% of presidencies nationwide were held by women (ACE, 2007).

#### *Summary of Historical Overview of Women Administrators*

Since the establishment of the colonial colleges, the role of women in higher education has been consistently increasing. The gender inequities within the faculty and administrative ranks vary according to the type of institution. Community colleges have incorporated women into all levels with the most success, while faith-based institutions lag behind. Although much progress has been made, it is important to continue pursuing gender equity and to provide avenues for advancement for women in higher education.

According to Stephenson (2001), diversity is essential for providing an effective, quality educational experience.

Although the importance of promoting women is indisputable in terms of institutional ethics and the precepts of equal opportunity, it is also critical to providing the education and services appropriate to the needs of students and the workplace in the next decades. I am a firm believer in the productivity of diversity and the wisdom of inclusive leadership based on practice as well as principle. (p. 193)

Identifying the barriers to advancement, understanding the career paths taken by past women administrators, and identifying keys to success are essential in promoting women to senior leadership in higher education institutions.

#### Overview of Barriers Faced by Women Administrators in Higher Education

The identification of barriers to advancement for academic and administrative leaders is necessary for achieving diversity. Institutions must “unveil the nature of power, resistance, and domination” because the “suppression of diversity can be easily masked” (Evans & Chun, 2007, p. 26). In addition, the existence of barriers for women in higher education “create[s] patterns of exclusion, marginalization, and voicelessness” (Evans & Chun, p. 103). An exploration of barriers to diversity creates a clearer understanding of the past, present, and future progress of women.

Bain and Cummings (2000) described three approaches to studying barriers. The first is to identify the societal factors that contribute to women’s advancement, including trends in national culture, economy, and polity. The second approach is to identify professional-organizational barriers. Within higher education, these barriers may exist in hiring and promotion practices and may vary between different academic disciplines. The third approach, which may compete or contrast with the previous two views, is the institutional variation approach. This view compares variables based on institutional

models such as Latin, English, American, and East Asian, and is most applicable in comparing barriers faced internationally (Bain & Cummings). Because this study focused only on American higher education, societal and organizational barriers were considered.

As the role of women in higher education has progressed and evolved, the societal and organizational barriers faced by women have also changed. In a 1988 article, Fobbs summarized the hindrances to advancement for women. These barriers included: discrimination in pay, promotion, and reward systems; a lack of support for professional growth; and a lack of female role models for leadership. Fobbs' findings also preceded and supported "the higher, the fewer" theory previously discussed by Nidiffer (2002). Regardless of the passage of time, discrimination within the academy persisted and more recent studies have analyzed and described barriers with more detail and depth. A review of current literature revealed three categories of barriers: gender discrimination, barriers related to family, and barriers related to institutional culture and societal expectations.

#### *Gender Discrimination*

Gender discrimination is the "unequal and harmful treatment of people because of their sex" (Benokraitis, 1998, p. 4), and acts of discrimination can be obvious or subtle. Forms of gender discrimination in higher education include salary discrepancies, biased perceptions, and tenure and promotion discrimination.

#### *Salary Discrimination*

Gender discrimination in the form of salary discrimination has been found within higher education administration. Glazer-Raymo (1999) discovered pay gaps for assistants to the CEO, assistants to the president, and executive vice presidents. The median salary for CEO assistants in doctoral institutions was 23.8% higher for men than for women.

The pay gap for assistants to the president varied from 27% to 53.7% higher for men than for women based on institutional type. Male executive vice-presidents earned, on average, 33% more than their female counterparts. When the proportion of women in a particular administrative category increased, the average salary for the category decreased (Glazer-Raymo).

Chliwniak (1997) also discussed wage disparities and argued that an increase in the proportion of women in a particular role led to a decrease in the prestige associated with the role. This decrease in prestige led to a decrease in income for both genders. Finally, when controlled for other variables, approximately 32% of wage disparity was attributed to gender (Chliwniak). Thus, salary discrimination has been one institutional barrier to advancement for women in higher education.

### *Biased Perceptions*

Quina, Cotter, and Romenesko (1998) categorized the barriers to advancement in academia and described concerns related to biased perceptions, thus supporting Chliwniak's (1997) connection between women, prestige, and income. Biased perceptions include the devaluation of competence; that is, "work that is performed by or attributed to a woman is devalued when compared to the same work performed by or attributed to a man" (Quina, et al., p. 226). Devaluation of competence can lead to poorer evaluations, lowered expectations, and support of the idea that some areas are simply "women's work." Thus, positions in traditionally women's areas such as nursing and education are not compensated as highly as areas that are traditionally male like business and engineering (Quina, et al.). Another biased perception is the stereotype that "Women are judged on their accomplishments, men on their potential" (Williams, 2005, p. 94).

Whereas a male applicant may be granted an interview based on signs of promise, a comparable female applicant may be denied an interview due to lack of qualifications. Biased perceptions are a more subtle type of gender discrimination commonly found in both society as a whole and in the institution.

#### *Tenure and Promotion Discrimination*

Gender discrimination has also been identified in the tenure and promotion process (Cooper, 2002). Discrepancies were found in the access to tenure-track positions and in the outcome of tenure and promotion decisions. These differences in tenure and promotion decisions may have had a significant impact on women's abilities to advance since the traditional career path to the presidency has been through the faculty ranks (Cooper). Women administrators also tended to be given fewer opportunities to make mistakes. Whereas men administrators made mistakes and were still rehired by other institutions, women administrators were not typically given repeated opportunities (Lively, June 16, 2000; Manzo, 2001). Williams (2005) described the problem when he stated, "Women's mistakes are remembered long after men's are forgotten" (p. 94). As a result, women have often not pursued advancement until they felt prepared, decreasing their chances of failure and possibly limiting opportunities for advancement (Bornstein, 2007). Other gender-based institutional practices influencing tenure and promotion have led to discrimination and are discussed in the following section.

#### *Other Examples of Gender Discrimination*

In addition to pay discrimination, biased perceptions, and discrimination in the promotion and tenure process, less obvious examples of gender discrimination existed and were more subtle. White (2005) summarized the findings of the status of women in

the MIT School of Science. The study concluded that women faculty in the School of Science received fewer teaching assignments, awards, and recognitions, were not included in the most influential committees, had an inequitable share of the physical space, and had salaries which included less of the monies collected through individual research and grants (White). These inequities influenced salary, promotion, tenure, and the perceptions of peers.

Thus, gender discrimination can occur in a variety of ways. In addition to barriers caused by these forms of discrimination, other gender-related issues affect the opportunities for women advancing in academia. These include issues related to family formation and the societal role of women in the home.

#### *Barriers Related to Family*

According to White (2005), “the careers of women faculty are impeded by institutional structures and family pressures” (p. 22). In T. M. Brown’s (2000) survey of female presidents of four-year independent colleges, 31.8% of the respondents encountered personal hindrances in their career paths, and these hindrances were most commonly geographical limitations and maternal responsibilities.

#### *Geographic Constraints*

Geographic constraints prevented women faculty and administrators from accepting positions that could advance their careers (Eagly & Carli, 2007; Lepkowski, 2009; White, 2005). Wolf-Wendel, Twombly, and Rice (2000) studied the issue of “dual-career couples” in higher education.

Academic couples face an extremely difficult task, namely finding two positions that will permit both partners to live in the same geographic region, to address their professional goals, and to meet the day-to-day needs of running a household which, in many cases, includes caring for children or elderly parents. (p. 292)

Often the husband's career guides geographic decisions for the family. Even though working is a more socially accepted choice for women today than in past years, marriage is still the primary sphere in which women are judged (Chliwniak, 1997). Thus, women, more than men, are often pressured to put work over family in order to succeed. Although institutional policy may also create barriers for women balancing career and family responsibilities, some institutions have made an effort to smooth transitions for dual-career couples.

Little research examining institutional policies and dual-career couples exists. One exploratory study utilized a survey of chief academic officers of the 617 member institutions in the Association of American Colleges and Universities (Wolf-Wendel, Twombly, and Rice, 2000). The survey included forced-response and open-ended questions about the institutional policies concerning dual-career couples. The survey had a return rate of 59%. The researchers discovered that 80% of respondents believed that accommodating spouses was an important issue in higher education. Of the 24% of the participating institutions that had dual-career policies, most were research institutions. The various spouse-friendly practices found in the institutions included: helping the trailing spouse find work in the community, hiring the spouse in a part-time or adjunct role, creating a shared position for both spouses, providing an administrative position within the institution, and the rare option of creating a tenure-track position. None of the institutions with policies had evaluated the effectiveness of their approaches. Barriers to creating dual-career policies were also examined. These barriers included limited employment opportunities, concerns about the quality of the trailing spouse, potential legal issues, and preserving departmental autonomy. In summary, this study indicated

that policies for dual-career academics are not common, and institutions face a variety of barriers in forming dual-career policies (Wolf-Wendel et al.).

Overall, whether the spouse of a woman administrator has his profession inside or outside of higher education, there may be geographic constraints for the family. Often, the constraints favor the professional goals of the husband. In the case of dual-career couples in higher education, they are unlikely to find an institution with practices that favor both the husband and the wife.

#### *The Maternal Wall and Caregiver Bias*

Researchers have used different terminology to describe the advancement barrier that mothers may face in higher education. Williams (2005) discussed the “maternal wall” and its relationship to the glass ceiling in academia. According to Williams, “women who have children soon after receiving their Ph.D. are much less likely to achieve tenure than men who have children at the same point in their career” (p. 91). This leads to many women with earned doctorates never reaching tenure and thus not being able to climb the faculty or administrative ladders. Other researchers described “caregiver bias” which is an institutional culture that essentially penalizes faculty who try to balance family with work responsibilities (Colbeck & Drago, 2005; Spalter-Rother & Erskine, 2005). Regardless of the language used, evidence indicates that academic reputations and careers may be damaged for caregivers.

To advance in higher education, faculty must devote their attention to teaching, research, and service over a sustained time frame (Bain & Cummings, 2000). This sustained devotion to work may be hindered by caregiver responsibilities. The issue is not only whether women faculty have children; the more significant factor is the point of the



career at which women have children (White, 2005; Wolf-Wendel & Ward, 2006). Of course the duties of the parent extend well beyond birth, and additional evidence suggested that childrearing responsibilities fall disproportionately on women (Quina, et al., 1998; White, 2005; ACE, 2007).

In the 2006 profile of institutional presidents, 63% of women presidents were married and 68% had children; however, 89% of the male presidents were married and 91% had children (ACE, 2007). Even though the male presidents were much more likely to be parents, only 5% of them altered their careers to care for family, compared to 15% of the female presidents (ACE).

Women with maternal responsibilities may also find it difficult to participate on committees, to serve in the community, to conduct and publish research, or to present at conferences (Chliwniak, 1997; Eagly & Carli, 2007). These limitations for women may influence tenure and promotion decisions if institutional policies do not consider caregiver needs. Even though policies may be family-friendly, the institutional culture may be perceived as biased, and faculty may not utilize policies due to fear that it may damage their careers (Spalter-Roth & Erskine, 2005).

Chliwniak (1997) summarized the problem in *Higher Education Leadership: Analyzing the Gender Gap*.

Historically, women have been expected to prioritize their goals based upon a primary role as nurturer in the family. Yet, a successful professional career requires timing based on the male pattern – that is, early achievements and uninterrupted competition. A common stereotype is that women are less motivated than men, but research has shown that in actuality, women face traditional perceptions of sex roles; pressures to balance family and career needs; and financial, emotional, and time constraints related to child care. In turn, women express concern with resultant sexist attitudes which negatively affect their ability to obtain or succeed in faculty or leadership positions. (p. 33)

Thus, family responsibilities may interfere as women seek to advance their careers. Institutional policies and societal expectations can create additional barriers to advancement for women in higher education.

#### *Barriers Related to Institutional Culture and Societal Expectations*

Researchers have documented other barriers to advancement for women in higher education, both related to institutional policy and to societal expectations (Lepkowski, 2009). Institutional and societal expectations are especially relevant when considering barrier issues in Christian higher education. In the following section, general institutional barriers and barriers specifically related to religious denominations are discussed.

#### *Institutional Barriers*

Eagly and Carli (2007) described four specific institutional barriers to advancement. The first barrier was associated with the demands of the job including long hours, the need to travel, or possible relocation and was discussed in the previous section.

The second barrier was related to building social capital. Eagly and Carli (2007) claimed that “Gender affects social capital: women usually have less of it” (p. 144). Devaluation of competence can impinge on social capital and on women’s ability to build it (Quina, et al., 1998). A crucial aspect of establishing social capital is understanding and building formal and informal networks (Eagly & Carli). Networks and insider information are often used in making hiring, tenure, and promotion decisions (Chliwniak, 1999). Networks are frequently segregated, so in an environment such as higher education administration where women are a minority, the opportunity to network is limited (Eagly & Carli). Women are then cutoff, however unintentionally, from these opportunities, isolating them from those who make the decisions and limiting their ability

to advance (Chliwniak). In fact, the most frequent organizational hindrance mentioned in T. M. Brown's (2000) study was the "old boy's network." Approximately 32% of the female presidents at four-year independent institutions reported exclusion from this informal yet powerful network (T. M. Brown). Thus, women may experience a lack of social capital as a barrier to advancement.

The third barrier described by Eagly and Carli (2007) was difficulty harmonizing with the organizational culture. This could be due to the formal and informal rules that are prevalent within all organizations and defined by each institution (Aisenberg & Harrington, 1988). Culture is reflected through dress, office arrangements, social interactions, and language, and the specifics of the culture often reflect masculine values, especially at the executive level (Eagly & Carli). These values may be seen in social requirements like playing golf or in cultural values such as decisiveness and competition. The cultural values may reflect gender-role expectations to which women feel like they must conform (Cooper, 2002). In addition, Eddy (2009) concluded that society "still judge[s] 'good' leadership against the male norms of success" (p. 26). Members of an organization may value certain leadership qualities typically considered masculine over feminine styles such as collaboration and participation (Chrisler, Herr, & Murstein, 1998; Hertnecky, 2008; Cox, 2008; Lively, June 16, 2000). Gender stereotypes related to leadership influenced committee selection, participation in governance, and promotion decisions (Chrisler, et al.). Overall, a more masculine culture may be another barrier around which women must negotiate (Eagly & Carli).

The final institutional barrier was related to acquiring desirable assignments that are necessary to qualify women for promotions (Eagly & Carli, 2007). These assignments

often involved extensive travel, supervisory duties, and challenging job responsibilities. Although the problem was quantified by evidence, the reasons for this barrier were mostly conjecture. The authors suggested that an abundance of family responsibilities, a lack of social capital, a restriction to traveling, and a deficiency in preferred leadership skills may all contribute to women being less likely to receive these assignments (Eagly & Carli). Each of these possible factors tie into one or more of the other previously discussed barriers.

Thus, women face various barriers to advancement resulting from institutional policy and culture. While some barriers exist across the higher education landscape, there are some obstacles specific to Christian institutions that warrant examination.

#### *Denominational Barriers*

Within faith-based institutions, denominational barriers may exist that hinder the advancement of women administrators. Nidiffer (2001b) suggested that historically, the Judeo-Christian values that influenced the origins of the nation also influenced women's historical role in higher education. Participation of women was marginalized because of a "conviction that women were to be subservient, first to a father, then to a husband, and, at all times, to God" (p. 14).

Over the past two centuries, as previously discussed, the access of women to higher education and the opportunities for women as faculty and administrators has significantly broadened. At the same time, faith-based institutions associated with specific denominations may have views that limit the role of women in the church. These beliefs are sometimes directly applied to the university, or the denominational views may

permeate the culture of the institution. One researcher summarized this issue in an interview with *Christianity Today*.

Evangelical environments reacted negatively to the women's movement, and even denominations traditionally more open to women's leadership early in the century are less open even now. This is, not surprisingly, also a trend carried out in the rank and file of their institutions. (Garlett as cited in Cagney, 1997, p. 72)

Denominational beliefs that limit the leadership role of women in the CCCU institutions and in the Southern Baptist colleges and universities (SBCUs) will be discussed in a later section.

#### *Summary of Research on Barriers*

Evidence of institutional and societal barriers to advancement for women in higher education has existed since the inception of the colonial colleges. Wolf-Wendel and Ward (2006) concluded, "Higher education does not have a strong history of responding affirmatively to the personal needs of its faculty" (p. 487). The barriers for women in higher education include overt gender discrimination and subtle attitudes that permeate institutional culture. Limitations due to family responsibilities, difficulties related to building social capital, problems forming informal and formal networks, and denominational beliefs that limit the leadership role of women are examples of barriers to advancement. Understanding the career pathways of women who have advanced and identifying their keys to success are critical to overcoming these barriers.

#### Career Pathways of Women Administrators in Higher Education

Mobility along career pathways in higher education differs from that outside of academe (Moore, 1983). Whereas career mobility through the faculty ranks is usually clearly defined, mobility into and through administrative ranks is less clear (Twombly, 1986). The "traditional" career pathway to the presidency referred to by researchers

involves moving up the academic ranks through faculty, chair, dean, and CAO, and this historical pattern is still common (Eddy, 2009). Other pathways to the presidency include movement from outside higher education, from other senior leadership positions in student affairs, academic affairs, development, finance, or other administrative areas, or directly from a faculty position.

In the following sections, the literature related to career pathways for all presidents, for women presidents, for presidents at Christian institutions, and for women administrators in the CCCU is examined.

### *Career Pathways to the Presidency*

Although there are many paths to the presidency, the route through the provost or chief academic officer position is common. In addition to this path, presidents often promote through the faculty ranks, or in some cases, they come from outside higher education.

#### *Pathway through the CAO*

ACE (2007) described the typical route to the presidency as being through the CAO position, and this route has become more common over the past 20 years. In 1986, 23% of all presidents moved into the presidency from the CAO compared to 31% in 2006. When analyzed by gender, in 2006, 40% of women moved from CAO or provost to the presidency, and 29% of men transitioned in the same way (ACE, 2007). Holding an executive position in academic affairs was another frequent prelude to gaining the presidency. Almost equal percentages of male and female senior executives in academic affairs moved into the presidency. Combined, CAOs and senior executives in academic affairs accounted for 41% of prior positions for male presidents and 53% of previous

positions for female presidents (ACE, 2007). Thus, the pathway through academics was the most common path taken to the presidency by both genders and was a more likely path for women than for men.

#### *Pathway through the Faculty*

While ascending to the presidency through the faculty ranks is a traditional pathway, the number of collegiate presidents who have never been full-time faculty members continues to grow. In 2006, 31% of presidents had never served full-time in the faculty ranks, up from just 25% in 1986. The 2006 survey further showed that this pattern held true for both genders; 32% of male presidents and 29% of female presidents had never been full-time faculty (ACE, 2007). This trend was consistent with the decrease in the full-time faculty positions resulting from institutional fiscal constraints and with the increased use of adjunct faculty and also suggested that women should consider more non-traditional routes to senior administration (Van Ummersen, 2009).

#### *Pathway through Avenues Outside of Higher Education*

Not all potential presidential candidates are found within institutions of higher learning. The above referenced study also reported data regarding moving into the presidency from outside academe. In 2006, 13% of all presidents moved into their positions from outside higher education, a slight decrease from 15% in 2001. Examining the 2006 data based on gender revealed that 9% of women and 14% of men stepped into their positions from outside higher education (ACE, 2007). Glazer-Raymo (1999) observed that women attempting to attain the presidency from outside higher education might face more obstacles such as limited networking and negative perceptions toward outsiders. Her research may explain the gender differences in the data.

*Career Pathways to the Presidency for Women*

Several researchers have studied the career pathways of women presidents. Madsen (2008) conducted a phenomenological study of ten women presidents utilizing in-depth interviewing techniques. Of the ten participants, only one president had followed the entire traditional career pathway through the academic ranks. Although six of the presidents were professors at some point during their careers, from that position, their pathways diverged through different vice presidencies and senior executive positions. Overall, the presidents interviewed lacked formal or clearly structured career paths. In addition, Madsen concluded that “a major finding of [her] research on this topic [was] the value of informal or nonlinear career paths for women” (p. 143).

In her study of women presidents in four-year independent colleges, T. M. Brown (2000) similarly concluded that the traditional career path was not the dominant route to the presidency. She determined that 33% of women held the CAO position before becoming president, half had been a faculty member, and less than half had served as a department chair. More than half had held administrative positions in academic affairs immediately prior to becoming president (T. M. Brown). This is significantly more than the 13% of female presidents nationwide who moved from being an executive in academic affairs into the presidency (ACE, 2007). This suggests that nontraditional routes have established themselves as worthy of consideration for women aspiring to be senior leaders, especially within specific collegiate environments.

Kane (1998) examined the differences in the pathway to the presidency in four-year and two-year institutions. She concluded, “women are not able to move immediately from administrative positions at two-year institutions to the presidency at four-year



institutions” (p. 72). However, movement in the opposite direction, from administrator at a four-year college to the presidency at a two-year institution, did occur (Kane). The author concluded that there was no clear blueprint for the pathway to the presidency in higher education.

In summary, the pathway to the presidency varies for each individual and current trends may influence the paths chosen; however, the route through the faculty and academic ranks remains common even if it is not always linear. For both men and women, the pathway to the presidency may follow a traditional route through the faculty ranks, or it may be non-traditional and include positions outside the faculty ranks or even outside higher education. The career pathways taken by a more narrow population, senior leaders at faith-based institutions, are examined in the following section.

#### *Career Pathways for Senior Leaders at Christian Institutions*

The first study to create a profile of CCCU presidents was conducted by Lumsden, Plotts, Wells, and Newsom (2000). The CCCU presidents’ profile differed significantly from the nationwide profile of college presidents in three ways (both profiles were created using data from 1998). First, whereas 56% of presidents nationwide held doctoral degrees (ACE, 2007), 80% of CCCU presidents had doctorates. Among the CCCU presidents, 55% held Ph.D. degrees while 25% completed Ed.D. degrees (Lumsden et al.). This differed from presidents nationwide, 49% of whom held Ph.D.s and only 6% had Ed.D.s (ACE). Second, 50% of CCCU presidents had a terminal degree in the field of education (Lumsden et al.) compared to only 17% of their counterparts nationwide (ACE). Finally, 25% of CCCU presidents moved from academic affairs and 15% moved from other vice president positions (Lumsden et al.). These findings

provided a contrast to the 16% and 7% of presidents nationwide who came from academic affairs and other vice presidencies (ACE). Thus, CCCU presidents were more likely to hold doctoral degrees, to have a terminal degree in education, and to move into the presidency along a less traditional route.

Smith, Filkins, Schmeltekopf, and Bateman (2005) compiled a profile of Christian college presidents and compared the results to national statistics. This study included presidents from CCCU institutions and from the Lilly Fellows Network (LFN), an ecumenical group of 70 institutions who pursue a Christian understanding of academic subjects. In this study, Smith et al. discovered that Christian college presidents were less likely to hold a terminal degree in education than presidents nationwide. In addition, “a decreasing proportion of Christian college presidents appear to be coming from outside of higher education, just the reverse of what is occurring with all other presidents” (Smith, et al., p. 141).

In addition to studying the career pathways of all administrators in faith-based institutions, the routes followed by women administrators in these institutions also need to be examined.

#### *Career Pathways for Women Administrators in CCCU Institutions*

Although the previous studies focus on a profile of CCCU presidencies, there are no studies related specifically to women CCCU presidents, presumably due to the small population. However, the one study of women CAOs in CCCU institutions found consistencies between women CAOs in the CCCU and women senior leaders nationwide (Moreton & Newsom, 2004). The majority of women in the study attained the CAO position through the traditional academic ladder. The CAOs also held terminal degrees,

primarily in academic areas such as English, the social sciences, and education. The majority of the CAOs were also married and had children, and none of these women had left higher education for an extended length of time for childrearing. All of these findings were consistent with nationwide trends (Moreton & Newsom).

Thus, the profile of CCCU presidents revealed some characteristics that differed from a nationwide profile of college presidents. However, the characteristics of women CAOs in CCCU institutions were consistent with nationwide trends.

#### *Summary of Research on Career Pathways*

In 2006, the most common pathway to the presidency for both men and women presidents nationwide was through the provost or chief academic officer role (ACE, 2007). Specifically, 28% of male presidents and 40% of female presidents followed this route. Nationwide, this trend has increased since 1986 (ACE). Within the CCCU, the most recent study, conducted in 1998, revealed that 22% of presidents previously held the provost or CAO position (Lumsden et al., 2000). At the time of the study, all of the CCCU presidents were male, and there was not a more recent study that would include women presidents. The only study related to CCCU women leaders focused on women CAOs. The characteristics of these women were consistent with nationwide trends (Moreton & Newsom, 2004). Overall, although many studies identified some career trends, a variety of routes to the collegiate presidency do exist. Identifying the keys to successfully following those routes remains an important objective.

#### **Keys to Success for Women Administrators in Higher Education**

To advance in an administrative career in higher education, it is important to identify and analyze strategies used by women in the past. Bashaw and Nidiffer (2001)

described early women administrators as having “shrewd pragmatism” and being “willing to change course, to pursue diverse strategies to achieve their goal” (p. 275). C. F. Brown (2001) observed that a key for some of the first female administrators was “the backing and continued support of one or more well-placed male mentors” (p. 44). The body of literature related to keys to success revealed three themes of significant strategies for successful advancement into senior-level administration: engaging in a mentoring relationship, seeking leadership development opportunities, and establishing a support network.

### *Mentoring Relationships*

Although the formality and structure of mentoring may vary, Madsen (2008) provided a definition of the role of mentor that allowed for these variations: “an individual in a position of formal or informal influence who advises, counsels, encourages, teaches, and coaches another” (p. 155). This supportive figure could provide many benefits to the protégé. Evans and Chun (2007) described the benefits of the mentoring relationship as follows: (a) mentoring can prevent a person from leaving an organization; (b) mentors may be in a position to confront biased or unfair criticism aimed at the protégé; and (c) mentors can provide insider information, connecting the protégé to the institution. Madsen’s interviews with ten women presidents revealed that few of the presidents had formal mentoring relationships; however, the presidents did describe supportive role models who influenced their careers by giving the women “permission to aspire, to act, and to be themselves” (p. 166). These influential individuals, whether in formal or informal relationships, were often men (T. M. Brown, 2005; Cox, 2008; Lively, June 16, 2000; Santee, 2006). Thus, mentors, no matter their

gender, are uniquely positioned to provide encouragement and to support their protégé's experiences.

Several researchers agreed that mentoring was a critical component in the success of women administrators. Britt (2002) conducted a study to determine if a glass ceiling existed for women executive administrators at a variety of institutional types in the New England region. Her analysis of the data revealed that, "mentoring is critical for career advancement but especially for women to move into executive positions" (p. 136). In interviews with women provosts from Ivy League institutions, some participants said that having an administrative role model who was willing to provide advice was a key to success (Lively, June 16, 2000). In a study of community college administrators, VanDerLinden (2004) discovered that mentoring relationships might improve career knowledge and skills critical for advancement. Moreton (2001) examined the career paths of female CAOs in CCCU institutions. Her findings revealed that mentoring relationships played a significant role in the success of female administrators in faith-based institutions and helped the protégés to develop professional skills and characteristics (Moreton; Morton & Newsom, 2004).

In the article, *Mentorship and the Female College President*, T. M. Brown (2005) described the results of her survey of 91 female presidents at independent colleges regarding their mentoring relationships. Approximately 53% of the presidents reported having a mentor who aided their progress through the administrative ranks. Over 71% of the presidents stated that the mentor had initiated the mentoring relationship, with only 29% of the relationships being initiated by the protégé. In addition, the majority of the mentors were male. The protégés benefitted from the relationship by gaining

understanding of the role of president and acquiring knowledge and skills necessary for advancement to the presidency. T. M. Brown concluded, “mentoring plays a critical role in advancing female college presidents up the administrative ladder” (p. 663).

#### *Mentoring Relationships for Women in CCCU Institutions*

Two studies were found that examined the effect of mentoring for women administrators in CCCU institutions. In the first of these, Santee (2006) interviewed twelve CCCU women administrators about the factors that led to their advancement to a senior-level position. Although the interview protocol did not specifically address mentoring, the participants frequently discussed mentoring relationships. Of the twelve administrators, nine of them described mentoring as a key to their success. The participants reported that the mentors were often male, and the mentoring relationships tended to be more informal. Santee concluded that, “mentoring relationships have had a positive influence on the successful advancement of women in leadership” (p. 122).

The second study, by Diaz-Bolet (1999), was a survey of women administrators in the CCCU about the prevalence and impact of mentoring. Of the 343 women administrators surveyed, 119 of them reported that they had a mentoring relationship. Statistical analysis of the survey results revealed a significant positive relationship between mentoring and career advancement and between mentoring and personal development. Diaz-Bolet also discovered that the administrators reported that mentoring was optimal when the mentors showed an interest in their personal lives as well as in their professional careers.

#### *Summary of the Impact of Mentoring Relationships*

After conducting a nationwide study of women CAOs from a variety of institutional types, Dean (2009) summarized her findings about the impact of mentoring on advancing women into higher education leadership.

Mentoring matters. It provides cognitive and affective benefits. It prepares protégés for advancement and can be instrumental in moving them forward (identifying and creating opportunities, increasing visibility, making recommendations and nominations). Women considering or seeking to enter academic leadership should recognize mentoring as essential to their success and take the initiative to develop such relationships inside or outside their institution among peers, with individuals in higher positions, or with anyone who can offer beneficial knowledge, support, or opportunities. (p. 144)

In summary, whether women are pursuing advancement in secular or faith-based institutions, mentoring can play a key role in their success. Mentoring relationships can be developed with men or women and can be structured or informal. No matter the format, role models and their influence on protégés can significantly affect the career outlook for women administrators in higher education. The following section discusses another key to success for women administrators, leadership development.

### *Leadership Development*

Leadership development activities can come in many shapes and forms. Madsen (2008) interviewed ten influential women presidents and found that all ten women listed formal training and development programs for leadership. These activities included seminars, workshops, and lectures from a variety of organizations. Formal leadership training programs, many of which are designed for women, have the potential to positively contribute to the success of women administrators.

### *Leadership Development Programs*

Leadership development programs in higher education take different forms. Some are sponsored by a national organization; others are regional or affiliated with an

institution. Although the presidents in Madsen's (2008) study had attended a variety of leadership programs, nine of the ten participants specifically mentioned the American Council on Education. In describing the programs sponsored by ACE, the presidents pointed out many advantages including, "increased confidence, new positions of authority, personal and professional growth and development, and broadened contextual understanding of management in higher education" (p. 195).

T. M. Brown (2000) agreed that national leadership development programs might contribute to the advancement of women administrators. In her study of four-year, independent college presidents, over half of the participants had attended a leadership program sponsored by a national organization. In addition, another 20% had participated in a leadership program that was not nationally recognized. The benefits of leadership development programs, whether national, regional, or local, included increased networking opportunities and development of leadership, managerial, and communication skills (T. M. Brown).

Evidence also supported the effectiveness of leadership development programs in eliminating barriers to advancement for women leaders. Birnbaum and Umbach (2001) suggested that equity issues connected to race and gender can be addressed, in part, through developing the leadership skills of minority candidates who are already in higher education. Mitchell and Eddy's (2008) research indicated that underrepresented populations have benefitted from intentional skill-building programs supported by institutions. These "grow your own" programs could eliminate barriers faced by aspiring women administrators. The following section more closely examines two of these programs.



*The Women's Leadership Program.* Berryman-Fink, Lemaster, and Nelson (2003) conducted a case study of the Women's Leadership Program (WLP) at the University of Cincinnati. This program was developed to help address the glass ceiling that appeared to exist on that campus. The program included leadership workshops and administrative internships. Participants who completed the workshop series were then eligible to obtain an internship with an administrative department on campus. After the first year, 100% of the participants indicated that they were satisfied or very satisfied with the workshops. In 1999, prior to the inception of the WLP, women held 18.7% of the deanships and none of the vice-president or provost positions. However, after the first year of the WLP, five of the original twenty-four participants received promotions, including three deanships and one associate vice-president. Following the initial success of the WLP, the provost office established the Women's Initiative Network (WIN), an advocacy group for all campus projects involving women faculty, staff, students, and alumni. By 2003, the combined efforts of the WLP and WIN resulted in women holding 29.4% of the deanships and two additional vice provost positions (Berryman-Fink, et al.).

*Women's Leadership Development Institute.* The CCCU sponsors the Women's Leadership Development Institute (WLDI), a "grow your own" program that is a bi-annual retreat for emerging women leaders in CCCU institutions. The WLDI includes attending seminar sessions on a variety of topics, creating a one-year professional development plan, shadowing a senior administrator on another CCCU campus, reflecting on the experience in a paper, and meeting at a follow-up retreat ("CCCU Institute," 2006). Lafreniere and Longman (2008) surveyed participants of the WLDI to determine which of the experiences were most influential in developing the women for

leadership positions. Of the 71 participants who attended the institute between 1998 and 2004, 53 answered the survey. The shadowing and mentoring opportunity, the informal networking, and the all-female participant roster were listed as the most beneficial aspects. Respondents reported that shadowing and mentoring led to increased confidence in themselves and in their potential, while restricting the institute to women served as encouragement to remain in Christian higher education. Over half of the respondents obtained a position with greater leadership responsibilities within a year of participating in the WLDI (Lafreniere & Longman).

#### *Summary of the Impact of Leadership Development*

The WLDI sponsored by the CCCU and the WLP at the University of Cincinnati are examples of leadership development programs aimed at influencing aspiring and current women administrators. Leadership development programs may provide opportunities for enhanced networking (T.M. Brown, 2000), for improved managerial skills (Madsen, 2008), and for increased confidence (Lafreniere & Longman, 2008; Madsen, 2008). Overall, leadership development is a key to successfully advancing women administrators in higher education.

#### *Support Networks*

The formation of support networks emerged as the final theme in the literature regarding keys to success for women administrators. Cox (2008) concluded that the support of others served as one motivating factor in a woman's pursuit of senior-level administration. Women leaders benefit from support provided by the family, by the institution, and through a professional network.

#### *Support from Family*

As previously discussed, the burden of family responsibilities have hindered the careers of some women, but family members can also serve as sources of encouragement, especially for women in faith-based institutions (Moreton, 2001). In Moreton's study of CAOs in CCCU institutions, women administrators reported parents as being instrumental in encouraging them to pursue education. Moreton also stated, "the married administrators overwhelmingly reported that their spouses have played a key role in their vocational success, offering encouragement, family support, and the opportunity for mobility" (p. 118). Santee (2006), in interviews with twelve senior-level women administrators in CCCU institutions, confirmed Moreton's findings. Every participant interviewed indicated that a close member of the family or a spouse provided significant personal support (Santee).

#### *Support from the Institution*

Institutional support can significantly encourage women in their pursuit of advancement. Nutt (1996) conducted a survey of female presidents in selected institutions nationwide. This study focused on the participant's level of career satisfaction and the variables that predicted career satisfaction. Nutt discovered that institutional support and acceptance of a female president was a predictor of career satisfaction for women presidents. Institutions with cultures that are accepting of women leaders may help advance women up the administrative ladder. "The complex structure of organizations creates concepts of organizational roles and images of the kinds of people who should occupy them" (Chliwniak, 1997, p. 71). Every participant in Santee's (2006) interview study described the supportive environment of the institution as having contributed to personal success.

A specific way to support women is through institutional policies that help to shape an accepting culture. An attempt to foster such a culture was detailed by Wood (2009) in his description of the group called Nine Presidents. This group was comprised of the CEOs of nine renowned universities, with a history of male-dominated traditions and gender inequity. The Nine Presidents pledged to “develop equitable academic personnel policies at its institutions, support those policies through institutional resources, and take steps to create more family-friendly and gender-equitable campus cultures” (Felde in Wood, p. 87). These family-friendly policies should allow parents to be the caregivers of their children without being penalized in their work environment (Cox, 2008). According to Wood, establishing strong mentoring programs, encouraging women to participate in leadership development programs, and providing tuition benefits and flexible schedules for terminal degree completion could impact the institutional culture. Overall, institutional structures, policy, and culture can significantly foster leadership development and provide support and encouragement for women administrators (VanDerLinden, 2004).

#### *Support from Professional Networks*

Professional networking is a “significant source of social support in the academy” (VanDerLinden, 2004, para. 55). Cox (2008) interviewed 18 female, senior-level, academic administrators in land grant institutions regarding the motivational factors leading to their achievement. Support groups were a motivating factor for women, especially women administrators who were new to their positions and in an institution where women comprised less than a quarter of the upper-level administrative positions. Cox stated that, “women need sounding boards and people to encourage them to do well

at the new institutions” (p. 192). As a whole, the women interviewed “emphasized the need for support groups not only for building confidence and assisting in the direction of their career path, but also as role models, coaches or to provide feedback” (p. 181).

Opportunities to network with administrators on other campuses helped women administrators gain a holistic view of higher education and examine the differences between institutional types and leadership styles (Santee, 2006). Networking was often key in having the inside track to employment positions, committee assignments, and task force participation (Chliwniak, 1997). Thus, professional networking provides a variety of advantages and supports for women administrators in higher education.

#### *Summary of the Impact of Support Networks*

Family, the institution, and professional networks can each provide support for women administrators in higher education. As a result of these factors, women can overcome barriers, acquire the encouragement they need to continue in their career pathways, take advantage of equitable institutional policies, and gain the inside track for career advancement.

#### *Summary of the Research on Keys to Success*

Throughout the literature, women administrators identified keys to their success as senior leaders. Through this research, three categories of important career strategies were revealed. First, mentoring relationships emerged as a significant avenue for women to gain insight, encouragement, and support in both informal and formal structures. Second, for many women administrators, leadership development opportunities led to improved problem solving strategies, leadership skills, and confidence levels. Leadership development included formal programs such as the Women’s Leadership Program and

the Women's Leadership Development Institute. Third, support networks were a key to success for many women administrators. This included support from three primary sources: family members, the collegiate institution, and professional networks. Overall, an examination of the literature revealed a variety of strategies that influenced the success of women leaders in higher education.

*Summary of Research of Women in Higher Education Administration*

Throughout the history of colleges in the United States, women have overcome many obstacles to both obtaining a degree in higher education and to contributing to the institutions as a faculty member or administrator. Since the establishment of the first colonial college in America, both the institution and society have placed restrictions on women in higher education. In those first years, these barriers ranged from the complete exclusion of women from attending universities to the wide-held belief that women had reduced mental capacity as compared to men (Thelin, 2004). More recently, restraints for women in higher education included various types of gender discrimination (Glazer-Raymo, 1999), the formation of familial or household responsibilities, (Quina et al, 1998; Williams, 2005), and denominational beliefs connected to some faith-based institutions (Nidiffer, 2001b). Despite the barriers, women have risen to the positions of deans, vice-presidents, and presidents of colleges and universities. In attaining these levels of influence within higher education, women administrators followed a variety of paths, including the traditional pathway through the academic ranks and non-traditional routes outside of academe.

No matter the route taken nor the barriers faced, many women ascended to faculty positions, administrative posts, and presidencies in higher education. In 2004, 45% of all

faculty members nationwide were female (White, 2005). In 2007, 45% of all senior administrators were female (King & Gomez, 2008), while 23% of all presidencies were held by women (ACE, 2007). However, the presence of women in CCCU institutions had not kept pace with national trends. In 2006, 60% of the student bodies in CCCU institutions were female (“CCCU Institute,” 2006). As of 1998, 30% of CCCU faculty were women (Schriner, 2000). In 2002, 14% of CCCU CAOs were female (Cejda, Bush, & Rewey, 2008), while in 2008, only 3.3% of CCCU presidencies were held by women (“New Generation,” 2008). Thus, women are less represented in CCCU institutions than in colleges and universities nationwide.

To fully understand the role of women in Christian higher education, it is important to examine the unique characteristics of Christian higher education, the denominational views of the role of women in family and society, and the experiences of women in CCCU institutions. Part II of the literature review examines these topics.

## Part II: Women in Christian Higher Education

Christian higher education has defined characteristics that make it unique from higher education as whole. The theological underpinnings and the denominational views of the Biblical role of men and women have influenced the lived experiences of women faculty and administrators in faith-based institutions (Plotts, 1998; Moreton, 2001).

### *Theoretical Characteristics of Christian Higher Education*

As previously discussed, the mission of the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities is “to advance the cause of Christ-centered higher education and to help our institutions transform lives by faithfully relating scholarship and service to biblical truth” (CCCU, n.d., para. 2). The members of the CCCU are not just religiously affiliated;

instead, CCCU institutions must be “intentionally Christ-centered” (CCCU, para. 3). To understand the theoretical characteristics of Christian higher education, it is necessary to examine the concept of Christ-centered education, to explain the idea of a Christian university, and to enumerate the unique features of Christian institutions.

### *Christ-centered Education*

Gangel (1978) described Christ-centered education as integrating faith with discipline and stated that, “the ‘integration of truth’ refers to the teaching of all subjects as a part of the total truth of God, thereby enabling the student to see the unity of natural and special revelation” (p. 30). Gangel also enumerated six principles for integrating faith in the classroom as follows:

1. The Bible is viewed as inspired and inerrant, and the truth of the Bible authoritative in the classroom.
2. The role of the Holy Spirit is to guide individuals to an understanding of God’s truth, and this truth is consistent with the message of Jesus Christ. In addition, the message of Jesus is applicable to contemporary life.
3. All truth originates from God, the Creator. Thus, research and experimentation uncovers a greater understanding of God’s truth.
4. God’s revelation is found throughout the curriculum, from the hard sciences to the humanities. In addition to understanding how God’s revelation is congruent with knowledge, it is also important to “demonstrat[e] for students how the facts, theories, and implications of any given subject matter have been negatively affected by sin and thereby distorted” (p. 34).



5. A Christian worldview should be developed to combine the secular and sacred realities.
6. The integration of faith and learning is not limited to the classroom; instead Biblical principles should be extended to all areas of the students' lives.

Thus, according to Gangel, a Christ-centered education integrates the principles and teachings of the Bible into all aspects of student learning and into all disciplines. In addition to Gangel's description of a Christ-centered education, a review of the literature also revealed a description of the Christian University and the features of Christian higher education.

#### *The Christian University*

Schwehn (1999) described the attributes of a Christian university. The first characteristic was the belief that all of creation was designed and created by God, and this understanding brings unity to Christian education. This unity is reflected in valuing both discovery and invention, and by seeing that all knowledge is already unified in the Creator. According to Schwehn, the "unity" principle "make[s] the Christian university countercultural in the modern world" (p. 27). The second trait, the principle of universality, proclaimed that all humans, no matter when or where they were born, are made in the image of their Creator and are loved by God as exemplified by the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Integrity, the third hallmark, described the integration of all aspects of human life including the intellectual, moral, and spiritual development. This principle stated that a Christian university addresses all aspects of life and development in a concurrent manner rather than allowing separate entities to focus on individual areas. The fourth principle encouraged the development of a theology department within the

institution that is responsible for “its official rhetoric, the corporate worship it sponsors, and in myriad other ways, a particular tradition of thought, feeling, and practice” (p. 29).

The fifth feature was that a Christian university encourages students to use their knowledge and talents in a vocation that ultimately helps to meet the needs of others.

Grace was the final characteristic of a Christian university. This principle emphasized the need for God’s grace, because the efforts of mankind, no matter how talented or well-intended, will ultimately fall short of perfection. Schwen’s attributes of a Christian university, like Gangel’s principles of Christ-centered education, supported the integration of God’s truth into all aspects of education. In addition to these viewpoints, the features of Christian higher education were also analyzed.

#### *Features of Christian Higher Education*

Scriven (1999) outlined three features of Christian higher education within the postmodern culture. First, genuine Christian colleges and universities should be unapologetically partisan and countercultural. Christian higher education should not remain neutral regarding the curriculum, but instead, institutions should be committed to the point of view that is aligned with God’s truth. Secondly, education must engage the entire person including the intellect, imagination, and emotions. Facts should not be learned in a purely objective manner, detached from feelings and an understanding of how the facts impact the inner self. In this way, the learning process is fully entwined in the character and way of life of the student. The final feature of Christian higher education should be an embracing of conflict. Christian education must “acknowledge, confront, and learn from the clash of human perspectives. Ignoring differences, or dismissing them without engaging them, feeds apathy and puts an end to growth” (p. 53).

Scriven summarized his view by stating that Christian higher education should reflect “the church’s true identity” and “offer a deliberate strategy for building and bracing the circle of disciplines” (p. 41).

#### *Summary of the Theoretical Characteristics of Christian Higher Education*

In order to understand the role of women within Christian institutions, the philosophies, values, and features of this segment of higher education were examined. A summary of the views of Gangel (1978), Schwen (1999), and Scriven (1999) provides a description of Christian higher education that is distinctly different from the mainstream view of the role of the university. In short, Christian higher education cannot be separated from the identity of the church, is countercultural, and supports the integration of God’s truth into all disciplines and areas of life.

#### *Denominational Views of the Role of Women and Christian Higher Education*

As defined by Gangel (1978), Schwen (1999), and Scriven (1999), Christian higher education should uphold the universality of God’s word and apply the principles of the Bible to all areas of life and education. Gangel argued that the integration of faith should not be limited to the classroom setting. Schwen purported that the theological rhetoric, traditions, thoughts, and practices of the institution should be transmitted through the theology department. Scriven further stated that the identity of the church should be reflected within the institution. With these views in mind, the denominational beliefs regarding the role of women in the church must be examined.

#### *Two Primary Views of the Biblical Role of Women*

Glanville (2000) described the two primary divisions of viewpoints related to the role of women: traditionalist and egalitarian. The traditionalist or complementarian view

is based on the belief that “men and women were created differently for different roles that are meant to complement one another” (p. 59). In this view, men are seen as the leader and provider in both the home and church, while women are responsible for caring for the home and family. Although traditionalists prescribe the roles of each gender to be different, this view is not seen as incompatible with gender equality. Men and women are viewed as equal in worth and value; however, God has established a hierarchy and difference in roles. A strictly traditionalist view would not support women in leadership positions within or outside of the home (Glanville).

The egalitarian viewpoint regarding the role of women focuses on the similarities between the genders (Glanville, 2000). For example, both genders were created by God in His image, were given dominion over the earth, and were commissioned to be fruitful and multiply. Egalitarians reflect a variety of perspectives, many of which would consider the social and historical context of the Biblical scriptures. Some egalitarians consider themselves Biblical feminists. As a result, they tend to be more open to women leaders inside and outside of the church. More conservative egalitarians may accept women leaders in secular arenas, while rejecting the concept of a female leader within the church (Glanville).

Both the complementarian and egalitarian views of the role of women have implications for the accepted role of women in Christian institutions (Wood, 2009).

#### *Women in Christian Institutions*

In Christian higher education, the denomination associated with an institution will have a view of the role of women somewhere along the spectrum of complementarian

and egalitarian. Wood (2009) noted that both views are based on their own theological understanding of the Scriptures.

Interpretations of the Bible among various faith-based communities play a pivotal role in creating and sustaining organizational culture at these groups' affiliated college or university. What a denomination believes about women and their role in society will be evident at every level of their college or university and thus shape the campus climate for women. (p. 81)

Wood continued by stating that some institutions have simultaneously supported gender equity and traditionalist denominational views. A review of the literature led to several articles that focused on women administrators, faculty, and students in Christian institutions. Some of the studies were limited to institutions that were members of the CCCU.

*Women Administrators and Faculty in Christian Institutions.* Several researchers have focused on women in CCCU institutions and the role of denominational views. Lumsden, Plotts, Wells, and Newsom (2000) conducted a study that profiled the presidents of CCCU institutions and discovered that not one of the 105 member institutions of the CCCU had a woman president. They suggested the following explanation for this finding:

Institutions belonging to the CCCU relate to evangelical Christian constituencies. As such, the institutions are usually viewed as extensions of the church or denominational body, and their presidents as “pastoral” (or quasi pastoral) figures, even though in many cases, the president is not ordained. A few of the denominations in question have theological structures relative to women in pastoral offices, and almost all perceive the college president’s role in characterological and ministerial terms rather than strictly academic, executive, or managerial terms. (para. 22)

Plotts (1998) and Moreton (2001) both expanded on this view. They argued women who are motivated to pursue administrative careers within the CCCU are more rare because of the theological views that limit the role of women in leadership. In addition, the

evangelical social structure of the family stresses the role of women as caregiver for the husband and children. The demands of this role may limit the time, energy, and interest that evangelical women may have in pursuing senior leadership roles in faith-based higher education (Plotts; Moreton).

Adams (1995) utilized a life history methodology to study two female, senior-level, academic administrators in Christian higher education. Adams determined that while all women face challenges that help or hinder their advancement to leadership opportunities, women in Christian higher education have a unique element to overcome. Leaders at Christian institutions have a moral imperative, and the culture of the institution either accepts or denies that a woman can fulfill this role. In addition, the women in the study were influenced by their own views of gender roles, and they were influenced by the gender views of others on their campus. The extent to which their institutional culture was aligned with their personal beliefs affected their level of satisfaction in their leadership position. One interviewee served in an environment where conflicting gender values influenced her role and responsibilities, forcing her to be in positions that compromised her views, and ultimately leading to her decision to seek employment elsewhere (Adams).

Sequeira, Trzyna, Abbott, and McHenry (1995) implemented a mixed methods approach to study gender issues at one Christian institution in the northwest. By examining data regarding rank and promotion, Sequeira et al. found that, when compared to national norms, men were overrepresented in the higher faculty ranks, and women were overrepresented in the lower faculty ranks. In addition, more time lapsed between promotions for the women faculty than for the men. These inequities did not have a

negative psychological impact on the women. However, interviews revealed “microinequities,” such as overt remarks and attitudes, which did have a negative psychological impact. According to Sequeira et al., “The women who were able to cope with the measurable and immeasurable inequities reported high satisfaction with their multiple roles and maintained their own views of Christianity that were apart from the dominant, paternalistic culture” (p. 29). Conversely, women who were unable to cope reported problems related to balancing their various roles, disillusionment in their positions, and disappointment in their Christian institution (Sequeira, et al.).

Two studies provided perspectives that contradicted the expected results. Hardesty (2003) conducted a quantitative study examining the levels of job satisfaction for female Christian college administrators and the level of church-relatedness of the institution. The findings indicated that stronger levels of church-relatedness were correlated with higher levels of satisfaction for female administrators. In addition, satisfaction was greater at institutions related to conservative rather than liberal denominations. Both of these findings were contrary to the expected outcome. Institutions with strong rather than historical relationships with the sponsoring denomination tended to be more aligned with church doctrine that supports the marginalization of women. This relationship was even stronger in conservative denominations (Hardesty). Thus, the correlation of institutional church-relatedness and levels of job satisfaction, especially in conservative denominations, was contrary to the expected result.

Lafreniere (2008) surveyed over 1000 faculty, staff, and administrators at five CCCU institutions regarding their views of desirable leadership qualities for CCCU

administrators. The participants did not rate the desirable leadership characteristics for male leaders differently than they rated the desirable leadership characteristics for female leaders. In addition, “there was no social-cognitive explanation for prejudice to exist toward women in leadership and therefore there is likely to be an acceptance of women in these roles” (Lafreniere, p. vi). Thus, the findings of Hardesty and Lafreniere are encouraging for women who are hoping to advance to leadership positions in faith-based institutions.

In addition to the review of literature related to women administrators and faculty, some studies focusing on women students in CCCU institutions were analyzed.

*Women Students in CCCU Institutions.* Utilizing data from the CCCU’s Comprehensive Assessment Project (CAP), Longman (February 2002a) reported significant findings regarding gender differences in students in CCCU institutions. Entering male students, both in the CCCU and nationally, were significantly more likely to rank themselves as above average in characteristics related to college success such as intellectual self-confidence, leadership ability, and emotional health. Entering female students were more likely to enter college with higher GPAs, yet less likely than males to rate their abilities as above average. This was also consistent with national findings (Longman).

Longman (February 2002a) compared the responses gathered when the students entered a CCCU institution to the responses received after completing a Christian liberal arts education. There were three areas where the gap between the genders widened or remained unchanged: self-perception of leadership qualities, social self-confidence, and intellectual self-confidence. In these three areas, all of which are indicators of leadership



skills, male graduates were far more likely to rate themselves as above average than their female counterparts. The findings of this study indicated that CCCU institutions are not adequately preparing female students, both intellectually and psychosocially, to be future leaders (Longman).

Schreiner's (2002) presentation of the CAP findings summarized the effects of a CCCU education for women as being increased knowledge of their disciplines, increased understanding of cultural differences, and gains in religious beliefs. Male students reported greater gains in leadership abilities, critical thinking skills, communication skills, and mathematical abilities (Schreiner). Thus, the CAP results indicated that men are more likely to complete their education at a CCCU institution having gained characteristics usually associated with leadership.

#### *Summary of the Role of Women in Christian Higher Education*

Christian higher education endeavors to integrate faith, God's truth, and Biblical principles into all aspects of learning and life (Gangel, 1978; Schwen, 1998; Scrivner, 1998). The views related to the proper role of women held by the various denominations that support Christian institutions of higher education are usually extended from the church into the institution (Wood, 2009; Plotts, 1998; Lumsden, et al., 2000; Moreton, 2001). These views regarding the role of women in church leadership vary from traditionalist to egalitarian and may be extended from church settings to secular settings (Glanville, 2000). The connection between the culture of educational institutions and the beliefs of the sponsoring denomination may create unique barriers for women seeking promotion (Adams, 1994), may impact the psychological well-being of women (Sequeira, et al., 1995), or may impact the level of job satisfaction for female

administrators (Hardesty, 2003). Although Longman (February 2000a) expressed concerns regarding the impact of a CCCU education in developing women leaders, Lafreniere (2008) conveyed encouraging results for future women leaders. Overall, the impact of denominational views on Christian higher education is complex. Although the CCCU has incorporated gender equity as a part of its strategic plan and has created the Women's Leadership Development Institute (Wood, 2009), there are still examples of institutions in Christian higher education where senior-level women administrators are rare.

In the third and final section of the literature review, the history and role of women in the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) and the relationship between the SBC and Southern Baptist colleges and universities (SBCUs) will be examined.

### Part III: Women and Southern Baptist Colleges and Universities

In order to understand the experiences of women in Southern Baptist colleges and universities, the historical role of women in the Southern Baptist Convention, the relationship between the SBC, the state conventions, and SBCUs, and the current roles of women in SBCUs needs to be studied.

#### *Historical Overview of the Role of Women in the Southern Baptist Convention*

In May of 1845, in Augusta, Georgia, a group of Baptist men organized the Southern Baptist Convention (Fletcher, 1994; Morgan, 2003). This group passed the following resolution:

Resolved, that with profound gratitude to the Great Head of the Church, this Convention recognizes the harmonious and unanimous action to which it has arrived; and that we do regard the exhibition of the christian spirit which has governed its deliberations, as a pledge of the divine blessing in the origin and prosecution of this organization. (Southern Baptist Convention Resolutions, n.d., para. 1)

The newly formed Constitution did not mention the role of women (Morgan). In its origin, the member churches of the SBC were primarily located in the South. Although American women as a whole made gains in equality through the suffrage movement during the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, these advances were slow to impact the South and even slower to affect the women of the SBC. In 1868, women began attending the annual convention of the SBC, but they were not sent as delegates, or “messengers” (Morgan). By the late 1870s, Southern Baptist women were accepted in roles supporting missionary work, were allowed to teach children and other women, and were even encouraged to attend seminary (Fletcher; Morgan). Despite being allowed to attend seminary classes, women were not only forbidden to speak during class but were also barred from earning credit hours or degrees (Blevins, 2007; Letsinger, 2007).

The role of women during the annual SBC convention became a point of contention between the genders. In 1877, the first woman was seated as a messenger to the convention, but reports submitted by the women’s missionary societies were still read aloud by men (Morgan, 2003). In 1879, the Committee on Woman’s Work recommended that women be enlisted to help with both home and foreign missionary endeavors, while reminding members that the Convention did not approve of women “speaking before popular assemblies or in anyway usurping the duties which the New Testament imposes exclusively upon men” (Morgan, p. 56). By 1881, some members expressed uncertainty regarding the level of activity by women in missions work, and the Foreign Mission Board proposed a slow and cautious approach to the issue of the appropriate role of women (Morgan).

The Southern Baptist women, however, moved forward with their work. In the early 1880s, the women came to the convention city early and held their own meetings. These meetings were not affiliated with the SBC, but the women resolved to become a part of the official convention. In 1885, two women arrived at the annual convention in Augusta and requested to be seated as messengers (Bateman, 2003; Morgan, 2003; Letsinger, 2007). Although some of the discussion that ensued was deleted from the minutes (Letsinger), a committee of five was appointed to study the eligibility of women to serve as messengers. In the majority report, three members found the concept constitutional, although they did not necessarily support the idea. The two members in the minority voted to deny admission and expressed concerns that the convention “would be flooded with them [women] next year” (Morgan, p. 59). Others argued that by allowing women to be messengers, a door might be opened that would allow a woman to become president. At the same time, another delegate argued that Southern women do not want to serve as officers. Finally, the Convention passed a resolution limiting the participation of messengers to men. Women were no longer allowed to sit on the floor of the convention; they were limited to the visitors’ galleries (Morgan). The resolution restricting women from service as messengers was applied to the state conventions as well (Morgan; Blevins, 2007).

The beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century evidenced both gains and losses for Southern Baptist women. In 1901, women were allowed seats on the floor of the convention (Morgan, 2003). By 1907, women were allowed to pursue seminary education rather than just attend classroom lectures (Campbell-Reed & Durso, 2007). In 1913, the Convention rejected a resolution allowing women to speak during convention proceedings, but three

years later, a messenger named B. D. Gray gave some of his time at the podium to an officer of the Women's Missionary Union (WMU), Kathleen Mallory. Mallory introduced another woman, Maude McLure, who was the first principal of the WMU Training School. Both Mallory and McLure spoke to the convention, igniting another debate about the role of women and women's rights (Morgan; Blevins, 2007). Finally, in 1918, the Convention passed a resolution allowing women to serve as messengers to the annual meeting (Morgan).

Over the next 50 years, opportunities for women to participate in the business of the convention were expanded. In 1919, women flocked to the convention to enjoy their new status as messengers. For example, the Alabama delegation had 475 messengers, and 99 of these were women (Morgan, 2003). Ethelene B. Cox, the woman who was denied the privilege of addressing the Convention in 1916, became the first woman to give an address in 1929 and in 1938, became the first WMU officer allowed to read the committee report to the Convention delegates. Prior to this time, a male representative presented the report for the women's organization (Morgan, 2003; Weatherford, 2007). Women also began to participate in some committees and boards, but from 1927 to 1958, only five women served on the Convention's most powerful group, the Executive Committee (Morgan).

By 1968, approximately one-third of the delegates to the annual convention were female. In 1972, the proportion rose to 42% (Morgan, 2003). This time period also introduced the first female second vice-president, the first Southern Baptist ordained woman, the first female pastor, and the first woman nominated for convention president. To this day, no woman has been elected president of the Convention (Campbell-Reed &

Durso, 2007). By the mid-1970s, women also started holding offices in the Southern Baptist state conventions (Anders & Metcalf-Whittaker, 1993). In 1975, 7% of the positions on all committees, boards, and commissions were held by women, an increase from 2.5% in 1961. However, when compared to American Baptists, this figure was low. In 1971, women filled 19.6% of leadership positions in the American Baptist convention (Letsinger, 2007).

In the 1980's, the proportion of women on boards and committees dropped "as a result of the fundamentalist movement's growing success and the fundamentalist view on the role of women in the denomination" (Anders & Metcalf-Whittaker, 1993, p. 205). In 1984, a resolution on women's ordination and role in ministry was passed by the Convention. The resolution ended with the following statement:

Therefore, be it Resolved, That we not decide concerns of Christian doctrine and practice by modern, cultural, sociological, and ecclesiastical trends or by emotional factors; that we remind ourselves of the dearly bought Baptist principle of the final authority of Scripture in matters of faith and conduct; and that we encourage the service of women in all aspects of church life and work other than pastoral functions and leadership roles entailing ordination. (Melton, 1991, p. 236)

This resolution prevented women from filling the pastorate or any position requiring ordination. The wording of the resolution was controversial because part of the reasoning was that man was the first to be created, and woman was the first to sin. The resolution "blamed women for the fall of the human race and reasserted the long-held view of Southern Baptist men that women should stay out of the pulpit" (Morgan, 2003). The resolution was supported by 58% of the delegates, and surprisingly, women delegates expressed some of the most intense support (Fletcher, 1994).

In 2000, a new Baptist Faith and Mission statement was adopted by the Convention and superseded the 1963 confession of faith. The 2000 statement proclaimed that, “While both men and women are gifted for service in the church, the office of the pastor is limited to men as qualified in Scripture” (Morgan, 2003, p. 83). Since 2000, the participation of women in governing roles in the SBC has decreased, while participation has increased in other Baptist denominations (Campbell-Reed & Durso, 2007). In 2005, in the SBC, “none of the commissions, seminaries, boards, or agencies of the convention [was] directed by a woman except, of course, the Women’s Missionary Union” (Campbell-Reed & Durso, p. 255). In addition, fewer Southern Baptist women are serving as chaplains in the military or as missionaries because these positions often require ordination (Campbell-Reed & Durso).

Since the inception of the Southern Baptist Convention, the involvement of women has slowly expanded, but the roles open to women have, at times, been restricted. Women have participated in the annual meeting, represented churches as delegates, and served on governing boards. A woman has not served as the president of the SBC (Campbell-Reed & Durso, 2007), and according to the Baptist Faith and Message, women have been barred from serving as pastors or in any position requiring ordination (Morgan, 2003). Those restricted roles have all been housed within the church or in the governing agency of a religious body. To determine whether the denominational limitations to the role of women in leadership have affected the role of women as senior administrators in Southern Baptist higher education, the connection between the SBC, the state conventions, and the Southern Baptist colleges and universities were examined.

*The Southern Baptist Convention and Higher Education*

Since the founding of the Southern Baptist Convention in 1845, Southern Baptist support of higher education has ranged from vigorous to ambivalent (Walker, 1994). Some viewed higher education as an important link to missionary work while others questioned the value of higher education and the mission of Southern Baptist institutions (Walker; Bateman, 2003). During the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the number of institutions founded by Southern Baptists skyrocketed, and a financial and governing structure for the institutions evolved. Typically, local individuals or groups determined the need for an institution of higher education and provided buildings, land, and limited financial support. Additional funding by the state conventions was vital to the survival of these institutions (Walker). Thus, the connection between the state conventions and the Southern Baptist colleges and universities was established.

*The National Southern Baptist Convention and Higher Education*

The national SBC provides funding and elects trustees for the six Southern Baptist seminaries (Mangan, 1990). According to the SBC website, the SBC is directly connected to the five theological colleges associated with the Southern Baptist seminaries. However, the national convention provides no funding and elects no trustees for the institutions not associated with seminaries. These institutions are instead partnered with one of the Southern Baptist state conventions (Southern Baptist Convention Home, n.d.). This is consistent with the historical approach of the SBC, which has “maintained congregational polity and voluntary association among the churches of the convention” (Campbell-Reed & Durso, 2007, p. 245).

This approach, however, has led to problems related to developing and implementing a philosophy of higher education within the convention, since the



relationships between the institutions and the state conventions can vary (Walker, 1994). Some institutions have self-perpetuating boards with an agreement with the state convention that all trustees will be Baptist. Another model has a board with a proportion of the trustees elected by the state conventions and the remaining proportion selected by the institution. Other institutions have close relationships to the state convention, but a binding legal relationship is open to interpretation. The variety of structures has limited the ability of the SBC to approach higher education in a consistent, well-defined manner (Walker). Thus, the state conventions, not the SBC, have direct ties to the institutions.

*The Southern Baptist State Conventions and Higher Education*

The Baptist state conventions have established governing bodies that are independent of the national Baptist convention (Lively, 1996). However, the SBC has provided funding to the state conventions, and this funding has been distributed to the Southern Baptist institutions. The SBC website stated:

The Cooperative Program is the unified budget plan adopted by the SBC. Each state convention receives Cooperative Program funds from churches in its state or region. The state convention retains a portion of Cooperative Program contributions from its affiliated churches for missions and ministries in its respective state or region. If a college or university receives funding from a Baptist state convention, this funding comes only from Cooperative Program funds forwarded to the state convention by churches in that respective state. No Cooperative Program funds forwarded by the states to the national convention (the SBC) are allocated to a college or university related to any of our partnering Baptist state conventions. (Southern Baptist Convention Home, n.d., para. 2)

Historically, in exchange for providing funding to the institution, the state conventions have played a key role in selecting trustees (Lively). In 1987, Hefley described this process by stating, “In some cases there are legal arguments over whether a school is owned by the state convention or by the trustees, but it is generally accepted that the convention has some control over the college” (p. 187).

In the early 1980's, the control of the SBC shifted to the fundamentalists, and this shift increased tensions within the denomination regarding the mission of Baptist higher education (Walker, 1994). The relationships between state conventions and institutions were redefined, and in some cases, severed. For example, in 1986, the North Carolina Southern Baptist Convention established a "new, fraternal, voluntary" relationship with the institutions that allowed schools to elect their own trustees, but stopped funding from the convention (Walker, p. 21). Instead, the university was given a non-voting membership in the convention's Council on Christian Higher Education. This change did not sever the relationship between the state convention and the institutions; it simply redefined it (Walker). Other institutions, such as Stetson University in Florida, severed ties with the state convention completely (McMurtrie, 2003). Overall, since 1980, more than a dozen institutions have made moves toward autonomy by loosening or severing their ties with state conventions (McMurtrie, 2003; Lockwood, 2005).

Therefore, although the structure varies between institutions, the state conventions, rather than the national convention, have a direct connection to Southern Baptist colleges and universities through funding and trustee selection.

#### *Women in Southern Baptist Colleges and Universities*

Now that the historical role for women in the SBC and the connection between the SBC and the SBCUs has been examined, it is necessary to consider the present role of women in SBCUs. There were no articles profiling the demographics, career pathways, barriers, or keys to success for administrators, male or female, in SBCUs. In order to gain some basis of understanding, the researcher utilized the IPEDS database and downloaded data that was reported in 2008 by 41 of the 46 SBCUs in this study.

From this data, there were 130,047 students enrolled in the 41 institutions in 2008, and 57.04% of the student population was female. In addition, 41.29% of full-time faculty members were women. The data were also analyzed by faculty rank and salary averages were included. The rank of professor was largely held by men; only 25.66% of professors were female. The lowest rank, lecturer, was least likely to be male; women held 58.53% of the lecturer positions. Table 3 displays each rank and the percentage of that rank held by women. In addition, Table 3 shows the percentage of the salaries received by women at that rank. For each of the ranks listed, the percentage of the rank held by women and the percentage of total salary expenditures earned by women were close, although the salary percentage was less than the percentage of women for each rank.

Table 3

*Percentage of Women and Percentage of Total Salaries Earned by Women For Each*

*Faculty Rank in SBCUs*

	Percentage of Rank <u>Held by Women</u>	Percentage of Total Salary Expenditures <u>Earned by Women</u>
Professor	25.66%	23.16%
Assistant Professor	35.14%	33.76%
Associate Professor	49.81%	49.44%
Instructor	58.22%	57.44%
<u>Lecturer</u>	<u>59.43%</u>	<u>58.53%</u>

*Note:* Data gathered from IPEDS on March 7, 2010.

IPEDS did not provide any data regarding administrative positions, so the number of women administrators in SBCUs remains unknown. A significant gap exists in the literature related to women in SBCUs and to administrators in SBCUs.

*Summary of Women and Southern Baptist Colleges and Universities*

For much of the history of the SBC, the role of women progressed as women were eventually allowed to serve as delegates to the convention, attend seminary and receive credit for courses, and gain influence through committees and governing boards. In 2000, the new Baptist Faith and Message acknowledged the gifts and contributions of women in Southern Baptist life, but excluded women from being able to fill the pastorate. This part of Southern Baptist history reveals the role of women within the church and within the denomination. Understanding the role of women in Southern Baptist higher education is also essential for this study.

The role of the SBC within Southern Baptist higher education is indirect. The national convention does not provide funding nor elect trustees for the SBCUs in this study. Each of the SBCUs are partnered with a state convention, but the relationship between the state conventions and the institutions varies. For some institutions, the state convention participates in the election of some or all trustees. The state convention may also provide funding for an institution. However, some relationships are less formal, and the association is purely historical, with no formal powers given to the convention. Thus, the connection between the national convention, state convention, and each institution varies in strength and formality.

Finally, the data regarding women administrators, faculty, and students in SBCUs are scant. An IPEDS search revealed that a majority of the student populations of SBCUS

is female. In addition, although women faculty are present at all of the academic ranks, they are most likely to be found at the instructor level, and least likely to hold full professor ranking. The researcher could not find any data regarding women administrators in SBCUs. Overall, there is a gap in the literature related to women administrators in SBCUs.

#### Summary of Literature Review

The role of women in higher education in America has expanded over the past two centuries. Many studies have been conducted on the barriers faced by women in higher education, on the career pathways taken by women administrators, and on the keys to success described by women in senior leadership. Within the member institutions of the CCCU, there are a handful of studies that profile the senior leadership or examine these areas. However, there are no studies that focus on women administrators in Southern Baptist Colleges and Universities. This work will add to the body of literature related to women leaders in SBCUs. The following chapter describes the research methodology and procedures used in this study.

## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

This chapter describes the research design, population, participants, data collection, and data analysis methods utilized by the researcher. Concerns related to trustworthiness and the role of the researcher are also included.

#### Research Design

Seidman (2006) stated that interviewing “is a powerful way to gain insight into educational and other important social issues through understanding the experience of the individuals whose lives reflect those issues” (p. 14). Because the purpose of the study was to gain insight regarding educational issues such as the barriers faced, career pathways followed, and keys to success as identified by senior women administrators in Southern Baptist colleges and universities, an interview approach was deemed appropriate. The demographics gathered in this study were compared to the demographical profile of senior leaders nationwide. In addition, the findings were compared to the body of literature related to the barriers, career pathways, and keys to success identified in studies of other subpopulations of women administrators.

In an interview survey, “the researcher asks a question from an interview guide, listens for answers or observes behavior, and records responses on the survey” (Creswell, 2005, p. 360). There are two types of survey interviews, qualitative and quantitative. In qualitative survey interviews, the researcher primarily uses open-ended questions without response options (Creswell). This unstructured approach does not limit the participants to predetermined response options, allows for breadth in responses, and acknowledges the emotional dimension that may be present in reactions (Fontana & Frey, 2003).

Qualitative interviews are also appropriate for asking sensitive questions (Creswell). According to Fowler (1995), open-ended response questions allow the researcher to “learn the unexpected” (p. 59) and are appropriate for telephone interviews. Qualitative interviews also allow the researcher to immediately check misunderstandings or to clarify answers, provide rapid responses, and offer a variety of rich data for analysis (Brenner, Brown, & Canter, 1985). In short, qualitative survey interviews provided many advantages for this study.

Qualitative survey interviews were also appropriate due to the lack of research currently available on women administrators in SBCUs and in Christian higher education as a whole. Maxwell (2005) warned that

it is difficult to see any phenomenon in ways that are different from those that are prevalent in the literature. Trying to fit your insights into this established framework can deform your argument, weakening its logic and making it harder for you to see what a new way of framing the phenomenon might contribute. (p. 45)

As discussed in Chapter 2, while research on barriers, career pathways, and keys to success exists for women administrators in secular institutions, there is a considerable gap in the literature related to Christian higher education and SBCUs. A survey interview with open-ended questions allowed the participants to respond without the limitations of predetermined choices, provided the researcher with data to analyze and compare to existing literature, and potentially offered a “new way of framing” the problem. Thus, survey interviews with both open-ended and closed response questions were appropriate for this study.

#### Identification of the Population

The population for this study was senior-level women administrators in four-year, co-educational, Southern Baptist colleges and universities. A senior-level administrator was defined as an individual who answers directly to the president. Possible titles included vice president, executive vice president, provost, and chief financial officer.

Southern Baptist colleges and universities were identified on the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) website. There were 54 institutions listed on the website. This study was limited to the 46 institutions that are four-year, co-educational, baccalaureate institutions not directly associated to one of the six seminaries in the Southern Baptist Convention.

Of the eight institutions excluded, one was an institution for women and five were operated by one of the Southern Baptist seminaries. These differences influenced the governance structure of the institution and the opportunities for women. The remaining two were not liberal arts institutions and did not offer four-year degrees. By limiting the population to the 46 institutions that were four-year colleges, affiliated with a state convention, and co-educational, the group of institutions represented in the study was more homogenous. Though not included in this research, it is interesting to note that, according to the institutional websites, two of the five senior-level administrators at the women's institution were female, and none of the administrators at the other seven excluded institutions were female.

In order to identify the targeted population of senior-level women administrators in the 46 SBCUs in the study, institutional websites were utilized. This examination resulted in 42 women senior leaders and 187 male senior leaders. The 42 women administrators constituted the targeted population for this study.



## Data Collection Procedures

Data collection procedures included obtaining access, forming interview protocol, and writing interview questions.

### *Obtaining Access*

To gain access for interviewing, each member of the population was contacted via a letter of invitation (Appendix A) that explained the purpose of the research, the significance of the study, and the role of the participants. The letter also stated that the researcher would contact each individual by phone within two weeks to answer questions, to confirm participation, and to schedule a time for a telephone interview. A vita was also requested from the participant so that findings related to career pathway could be verified. The researcher obtained written consent prior to conducting interviews. The consent form (Appendix B) described the process for maintaining confidentiality, the use of digital recording, and the potential risks of participation. Interviews were conducted at the convenience of the participant and were not limited to work hours.

### *Forming Interview Protocol*

As previously mentioned, the letter of invitation was written to orient the participants to the study, the follow-up phone call to address questions and concerns and allow the researcher to schedule the interview, and the consent form to communicate the measures taken to ensure confidentiality and trust. The interviews were scheduled via telephone or email with the consent of the participant. This personal contact resulted in a high response rate for the interviews. This is common with interviews where the appointment was scheduled with the participant, because the participants tend to feel obligated to follow through with the appointment (Creswell, 2005).

Following the recommendation of Creswell (2005), the researcher addressed ethical considerations, such as confidentiality measures, through the interview protocol. The participants were informed of the purpose of the research in the introductory letter and any questions about the study were addressed in the follow-up phone call. Interview transcriptions were stored digitally on a personal computer that was password protected. Printed transcripts were kept in a locked office. In the final report, data were not connected to the participant; any identifiable information was removed. The names of the participants and of the institutions were not connected to the responses. Approval to conduct the interviews was granted by the Institutional Review Board at the University of Arkansas prior to any data collection. The consent form identified the rights of the participants, and the protocol was designed to respect the dignity, privacy, and rights of the participants.

Creswell (2003) also provided recommendations about how the interview protocol should address the method of data collection. In response to these recommendations, the researcher included probes for open-ended questions, transition messages for the interviewer, space for interviewer comments, and space for reflective notes. For responses that were unclear or did not address the question, the researcher utilized nondirective probes for open-ended questions as suggested by Brenner (1985). The interview protocol included introductory and closing statements. The interview form provided space for the researcher to make notes during the interview and for reflective notes after the interview. Notes regarding any unusual facts or concerns about the interview were recorded. Follow-up letters were sent to the participants thanking them for sharing their experiences and perspectives.

Finally, the researcher chose to conduct interviews by telephone based on the geographic dispersion of the participants (Creswell, 2005) and based on the use of open-ended questions (Fowler, 1995).

### *Writing Interview Questions*

Good instruments for interviewing are challenging to create; consequently, using or modifying existing instruments should always be considered. Good survey instruments utilize different types of questions, have good question construction, and are improved through the results of pilot testing (Creswell, 2005).

The survey instrument for this interview study included demographic questions and open-ended questions. Demographic questions gathered information regarding personal and attitudinal content, while open-ended questions allowed for deeper exploration and meaning. An open-ended approach “allow[ed] participants to create responses within their cultural and social experiences instead of the researcher’s experiences” (Neuman as cited in Creswell, 2005). This was an appropriate approach for studying the experiences of women within the culture of Christian higher education.

The interview included 25 questions (Appendix C). The first nine questions obtained demographic information regarding current position, years of experience, age, educational background, marital status, number of children, and religious or denominational affiliation. The next eight questions related to the research question on career pathways. These questions focused on previous career goals, previous positions held, length of time between positions, and future career goals. The three questions pertaining to keys to success revolved around personal, professional, and institutional factors that contributed to the advancement of the participant. Two questions were

connected to perceived barriers in the participant's professional career or personal life. The interview concluded with one question that could elicit information regarding barriers or keys to success, one question about advice to future women administrators, and a final question that provided an opportunity for the interviewee to share any other information that was important to her personal story. In selecting and wording these questions, the researcher utilized previous interview protocols used by Moreton (2001), Buddemeier (1998), Brown (2000), Cox (2008), and Gatteau (1999). Each of these researchers studied women administrators and the barriers met, career pathways followed, or unique experiences faced. The work of Moreton, Brown, and Cox was summarized in Chapter Two.

Finally, the interview protocol included the use of pilot testing. Pilot tests provide feedback that helps the researcher improve the questions and revise the procedures (Creswell, 2005). The researcher applied this recommendation by interviewing two women administrators at the institution at which the researcher is employed. Neither of the women in the pilot test were members of the targeted population. Both of the participants in the pilot test reported that the questions were clear and thorough and that the tone of the interview was comfortable.

After the data are collected, they must be analyzed. The approach used by the researcher to analyze the data is described in the following section.

### Data Analysis

According to Maxwell (2005), "data analysis is probably the most mysterious aspect of qualitative research." In this interview study, the instrument used included both quantitative and qualitative data. The first step of analysis was to transcribe the recorded

data. The digital recording for each interview was transcribed by the researcher into a text file. After all of the interviews were transcribed, the researcher created a database of the responses. The database allowed the researcher to view the responses of one participant or to analyze the data for one interview question. The researcher used both perspectives throughout the process of analyzing the data. Specifically, cross-case analysis and single-case analysis was utilized in analyzing the data (Maxwell, 2005).

#### *Cross-case Analysis*

The researcher initially utilized cross-case analysis. The data were examined and summarized for each interview question. Some of the demographic questions yielded numerical responses. For these questions, the researcher calculated averages and frequency distributions. For the demographic questions that were not numerical, the researcher determined categories that described the common themes of the responses. Frequency charts were created based on the categories. Finally, for the open-ended questions that were not demographic in nature, the researcher examined the data for common themes and recurring terms. Based on these commonalities, categories were created and the data were described in qualitative terms. This process is consistent with Maxwell's (2005) recommendation that the data be rearranged "into categories that facilitate comparisons between things in the same category and that aid in the development of theoretical concepts" (p. 96).

After examining the data on a question-by-question basis, the researcher applied single-case analysis.

#### *Single-case Analysis*

After summarizing the data for each interview question, the researcher returned to the data and analyzed the responses based on participant. The researcher read the complete transcript, vita, and field notes and organized the responses based on the research questions. For each interview, a content analysis was performed in which the data for each interview were reduced to patterns and responses based on the categories created by the research questions. The research questions addressed specific, separate phenomena such as barriers, keys to success, advice, and career pathways. To analyze these data, organizational categories were developed that reflected the common themes that emerged for each of the phenomena (Maxwell, 2005). Organizational categories are broad issues that can generally be anticipated prior to the interviews and “function primarily as ‘bins’ for sorting the data for further analysis” (Maxwell, p. 97).

After reviewing each individual interview transcript, the researcher returned to cross-case analysis with the objective of answering the research questions and forming conclusions for the study. In doing this, the researcher moves from developing organizational categories to theoretical categories. Theoretical categories provide a more abstract framework for understanding the phenomena (Maxwell, 2005).

#### *A Return to Cross-case Analysis*

After the single-case analysis was completed for each interview, the data were examined and summarized across the interviews. The transcript, field notes, vitae, and content analysis for each interview were examined for emergent themes, recurring ideas, similarities, and differences related to the research questions. Finally, cross-case analysis was used to form conclusions of the study. The conclusions emerged as the answers to the research questions were compared to the literature summarized in Chapter 2. For

example, the first research question addressed the personal and professional demographics of the participants. The findings related to this research question were compared to the literature on the profile of women senior leaders for the nation and for various subpopulations. The researcher formed a conclusion based on this comparison. The conclusions section in Chapter Five reflects this analysis.

### Trustworthiness

For qualitative research, the concepts of “validity” and “reliability” are often renamed “trustworthiness” and “authenticity” (Creswell, 1994). Although the terms vary, the concept is to determine “the accuracy of the information and whether it matches reality” (Creswell, p. 158). To validate the accuracy of the findings, the researcher used good protocol and design, triangulation, and member checking (Creswell, 2005).

First, the researcher minimized coverage error and sampling error. The researcher reduced coverage error by forming an accurate list of the target population. The researcher utilized the website of each of the 46 institutions in the study to generate a list of the target population. The list was updated immediately prior to mailing the letters of invitation. The follow-up phone calls yielded two corrections to the list. In addition, the researcher addressed sampling error by obtaining as large a sample as possible. The researcher contacted the entire target population via mail and by telephone and encouraged each member to participate. This personal contact resulted in 20 participants from the population of 42 women, or 47.6% participation. Even though generalizability is not the goal in qualitative interviewing, the findings of a larger sample will be more reflective of the entire population (Creswell, 2005).

Second, the researcher used triangulation to confirm the interview responses. The researcher compared the data from the professional vita to the interview responses. For the vast majority of the interview responses, the information from the vita confirmed the responses. However, in four cases, the number of years that passed from receiving the highest degree to obtaining the current position differed in the interview and on the vita. In these cases, the information from the vita was used. Overall, triangulation helped to confirm the validity of the responses, specifically for the demographic questions.

The final method of addressing validity was member check. Lincoln and Guba (1985) described the purpose of member checking as “test[ing] for factual and interpretative accuracy but also provid[ing] evidence of credibility” (p. 373-374). The researcher sent an executive summary of the study, including the conclusions of the study, to the participants for member checking. The participants were invited to address factual errors or concerns about interpretation. The researcher did not receive any concerns or questions from the participants, although a few of the women provided words of encouragement to the researcher. Overall, the participants did not question the validity of the conclusions.

Thus, throughout the data collection and data analysis processes, the researcher used good survey design protocol, triangulation, and member checking to address threats to trustworthiness.

### Background and Role of the Researcher

According to Maxwell (2005), it is important to understand “how a particular researcher’s values and expectations influence the conduct and conclusions of the study (which may be either positive or negative) and [how to] avoid the negative



consequences” (p. 108). In light of that, the researcher will explain her background and motivation for conducting the study.

The researcher is a faculty member holding the rank of assistant professor at a university affiliated with a Southern Baptist state convention. In addition, the researcher has some administrative responsibilities and oversees an academic program. The researcher has seven years of experience at this institution, nine total years of experience in higher education, and seventeen total years of experience in the education field. The researcher has career goals that include advancing into senior-level administration and is pursuing this study, in part, to gain personally and professionally from the findings. Through these interviews, the researcher hopes to gain insight from the experiences of other women in executive positions in Christian higher education. By learning about potential barriers, the researcher hopes to map out a career path that will avoid the barriers or to learn perspectives that will help her overcome the barriers. The keys to success identified by current senior-level women administrators will be invaluable to the researcher.

In order to deal with this possible bias, the researcher will follow interview protocol that restricts her from interjecting her views or opinions during the interview. In addition, she will utilize processes to minimize threats to validity such as member checking and triangulation.

### Reporting the Findings

In Chapter 4, the researcher presents the results of the study. The results are organized by interview question, and depending on the type of question, the findings are reported using numerical or narrative data. In Chapter 5, the researcher organized the

findings by research question and discussed the themes related to barriers, career pathways, keys to success, and advice for future leaders. The conclusions are also listed in the last chapter.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### PRESENTATION OF THE RESULTS

This chapter provides an overview of the data collection process and describes the collective responses to each of the items in the interview questionnaire. The chapter is divided into four sections: (a) an overview of the data collection and analysis process, (b) the findings from the demographic items from the questionnaire, (c) the findings from the open-ended questions from the interviews, and (d) a summary of the chapter.

#### Summary of Data Collection and Review

The intent of this study was to gather and analyze data about women senior administrators in Southern Baptist colleges and universities and to provide insight into the pathways traveled by these women, the barriers faced in their journeys, and the factors that significantly contributed to their successes. The population for this study consisted of 42 women from 31 different SBCUs. Each vice-president was sent a letter of invitation to participate in the study, followed by a telephone call to confirm participation. A total of 20 women from 18 institutions agreed to participate in the study. A telephone interview was conducted with each of the 20 sample participants, and 16 of the women provided resumes or vitas to assist in the analysis of data regarding career pathways. The interviews were completed from June to August 2010. The researcher transcribed each interview, and the data were compared to the information provided in the resumes. In rare cases where the interview response and resume information conflicted, the information from the resume was used.

For the questions related to demographics, the data are presented in ways that protect the confidentiality of the participants. For example, if a particular job title was

rare, then that specific title is not used in the report so that the identity of the participant was protected. The data elicited from each demographic question are described and displayed in a table.

For the open-ended questions, the data were reviewed on a question-by-question basis. Key phrases, concepts, similarities, and differences were analyzed within the responses. The data for each open-ended question are described and summarized, and where appropriate, the findings are reflected in tables.

In this chapter, the results are organized by interview question and the findings for each question are summarized. An analysis of the data with respect to the research questions is included in Chapter 5.

#### Results from the Demographic Questions

The first nine items in the interview protocol were either close-ended questions or questions designed to elicit brief responses from the participants. The questions were clear and participants generally responded without asking for clarification or for examples. In this section, the responses to the first nine questionnaire items are addressed and summarized.

##### *Item 1: What is the title of your current position?*

The areas of responsibility for the study participants varied across the higher education spectrum. Vice President for Enrollment Management was the most common response with five of the participants having this title. The Provost or Vice President for Academic Affairs followed closely with four. Only one participant was responsible for university advancement. To protect the identity of the participants, the category of “other” was used to describe two titles with uncommon areas of responsibility.

Institutional websites were used to verify the titles for the participants and to gain data for the entire population. Because one area of responsibility can have different titles, the data were categorized by area of responsibility. For example, finance is an area of responsibility that includes the titles Vice President for Finance and Chief Financial Officer. Table 4 compares the distribution of areas of responsibility for the sample and for the population. The titles for the population were acquired using institutional websites.

Table 4

*The Distribution by Areas of Responsibility for the Sample and for the Population*

Position	Number in Sample	Number in Population
Academic Affairs	4	8
Advancement	1	5
Enrollment Management	5	8
Finance	3	7
Student Affairs	3	5
Public Relations/Marketing	2	3
Other	2	6
Total	20	42

*Item 2: How many years have you been in this position?*

The number of years that the participants have served in their current vice presidential positions ranged from one to twelve (with multiple respondents at each end).

The average time in their current positions was 4.7 years. Table 5 summarizes the distribution of responses for the sample.

*Item 3: How many years have you been at this institution?*

The number of years that the participants had worked at their respective institutions varied from 1 to 35 years (with multiple respondents at each end). The average time of institutional service was 15.9 years. Table 5 displays the distribution of the responses for Items 2 and 3.

Table 5

*The Distribution of Years in Current Position and Years of Institutional Service*

	Total Number of Years							Average
	0-4	5-9	10-14	15-19	20-24	25-29	30+	
In Position	10	7	3	0	0	0	0	4.7
In Institution	3	5	2	3	0	4	3	15.9

*Item 4: What is your age?*

For this question, participants were given four options of age ranges: 30-39, 40-49, 50-59, and 60+. Half of the participants responded that their age was in the 50-59 category. Table 6 reflects the distribution of ages and the percentage of participants in each age category.

*Item 5: What degrees do you hold and from where did you receive them?*

The highest level of education for the participants ranged from a bachelors degree to a doctoral degree. Nine of the participants held doctoral degrees; two of these were Ed.D. degrees while the remaining seven were Ph.D. degrees. In addition, three participants reported some doctoral study or current progress toward a doctoral degree.

Table 6

*The Distribution of Ages and the Percentage of Participants in Each Age Category*

<u>Age Range</u>	<u>Number of Responses</u>	<u>Percentage of Sample</u>
30-39	2	10
40-49	4	20
50-59	10	50
60+	2	20
<u>Total</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>100</u>

For the 20 participants, there was a total of 46 earned bachelors, masters, and doctoral degrees. Of the 20 participants, seven women earned at least one degree from a Southern Baptist college or university. Table 7 displays the distribution of the highest level of education for the participants in the study.

Table 7

*The Distribution of the Highest Degree Earned*

<u>Highest Degree Earned</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage of Sample</u>
Bachelors	3	15
Masters	8	40
Doctorate	9	45
<u>Total</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>100</u>

*Item 6: What is your marital status?*

For this question, respondents were provided with four options: single, married, divorced, or widowed. Only two participants were single, while 15 participants reported

that they were married. The remaining three participants responded that they were divorced. Table 8 displays the number of responses for each marital status.

Table 8

*The Distribution of Marital Status Responses*

Status	Number of Responses	Percentage of Sample
Married	15	75
Divorced	3	15
Single	2	10
Total	20	100

*Item 7: Do you have any children? If so, how many?*

Five of the participants reported having no children. For the remaining 15 sample members, the minimum response was one child, and the maximum response was 3 children. The average number of children for all 20 participants was 1.35. Using the responses of those participants with children, the average was 1.80. Table 9 shows the responses by total number of children.

Table 9

*The Distribution of Number of Children*

Number of Children	Number of Responses	Percentage of Sample
0	5	25
1	5	25
2	8	40
3	2	10
Total	20	100



*Item 8: What is your religious preference?*

Fifteen of the 20 vice presidents answered this question succinctly by listing the denomination with which they are affiliated. The five remaining participants identified a denomination, but also included other descriptors such as Christian, evangelical, Protestant, or moderate. Overall, seven participants reported affiliation with the Southern Baptist denomination, while six other participants stated Baptist. Other denominations included Methodist, Catholic, Episcopalian, and non-denominational. Table 10 displays the number of responses for each denomination.

Table 10

*The Distribution of Denominational Preference*

<u>Denomination</u>	<u>Number of Responses</u>	<u>Percentage of Sample</u>
Southern Baptist	7	35
Baptist	6	30
Methodist	2	10
Catholic	2	10
Non-denominational	2	10
Episcopalian	1	5
<u>Total</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>100</u>

*Item 9: Are you a member of a church? If so, what denomination is affiliated with the church?*

Of the 20 respondents, 19 women stated that they were members of a church. For each of the 19 individuals, the denomination of the church was consistent with their response to Item 8 regarding religious preference. One participant stated that she was not

a member of a church. Table 11 displays the number of responses regarding church membership.

Table 11

*The Distribution of Responses Regarding Church Membership*

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<u>Current Church Member</u>	<u>Number of Responses</u>	<u>Percentage of Sample</u>
Yes	19	95
No	1	5
Total	20	100

The first nine questions addressed the demographics of the sample. Analyzing the data from these questions requires little interpretation. The responses were straightforward and clear. In the following section, the open-ended questions pertaining to career pathways, barriers faced, keys to success, and advice for aspiring administrators are addressed.

#### Results from the Open-Ended Questions

Analyzing the open-ended questions required an examination of common terms, phrases, and concepts. The data were categorized based on this examination and summarized in textual and sometimes visual forms.

*Item 10: What was your career goal after completing your highest degree?*

The career goals for the women in the sample varied. Some participants listed a desire to obtain a specific position, while other respondents described a less concrete goal such as advancing as far as possible. The most common answer, with six responses, was teaching or holding a professorship. The goal of holding a vice presidency or another administrative position was mentioned by four participants. Three women responded with

specialized fields of work such as finance or counseling. One participant described a desire to improve her current department to be the “best.” Two participants had no clear career goal. Table 12 shows the number of responses for each career goal mentioned in the sample.

Table 12

*The Distribution of Career Goal Set After Completion of Highest Degree*

Career Goal	Number of Responses	Percentage of Sample
Teaching/Professorship	6	30
Becoming a VP/Administrator	4	20
Moving into specialized field	3	15
Advancing as far as possible	2	20
Improving current area	1	5
No career strategy	2	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100</b>

*Item 11: What was your strategy for obtaining this goal?*

Although the descriptions of career strategies varied among the vice presidents, the responses can be categorized into six groups: obtaining education, working hard, adjusting to challenges in the job market, maintaining communication with supervisors, acquiring certifications, and having no career strategy.

The most common career strategy described was education, both formal and informal. One participant described her strategy as “[T]he more education, the better off you were....Higher education could never hurt anybody, could only help you, so I am a firm believer in continuing education for everyone, not only for women but men.” Other

women mentioned obtaining specific degrees such as Ph.D. or Ed.D. depending on the discipline being pursued. Although most women mentioned formal education or specific degrees, one participant described informal learning when she described a prevalent workplace attitude that she did not adopt. This vice president said, “The ‘that’s not my job, so I don’t want to learn how to do that’ kind of mentality has never been mine.” She continued to describe observing areas outside of her purview, learning about those areas, and then utilizing the knowledge to eventually become the supervisor for those departments. Therefore, seven women described the pursuit of education as their career strategy.

Four participants described their openness to taking available positions in order to achieve their career goals. One participant said, “To take whatever position I could find. It was a very, very bad job market back when I was looking for a job.” Another vice president had a goal of acquiring a specific position. When the position went to another person, she adjusted her strategy. She stated, “I guess my strategy was to take a position that was kind of outside the bounds of what I originally expected to do.” One participant accepted a non-teaching position in order to work toward a teaching position. Thus, an openness to pursue available positions was one strategy that emerged from the data.

Three vice presidents said their strategy included a solid work ethic. One of these women said that she thought hard work would ultimately lead to advancement. Another participant succinctly said that her career strategy was “mainly just work ethic.” Overall, hard work was a strategy for a few of the vice presidents.

Two of the participants described conversations with the president or vice president of the institution to discuss possible advancement. While working in the

admissions area, one participant approached the president regarding her desire to change positions:

I was able to go to my vice president at the time, and talk with him very openly about...wanting to stay at the university, but at the same time, starting a family, and not being able to travel as much as I had before, and I think, he appreciated me enough...that he worked with me, and we were able to adjust some of the territories, and make some changes that would work better for me.

Thus, open communication with administrators was a strategy utilized by some participants.

For career goals within a specialized field, the strategy described included taking certification exams and gaining experience within that field, most commonly outside of higher education.

Finally, four of the vice presidents reported having no strategy. One respondent stated, "I did not have a strategy. I fell into my positions." The two women who had no career goal also did not have a career strategy.

Table 13

*The Distribution of Career Strategy for Obtaining a Career Goal*

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Career Strategy	Number of Responses
Education	7
Work ethic/Hard work	4
Openness to new positions/change	4
Conversation with leadership	3
Certification in specialized field	2
No career strategy	4

Table 13 displays the six categories for the responses to the career strategy used by the sample participants. Because some participants listed multiple career strategies, the total number of responses is greater than the sample size.

*Item 12: How many years passed between obtaining your highest degree and being appointed to your current position?*

The range of responses for this question was broad. Three participants completed their highest degree while serving in the vice presidential position or received the new title upon completion. These responses were considered “zero years.” The range of responses was 0 to 30 years. The average number of years that passed was 11.0 years. Table 14 shows the distribution of responses of the number of years that passed from degree completion to obtaining their current positions.

Table 14

*The Distribution of Years from Degree Completion to Obtaining Current Position*

	Total Number of Years							Average
	0-4	5-9	10-14	15-19	20-24	25-29	30+	
Number of Responses	5	5	3	4	1	1	1	11.0

*Item 13: Have you ever held faculty status?*

The responses to this question were evenly divided: 10 of the participants have held faculty status and 10 have not. Of the 10 who have held faculty status, six of those were teaching faculty while four were non-teaching faculty. Table 15 displays the distribution of responses regarding faculty status.

Table 15

*The Distribution of Faculty Status*

Status	Number of Responses	Percentage of Sample
Have held faculty status	10	50
Have not held faculty status	10	50
Total	20	100

*Item 14: What was your first position in higher education administration?*

The most common reply to this question was a director position with nine responses. Five participants began their career in higher education in the academic ranks as department chair, associate dean, or dean. The other fifteen answers reflected positions with no academic rank. Two women began their careers in higher education on the vice presidential level. One respondent did not have a common title and was recorded as “other.”

Table 16 displays the responses regarding the first position in higher education for the sample.

*Item 15: What was the position you held immediately prior to your current position?*

The responses regarding the position held immediately prior to the current position were less varied than the replies to item 14 concerning the participant’s first position in higher education administration. The two most frequent answers, with five responses each, were director and dean. Responses such as associate vice president and assistant to the president were given for Item 15, but not for Item 14.

Table 16 displays the number of responses for each position for both Item 14 and Item 15.

Table 16

*The Distribution of Responses for First Position in Higher Education and for the Position Held Immediately Prior to the Current Vice Presidency*

<u>Title of Position</u>	Number of Responses	
	<u>First Position in HIED</u>	<u>Prior to Current VP Position</u>
Coordinator	1	0
Director	9	5
Assistant Executive Director	1	0
Executive Director	1	2
Department Chair	3	1
Assistant Dean	1	0
Dean	1	5
Associate Vice President	0	3
Assistant to the President	0	1
Vice President/CFO	2	2
Other	1	1
<u>Total</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>20</u>

*Item 16: How did you achieve your current position?*

The processes and occurrences that led to the current positions held by the participants varied. In some instances, the participant pursued the position through application or informal conversation with leadership, while in other cases, the individual was recommended by a third party. The two most common methods were presidential pursuit and presidential appointment.



The most common method of achievement was being asked by the president to fill a role. Eight of the participants were approached by the president and asked to consider the position. In one case, the vice president was unclear about the role the president was wanting her to fill. She stated,

I didn't even know what I was interviewing for when I came down. He was like, 'I just want you...to come down and join me.' That was it...I was interviewing, and I literally didn't even know what I was interviewing for.

Another participant did not expect to fill her vice presidential position permanently. She described the president pursuing her as an interim.

The president called me up to say that our current [senior administrator] was resigning and would I take the position. In other words, it wasn't something that I had been seeking. I did not apply for it. I was recruited into it with the initial expectation that it would be an interim position, and it then turned into a permanent position.

In other situations, the president created a new program or division and then pursued the participant, giving her the option to run it. In one of these instances, the respondent stated,

When my position was created, the division was created, and it merged a lot of functionality from other divisions and created some new functionality, and so the president asked if I would be willing to take on that role, and so I did.

Another vice president said, "They really didn't interview anybody else. They asked me. I had to meet with the administrative council and with the trustees, but, pretty much, they had decided that I was the person they wanted to take the role." In one case, the participant was recruited from outside the institution. In another case, the individual emphasized that she has "never sought an administrative role." She went on to say, "Someone has always come to me and asked me to do it." Overall, presidential pursuit was a common theme for participants in achieving their current positions.

Seven of the participants described a situation in which they were appointed to their current positions, although not all seven of the women used the term “appointed.” One respondent stated, “I pursued it. There was not a search.” One participant viewed her appointment as a reward for good work when she said, “I kind of just grew into it, I guess, by showing good work.” In one case, the appointment came as a bit of a surprise. This vice president described, “He [the president] actually just announced in cabinet one day that he had made me a vice president.” The process of appointment may have involved applying and interviewing, but those aspects were either not mentioned or were not emphasized by the women. Overall, presidential appointment was a common method for achieving vice presidential status.

The remaining five participants described scenarios involving an application process or an outside recommendation followed by an interview. Their descriptions included terms such as “application,” “search,” “recommended by,” and “interviewed.” Three women applied for the position and became a part of the search. One vice president claimed,

I thought, “why not?” I just threw my hat in there and went to the president at that time ...I basically knew someone else was being groomed for the position, another male, and I just made him aware that I was very interested in it and that I had been doing much of that position’s job requirements for quite a while....I got it.

Two women were recommended for the position and were then interviewed and selected, and both of these participants were outside candidates. One of these respondents claimed, “it was all about doing a good job where I was before and then networking.” Only one participant applied for the vice presidential position from outside the institution without being initially recommended by an outside source. Thus, application and

recommendation followed by interview were less common methods for achieving current vice presidential positions.

One interesting trend was that 16 of the vice presidents achieved their position from another internal position in the institution. Only four vice presidents acquired their roles from outside the institution.

Table 17 summarizes the number of respondents for each method of achieving the vice presidential role.

Table 17

*The Distribution of Methods of Achieving the Vice Presidential Positions*

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<u>Method</u>	<u>Number of Responses</u>	<u>Percentage of Sample</u>
Approached by president	8	40
By appointment	7	35
By application	3	15
By recommendation and interview	2	10
<u>Total</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>100</u>

*Item 17: What do you perceive to be your next career move?*

The most common response was retirement. Eight of the participants mentioned retirement, although some of these also suggested other possibilities. One mentioned retirement along with returning to faculty. Another listed retirement along with a parallel move or pursuing a presidency. A third said she would either retire or pursue more education in order to seek a presidency. Five participants listed retirement as the only option.

Seven of the participants stated that they were not considering another move. Each of these women qualified their responses with other circumstances, desires, or philosophies that might influence their decisions. For example, one participant said, “the only way that I would change roles at this point is if my husband...had to move because of his work.” Three vice presidents were not considering another move because they had ruled out pursuing a presidency. One of these said, “I don’t anticipate making a different move through the end of my career...I really don’t have a calling, I feel, to be president.” Another vice president had achieved balance in her professional and personal lives but feared she might lose that as a president. A third participant stated that she did not “have the skill set for a presidency” even though it “would be the obvious next career move.” One participant did not anticipate a career move, but she was considering more education. Finally, two participants reflected a different outlook claiming, “I always just wait for what life brings” or “I don’t ever think like that.” Thus, several women did not anticipate another career move, yet most left the door open for other options.

Other career moves included additional education, lateral moves, presidential pursuits, faculty positions, mid-management roles, and movement outside higher education. Five participants mentioned the presidency as an option. One vice president had interest in a presidency, but she was still evaluating her traits and personality style. Another respondent immediately stated, “I would love to be a college president.” Two participants mentioned the presidency along with the possibility of a lateral move. The fifth individual who mentioned the presidency was also considering a move to the faculty. Overall, only one person mentioned a move outside higher education, and the majority of respondents listed multiple options for the future.

Table 18 lists the career moves mentioned by the participants in the study and the frequency of each response. Because many participants listed more than one possible option, the total number exceeds the sample size.

Table 18

*The Distribution of the Next Career Move Anticipated by the Participants*

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Career Move	Number of Responses
Retirement	8
Stay in current position	7
Presidency	5
Dean/mid-management/faculty	3
More education	3
Lateral/parallel move	2
Position outside higher education	1

*Item 18: What role did institutional structures and policies play in your advancement as a woman into senior administration?*

Of all the interview questions, this item elicited the most requests for clarification or for examples. Most approached the question positively; that is, they described policies and organizational structures that positively affected their advancement.

Fourteen of the participants described one or more institutional policies or structures that positively influenced their advancement into senior administration. The most common structure was support for professional development. One respondent stated, "The institution did provide support for conferences focusing on administrative training." Specific professional programs were described including programs hosted by

the CCCU, Harvard University, the Chamber of Commerce, and the American Council on Education, while other opportunities focused on leadership development or on assessment and accreditation issues. Some of the professional development opportunities overlapped with the participants' membership in professional organizations or specific training for committee assignments.

Three vice presidents described key committee assignments as being significant institutional factors in their advancement. Two participants described their service on accreditation or assessment committees. One woman stated, “[the institution] gave me committee appointments, especially in the accreditation process that allowed me to learn a great deal about the institution and about administrative roles within the institution.” Another participant described her experience on the presidential search committee as being important to her advancement. Thus, committee assignments were a factor for three of the vice presidents.

Two participants described institutional support for membership in professional organizations. One vice president said, “[my institution] would always give me the funds and time off to do work with the CCCU which really broadened my perspective of Christian higher education.” She went on to say that she “felt very supported the entire time, both with opportunities or with release time or with funds to...go and develop.”

Flexible work schedules, release time, leaves of absence, or sabbaticals were described by five participants. A flexible work schedule helped one vice president to balance work and family. Two women were provided with leaves of absence to pursue additional education. Although there was no financial support from the university for one of these women, she described the institutional flexibility as “understanding” and being

“in a more of an encouragement kind of way.” Another participant was given release time for professional development, while a different vice president took advantage of a sabbatical. Flexibility regarding work time was important to five of the participants for a variety of reasons.

Three of the vice presidents received funds toward the completion of terminal degrees. One woman said this benefit was “significant for me and really was one of the reasons I decided to pursue the doctorate.” Another participant viewed the financial assistance as a reward for doing good work and not based on gender.

My boss at that time really felt that I had the opportunity to advance at the institution. So he paid me for me to get my [degree], but I didn't feel like it was because I was a woman. It was just I was doing a good job, and I was honored or rewarded...in the normal way that you would in an organization.

For all three of these women, financial assistance was an important institutional influence.

Several responses were mentioned less frequently. One individual described the formal mentoring program at her institution and described her “leadership mentor who said to me in my twenties, ‘you should prepare yourself for a career of leadership.’” Another participant explained that her president supported a diversity initiative for senior leadership, and this initiative supported her advancement. One vice president described an institutional non-discrimination policy, while a different respondent said that her institution “tries...to promote from within” and that this “obviously helped in my case.” Finally, one participant pursued a doctorate at the institution at which she was employed, because the degree program provided courses with flex schedules, and this approach helped her keep her family and work lives balanced. Thus, the participants described a variety of institutional support through policies and structures.

Three of the participants approached the question by specifically mentioning that there were no structures or institutional barriers that prevented advancement. One described this by stating, “We do have an atmosphere of a family, and I don’t see any of the barriers.” Another explained, “There weren’t any policies that prohibited me from advancing into...current positions. I think there was a bigger issue with politics.” Two of the three women also listed structures that contributed to advancement.

Six other participants stated that there were no policies that assisted their advancement, and most of these women contributed their success to other factors. Two women specified that their advancement was not due to institutional policies or related to gender. One stated, “We have women in high positions here, throughout the college, so I don’t think it was because I was a woman. I think it was because of my work,” while the other said, “I think mostly they look at the job and how well you can do the job...not considering whether that was male or female.” Another participant shared a similar sentiment that her advancement was connected more to job performance than policies.

I don’t think the institutional policies helped that much...I think it was more a matter of my willingness to be flexible in terms of putting in the type of work and output that would be required to help advance the institution. So my ability just to look and see where deficiencies were and what needs were unmet in the area that I could influence and then try to make those contributions for the university that helped advance me once I got here.

Three other women indicated that no institutional policies existed at all. One of these women described her institutional culture as being a factor.

I will tell you that when I came to work here...I sat at lunch with senior administrators who were all white men....There wasn’t, I don’t think, any specific strategy for being that way, it just was...and [I] sat there thinking “this is going to change.”



The second vice president did not directly state that there were no policies, but her response indicated that institutional support was not a factor. She stated, “I’m not trying to throw sticks or stones, but truly if I had not had a visionary president at the time that this position became available...I don’t see myself as even being considered.” The third vice president simply responded, “There is none. There is none. There is not a plan of any kind.”

Table 19

*Types of Institutional Policies and Structures that Influenced Career Advancement*

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<u>Institutional Policy or Structure</u>	<u>Number of Responses</u>
Professional development opportunities	6
Sabbaticals/release time/flex schedules	4
Committee assignments	3
Financial support for education	3
Professional organization membership	2
Mentoring programs	1
Diversity initiatives for leadership	1
Non-discrimination policies	1
Policies supporting promotion from within	1
Educational opportunities with flexible scheduling	1
None	6

As shown above, this item elicited a variety of responses, many of which were positive. Table 18 summarizes the responses and the frequency of each. Because some

participants listed multiple types of structures or policies, the total responses exceeds the sample size.

*Item 19: Describe a person or network of people who have provided you encouragement, support, or feedback in your career advancement.*

Every interviewee described one or more individuals or groups of people who provided support, encouragement, or feedback through her career advancement. Some of the responses included specific individuals such as a husband or institutional president, while others mentioned groups of people like faculty or classmates. Common words in their responses include mentor, direction, encourage, growth, and colleague.

The president was the most common response to this item. Eleven of the twenty participants described the role of the president as being influential. One vice president described the role of a former president for whom she worked.

He was very much an influence on me taking a stab at what I am doing now. I knew that he valued my opinion and would come to me, just one-on-one, asking me my thoughts and opinions on things. That in itself was reaffirmation that I had something to provide and that I could do this.

One participant described “a very open and encouraging relationship” with her president, while another stated that the president of her institution “was able to see what [she] was good at,” helped her “bloom where [she] was planted”, and “took a special interest in her.” For one interviewee, her president supported her in several specific ways including “assigning broader and broader responsibility, special projects,...informal encouragement, direction, mentoring.” All of the presidents described were male. Overall, over half of the sample described positive relationships with presidents whose support influenced their career advancement.

Another specific individual who provided encouragement was the husband of the participant. Six of the vice presidents described the role of their husbands. One woman said her husband was “the most influential person” who “always encouraged me to do the best and to advance as opportunities became available.” Another vice president described her husband as being her most supportive ally.

[He’s] probably the person who has been the most supportive all the way through. He had already completed the doctorate at the time that I was working on one, but he convinced me that even though I didn’t have any idea how I was going to use it, that it really would be something that would eventually be useful to me. And he was right. And I think, probably, his support has been really pivotal all along the way in these decisions to pursue these jobs that most often have been jobs that no one had done before, and were...creating new areas in the university.

A third interviewee simply said that her husband was “number one” and described his support as “You can do it!” Thus, for some of the participants, a husband provided invaluable support and encouragement.

Colleagues and supervisors (excluding presidents) were frequently mentioned by the participants. Seven women mentioned relationships with former supervisors, most of whom held vice presidential positions. One interviewee described her former boss as still influencing her in her current position. She stated, “He is still my biggest cheerleader. We talk...probably every other week...and I have great respect for him.” Eleven participants mentioned other colleagues including specific individuals who serve as deans, directors, provosts, or other cabinet members. One vice president described her relationship with her fellow cabinet members.

The people who have been most supportive are the other cabinet members who are all male, which I find pretty interesting, but that has made the job a lot easier, and I haven’t faced any kind of territorial or sexism issues with the other male cabinet members. So they have been very supportive.

One interviewee described two female colleagues as being “energizing conversation partners about how to make things better.” Six of the participants included the staff or faculty in their network of support. Only one of these limited the group to female faculty colleagues. She said, “there were definitely higher education women who were teaching faculty who had similar home life duties and responsibilities who encouraged me.”

Another vice president made the opposite claim when she stated, “There were not a lot of other women to encourage me.” Overall, 13 women described former bosses, individual colleagues, or groups of colleagues as having a significant role in providing support, encouragement, and feedback.

Two other groups of individuals were mentioned less frequently: trustees and parents. Two participants described support from trustees. One of these women provided specifics on how the trustees provided support.

I’ve gotten a lot of good feedback from Board of Trustee members who would indicate to me what areas they were pleased with that I was doing and just to help me grow, I think, in terms of being able to provide the information and the type of leadership that they were looking for.

The other participant described the trustees as “extremely supportive.” Two interviewees also mentioned parents as being an important part of their network. They used descriptors such as incredible and encouraging. One woman said that her dad was a “strong proponent” of the “you can do anything” approach to life. Even though parents and trustees were infrequently mentioned, for a few of the participants, these individuals provided significant support.

Another category of responses could be described as external organizations or individuals. Three women described the role of relationships established through professional organizations such as the CCCU as being significant. Two participants

claimed that former classmates from their doctoral study provided support and encouragement. Colleagues from a former institution, an administrator from when the participant was a college student, and pastors or pastors' wives were each mentioned one time. Overall, seven women mentioned individuals from outside the institution who were not family.

There are a few additional points that were conveyed through this interview item. Two of the participants directly commented that they thought it was interesting that their network of support was comprised only of males. Only one interviewee described a network comprised only of women. Finally, of those individuals identified by name as being a part of a respondent's support network, four were women.

*Item 20: Describe any important events, opportunities, or occurrences that played a key role in your current success.*

Nineteen of the respondents provided specific responses to this item, while one participant did not have any events or opportunities to mention. While many of the responses were events or opportunities, almost half of the participants described personal traits, institutional traits, or personal philosophies in their reactions.

#### *Events or Opportunities*

The events or opportunities that played a key role in the success of the participants were professional development trainings, educational opportunities, past jobs or job opportunities, specific institutional assignments, and difficult professional situations.

Two women mentioned professional development as a key to their success. One participant described a specific program that "was really helpful in learning how

universities operate...that was probably a very beneficial program.” In addition to professional development, three respondents listed formal or informal educational opportunities. Describing her education, one vice president stated

I use every tool that I ever learned...I credit my professors that I had to get past the book and get into practical knowledge and what it is we were learning and how we could put it into place. I also learned from a lot of people that didn't have good management skills...I learned from a lot of people that I am very capable of doing a lot of things.

For these participants, knowledge and skills gained through professional development and educational opportunities were pivotal to their success.

Past positions or job opportunities were mentioned by four of the participants.

One participant had previously interviewed for a vice presidential position but was not selected. This event was “strategic” to her ultimate advancement.

Going to that vice presidential interview was two days, very intense, where I met with faculty, vice presidents, and I met with everyone in the division, and I think people saw me in a new light. And so even though I didn't get the job...I am so thankful I went through the experience because I gained so much by people getting to know me, hear my viewpoints on things, where they wouldn't have normally.

Three women described past positions that led to growth and opportunity. One stated that her prior position had provided “a leadership niche” that “opened up a lot of doors” for her. A second participant replied that she “just can't emphasize enough the role, the impact of having that particular role, played in setting up how my career evolved and the approach I take to things and the understanding that I have of the organization.” The third vice president served as the interim in her position while a national search was conducted. As interim, she was able to work with the cabinet and gain an understanding of the institution. By the end of the search, the president asked her to fill the position.

Thus, previous jobs and interview experiences were identified as playing a key role in career advancement.

Four vice presidents described specific institutional assignments that were important in their advancement. One participant described an opportunity to develop a new program for her institution.

I think I was able to demonstrate the capacity to bring up a program from scratch and make it successful and move it forward on a relatively slim budget. It was that sort of...demonstration of a management ability that did help in identifying somebody who might be appropriate for this role.

A second participant portrayed two of her job responsibilities as “very frightening, big, scary, hairy monsters” that were also “wonderful opportunities to...grow in leadership.” She also said that this “kind of opportunity doesn’t come along just everyday.” From these experiences she learned about leading a group that includes constituents from across the institutional spectrum, which she referred to as “an important skill to learn in higher ed[ucation].” A third participant described her selection for the presidential search committee. This opportunity allowed her to work with trustees and get to know the new president through the process. Through this experience, she felt a “calling” to serve the new president.

I did not particularly feel called to this position, but I definitely felt called to his presidency, to ensure whatever I could do to advance the vision that he brought to this institution. Those dynamics of...getting to know him through the search process, but more importantly being called to his vision, were the factors that you are asking about.

The fourth vice president also mentioned participation on a presidential search committee. In addition to this role, she stated that overseeing the reaccreditation process for her institution provided her with pivotal experience. Overall, institutional assignments contributed to the career advancement for four of the participants.

Finally, three of the participants described professional situations that led to growth or opportunity. One vice president said that her “career has been one of solving problems.”

Each boss that I have had has said, “You know, this is an area that we really need to work on,” and then he would put it under my leadership...God just honestly blessed, and that thing would either be solved or...I was able to take it to another level where it needed to be...Then they would give me another – I’ll call it a problem area; you could call it an opportunity – something that they needed someone to advance. By doing that, I have had a really broad level of experience...You build a history of success, people have confidence in you, and I really feel like that’s how I have advanced.

A second participant described a campus tragedy that gave her a “very public opportunity to demonstrate clear leadership, decisions, and communication networks.” She stated, “I was able to run things and be a major player at that table.” Finally, a third vice president described a situation where she had two possible career paths. One path promised to be extremely difficult and potentially threatening to her career. She expressed that this difficult choice gave her “the drive to go ahead and take this [current] position.” Thus, unique professional situations led to career advancement for three of the participants.

In response to this question, 12 of the participants described one or more events or opportunities that led to career advancement. From some respondents, the same question elicited answers along different lines. Instead of mentioning events, some of the vice presidents described personal traits, institutional traits, or personal philosophies.

### *Personal Traits*

Five women described personal traits in response to this question. One person described being a workaholic and being dedicated to the institution. A second participant expressed her dedication to the institution as being key.



I can't think of one thing in particular...It may go back to just the time that I had as a student here...[that] had started that journey for me...even now, to me, even though we've grown as much as we have...it's still the same atmosphere that I experienced when I was a student here...relationships and personal attention that I felt, that I feel like our students get now.

Her experience as a student was the beginning of her dedication to the university. Two of the participants described a willingness to take on tasks and do good work. In doing so, one of the vice presidents characterized herself and her peers in SBCUs.

We see something that needs to be done, and we're willing to take on the task...We'll go get whatever it needs. We need to do it. That's it. Nobody has said, "There it is. Go this way. If you do this and this, this will happen." And all the women that I know in Baptist leadership roles have that characteristic and are very focused.

Finally, one woman described her desire to advance so that she could amply provide for her family. She stated, "You want to give to your children more than you had...I can't say it was an event, but it was definitely a powerful incentive." Thus, dedication to the institution, a willingness to work and to accept tasks, and a desire to provide for family are personal traits that five women described as being keys to their career advancement.

#### *Institutional Traits*

Two women mentioned institutional traits in response to this item. In both cases, the leadership of the institution was mentioned. One vice president said, "I honestly chalk it up to open-minded administration." The other participant specifically mentioned her president.

It would have been difficult for me to break through to the vice president level without the support of our new president...His support and his decision to do that were really important in that last step that I've made. Up to that point, there was precedent, and people were comfortable with that.

Therefore, for two of the vice presidents, supportive leadership was significant for their career advancement.

### *Personal Philosophies*

Three of the women described a philosophical outlook as being a key to their career advancement. For two of the vice presidents, this philosophy was stated simply as “being in the right place at the right time.” The other participant described a viewpoint that was faith-based.

I really am a strong person of faith, and I really do believe that the Lord puts us in places that we need to be in order to serve Him, and I also believe that He identified needs that this institution had at critical points...and just happened to give me an opportunity to help address those needs. And so I think a lot of it was just timing, in terms of God’s plan, more than my own doings.

Thus, for a few of the women, personal or religious outlooks were mentioned as a key to career advancement.

Therefore, eight of the women shared personal traits, institutional traits, or philosophies that guided or impacted their career advancement, while twelve participants named a specific event or occurrence. One woman mentioned both an occurrence and a personal trait, and one participant did not respond.

*Item 21: Describe any personal events that hindered or slowed your ascent to your current position.*

The most common response to this question was related to family in some way. Beyond family, there were four other distinct responses. Six of the vice presidents did not list any personal events that acted as a hindrance.

### *Factors Related to Family*

Ten women listed an obstacle that was related to their husband or children. Three of these described children as a factor that hindered or slowed their ascent. One of these women said that having a child led to “internal pressure on myself.” She wondered,

“How do I be a good mom, also work full time, [and] also somehow manage a household?” After having her first child, another participant said she was “naïve enough” to ask her president if she could work fewer hours. Although her initial response was to ask for reduced time, she eventually found a solution that helped her balance her personal and professional duties. A third vice president stated that she wanted to keep her children in their school, and as a result, her career options were geographically limited.

Husbands also factored into geographic limitations to advancement. Three women described situations where they had to consider their husbands’ professions and the geographic issues related to them. One vice president said she was not “willing to move just anywhere...because of my husband’s career as well as mine having to be considered,” and she described this limitation as “self-imposed.” Another participant said that her husband was “one of [her] biggest supporters,” but that he “never wanted to relocate.” She added that this was “very difficult for a woman wanting to move into a presidency or anything along that line.”

In addition to geographic issues, other circumstances related to husbands were listed as hindrances. Two vice presidents were concerned about perceptions related to the fact that both husband and wife were employed at the same institution. One of these women said that she “was concerned about whether that would be perceived as a conflict of interests,” but she concluded by saying, “the institution was always very supportive and never made that an issue.” A second vice president said that working on the same campus as her husband was an obstacle.

The fact that my husband worked here at the same time...that’s been a hindrance in some ways, because he had a very prominent position on campus...When a husband and wife team work for the same institution, and they are both in

positions of responsibility, it does make it a little difficult...So that's been a problem.

One vice president expressed limited career options because her husband worked at the same institution in a related field. Since she cannot supervise her husband, she was limited in the areas in which she could serve as vice president. Thus, a total of six participants mentioned issues related to their husbands as being hindrances to advancement.

Finally, two vice presidents said that being divorced could be a personal hindrance to career advancement. In both cases, the women seemed to struggle with being divorced, yet each woman said that it had not been an obstacle in the past, but it could be a hurdle in the future.

Working in the environment that I work in...struggling with the fact that I had a divorce...I guess [it] could have potentially been very much a setback...My best judgment call is that I had proven my ability to do the job well, and that over a period of years...not only had I worked through it, but I continued to do what I had been doing...so I was given an opportunity because I did the job well or saw to details and I guess my ability overshadowed the fact that I was divorced...I'm not saying that it didn't provide a hindrance, but I just didn't let it pull me down.

For the other participant who listed divorce as an issue, a key factor in acquiring her current position was a recommendation by a past employer. Although the divorce did not hinder her from gaining that position, she feared that it might be an issue in the future.

[If] I had just applied for the job...as a divorced woman, I think it would have made it very hard for me...I think the divorce would have hindered me, and it could possibly hinder me in the future...the Lord just worked all that out, and I had the credibility that I needed for the current president to say, "That is not an issue for me." So I am grateful for that.

Thus, although two women mentioned divorce as a hindrance, their concerns were primarily about the impact on future opportunities.

Overall, ten women described hurdles related to children, husbands, or marital status. In addition to family-related issues, there were other hindrances listed by the participants.

*Other Factors not Related to Family*

Five of the participants described obstacles that were not related to children or spouses. Two of the vice presidents said that they had to wait until their predecessors retired to pursue the position. One woman said that her predecessor routinely pushed back his timeline for retirement.

[T]here were times that I was honestly about ready to throw in the towel, but I just decided that...I wanted to be here, I knew it wasn't going to last forever, and I was willing to stick it out.

Another hurdle described by one participant was not having career goals or strategy. She stated that her hindrance was "not having a definite plan for moving forward" and also claimed, "I did not have career goals; I really actually probably still don't." When another vice president was asked about personal hurdles, she described her childhood.

I was the first person in my family to go to college...[We were] monetarily poor, but very rich in...hope and encouragement, and so that is what I would point to as...laying the foundation...My whole life was shaped around education.

Rather than describing life events, one participant said that the only hindrance she faced was being female.

I used to attend regularly the Baptist group of administrators...I don't do that, because it's all men. What hinders me is being a female. That's it...It's not that they don't accept me...and it's not about this institution. It's about Southern Baptists in general. You cannot preach, you know, you realize that. A Southern Baptist minister cannot be a woman.

Thus, this participant reported her gender as her only hurdle.

Overall, ten women listed obstacles that were related to spouses or children, while five women described hurdles not related to family. One participant listed hurdles in both categories. Six respondents did not describe any personal hurdles.

*Item 22: Describe any factors or events in your professional life that hindered or slowed your ascent to your current position.*

This item on the questionnaire pertained to professional hindrances, while the previous item referred to personal hurdles. Although the type of hurdle differed, there was a small amount of overlapping in responses. In addition, the most common response was “none.”

Of the 20 participants, 10 of the vice presidents replied that there were no professional hindrances that slowed their success. One woman stated, “No, I ascended to my current position before I was really ready.” Another respondent explained that she didn’t view her professional life in terms of hurdles.

I don’t know if I can think of any, only because that is so opposite of my own professional philosophy and how I kind of grew up by. I just view everything as...whatever I need to tackle or work on to move forward...Because I never really had a career goal or plan of action, I don’t think I’ve ever viewed things in those terms, and so it’s hard for me to think in those terms. So I can’t think of anything.

Some participants described their experiences before concluding that there were no professional hindrances. For example, one woman described some trials in her career path, but she viewed the trials in positive terms.

I have had two or three people try to stand in my way, but I really think that I have been...blessed in the opportunities that I’ve been given...Basically, the opportunities have come along when I was ready for them...I don’t know that there have been any hindrances that I don’t see now a reason for them.

Overall, half of the participants concluded that there were no significant professional hurdles in their ascendancy to their current positions. The other ten respondents described obstacles related to educational degree, to gender, to leadership, or to other factors.

#### *Hindrances Related to Degree*

Three of the vice presidents described professional hindrances related to their education. One of the women expressed disappointment in not completing a terminal degree.

I did not finish my terminal degree...and that has definitely been a factor...because many, many people in the position that I hold do have terminal degrees, and that's a personal...disappointment as well...When I thought about pursuing it...I wanted to be available to [my children]. I wanted to be able to share their experience, so my pursuing the doctoral hours would have been a significant time element, and I wasn't willing to make that sacrifice....I don't have regret, but it is somewhat of a disappointment, because I know I could have done it...That would be a professional hindrance.

While this vice president described not finishing a terminal degree, another woman expressed concerns about not having a masters degree.

I think not having a masters degree hindered my success...Had I known at the time that I was working on my education that I would wind up in education, I would have done things much differently, but that was not my career path...Because I was in a position of a lot of responsibility to start with, I really had a hard time having enough time in my schedule to pursue education. Each president that I worked for told me, "Don't worry about it. You're doing a fantastic job..." I do think not having a masters degree was a big mistake, and I should have tried to get that sooner.

Finally, the third participant stated that she would have pursued a masters degree in a different field had she known the limitations connected to the degree she held. Thus, three women described obstacles that were related to their educational degrees.

#### *Hindrances Related to Gender*

Three women described gender related factors as professional hurdles. In two cases, there were attitudes or actions related to gender discrimination, while in the third case, there were concerns about propriety. One vice president did not hesitate to mention gender as her professional obstacle.

Oh, I think it is definitely my gender...I don't see it across the board, but I've seen it in little pockets...other people in key positions, not our president at all who is very wonderful and open minded, but in some people along the way who just would not have envisioned it as a possibility...That would come through in some of the [questions] like "Why would I want to do that?" and "Why would I want to work so hard?" That was always very irritating to me, but I just forged ahead...Obviously, that didn't ultimately hold me back, but I can see that it could hold some women back if the person in ultimate authority has that type of ingrained attitude.

A second woman discussed gender as being a professional hurdle and stated that under a previous president, there was a "keep the women in their place" attitude. She also described gender discrepancies related to salaries and an institution with no female leadership.

[I]t would have been hard to advance. It's odd that I do feel like that for a period of time, the men could do what they wanted to, they could play any kind of game, but the women, they had to toe the line and stay in control...[Salaries] were bad overall, but for women they were abysmal...I know that women's salaries...were half of what their male counterparts were making.

A change in leadership ultimately led to her success, to an improvement in salaries, and to eliminating the gender gap in pay, but not before encountering another trial. Prior to becoming vice president, this woman was encouraged to respond to a difficult situation in such a way that lacked integrity and honesty. Ultimately, she chose the route of complete honesty, but she also suffered for it and questioned whether her gender was also a factor.

I took some hits for that, and professionally, probably took hits for it for some period of time...Now in essence, I was kept from [being named for a position] because I took a stand...I just feel that had that been a man in that position, then we wouldn't have had that scenario.



Finally, a third participant described concerns related to being a woman vice president and having to work closely with the president, including traveling with the president.

I think Southern Baptist schools are pretty sensitive to any appearances of impropriety, and I think that our presidents are very careful to avoid anything that might look improper. And frankly, being a woman might have put me in a position where that was an uncomfortable thing, or it might have set him up to look like it wasn't something proper... People are a little leery of that, and so that might be one hindrance where perhaps [in] an institution that didn't have a Christian focus, people might not be quite so worried about that or not think anything of it.

Thus, there were a few concerns related to how issues related to gender acted as a hindrance in their professional careers.

#### *Hindrances Related to Leadership*

Two vice presidents described obstacles that were related to the leadership at their institutions. One participant had to wait for her predecessor to leave the institution before she was able to step into the position. In this case, the predecessor had been at the university for a number of years, and waiting for this individual to leave slowed her progress. (Two other women described a similar scenario in response to Item 21 regarding personal hindrances.) Another vice president referred to her predecessor but in different terms. She stated that her “biggest problem” was that the prior administration “allow[ed] someone who was not competent be in a VP position,” and she had to “just watch things be not done.” She went on to say that “it took many years before they would finally get in there and do something about the situation.” This was viewed as a professional obstacle to her ultimate success. Thus, two women described hindrances related to institutional leadership.

#### *Other Hindrances*

Two participants described other hurdles that did not fit into the previous categories. One vice president expressed concerns about not being able to participate in scholarly activity due to her heavy teaching load.

One of the issues that you have at a small, liberal arts college is the heavy teaching load, and one of the very things that was a strength for me, which was that I was perceived as a good teacher...also meant that I had a lot of responsibility in that area and could not develop my scholarly potential, and I do think that slowed me down to promotion to full professor...Oddly enough, the very thing that probably hurt my professional career in that way helped me on the administrative side, because I was spending a great more time on the teaching and administration than on the straight scholarship.

The second participant responded to this question in the same way that she responded to the previous question regarding personal obstacles. She described her professional hindrances as being “self-imposed” and that she was limited in her career options since she was not willing to “move just anywhere.” This geographic constraint was due to having to consider her husband’s career in addition to her own. Thus, only two responses fell outside of the categories of education, gender, and institutional leadership.

Overall, half of the respondents expressed that there were no professional hindrances in their career advancement. Eight of the participants described obstacles related to education, gender, or institutional leadership. Only two of the participants listed hindrances that did not fit into those categories.

*Item 23: How would you characterize the culture at your institution in accepting women into positions within the upper-level administrative branch?*

Overall, the terms used to describe institutional culture were very positive. Seventeen of the participants described their institutional cultures using very positive terms, while only one respondent used negative terms. For two of the women, the descriptors were mixed.

### *Positive Institutional Cultures*

Seventeen of the vice presidents painted their institutional cultures in a positive light. Of these women, 13 described the culture towards women using terms such as: positive, warm, welcoming, like a family, supportive, encouraging, appreciated, open, and progressive. For one participant, the open atmosphere at her institution was linked to being a better institution.

[We are] very open here. Very open here. It almost seems like the more [women], the better the institution is as far as its quality of academic programming and the more open they are...There is a relationship, a correlation there between women who see themselves as being able to do those kinds of things at their institution and how good that institution actually is.

Another respondent described her institutional culture as “very positive” and that the “perception is that it’s definitely attainable for women.”

Another positive trait of the institutional culture was related to competence.

Three women described cultures where competence was valued over gender. In portraying her institutional culture, one participant said, “Warm, welcoming, not an issue. It’s more related to competence than gender.” Another vice president said, “We are like a big family...they look at the qualities and the qualifications; they don’t really look at the gender as much.” Finally, a third respondent said that her president is “very encouraging” and “he wants to find the best person for the job, and it doesn’t bother him at all that we are women.” Thus, three participants regarded the emphasis of competence over gender as a positive trait of the institutional culture.

In some cases, although the overall description was positive, some participants acknowledged that there was some resistance to the concept of having female leaders. One vice president said, “Those that didn’t like it...or maybe didn’t care for females in

leadership positions have not shown their face to me. They have kept their opinions to themselves or others, but I have felt great support.” In depicting an overall positive culture, seven of the participants described the progress of how their cultures have become more accepting of women administrators over time. One vice president, in an otherwise all-male cabinet, explained that some of the traditions and structures of the cabinet were established because the entire group had always been male. For example the administrators would go to a meeting, while the wives would do an activity that was stereotypically female. As the first and only woman leader, she was perceived as “a novelty,” but she handled it with patience and humor. She said change came as “people [were] getting used to the idea [of a female vice president] and [said], ‘Oh, wait, we might have to rethink how we do this.’” Her institutional culture adapted to the presence of women in senior leadership. For another participant, the reaction to women leaders was “mixed” but ultimately positive.

I felt like I really had to fight... Obviously, I have been accepted, and I don't even think of myself as a female. I think a couple of people on the cabinet go, “Whoa, there's a female,” but I don't think of myself as a female.

Thus, while the majority of cultures were described in positive terms, seven of the vice presidents elaborated on the progress their institutions had made toward accepting women leaders.

For two of other respondents, the positive institutional culture they now enjoy was achieved only with a change in the presidency. A new president at one institution caused a barrier to be broken when he named the first female vice president for the university.

Prior to our new president, the words “slow,” “cautious,” and sometimes never even thought about [described the culture towards women leadership]... [W]hen I was moved into this position, I received tons of emails from females on this campus that were watching me very, very closely, and it's not from a negative

standpoint, because they knew, that by me moving in here, that can help transform. So, we had the good old boy's system, [but] we are now getting more women trustees – that was even slow in coming about...I think that [my appointment] kind of set things in motion. It kind of broke...that glass ceiling.

A second participant described the institution's former president as being “not particularly encouraging” in the area of women in leadership; however, the president that followed was described as “very supportive in looking for ways to broaden participation.” Thus, for two of the vice presidents, a change of leadership led to a more positive outlook towards women in leadership positions.

Overall, seventeen of the participants emphasized positive traits, used positive descriptors, or described an atmosphere of progress related to their institutional cultures. For almost half of these women, the proof was in the numbers. Eight of the respondents listed the number of women in senior leadership or in administrative positions as proof that their institutions accepted women in leadership positions.

#### *Mixed Institutional Cultures*

Two of the participants described their institutional cultures as being positive, but each of the women spent the majority of their responses describing the more negative aspects of the culture. One vice president described “pockets” of resistance in a culture that is mostly accepting.

[F]or the most part, [the institution] has been very accepting. There are still pockets, that I think have some issues, but I think overall...90% of the people who work here are very accepting...and recognize the achievements [of women]. There are a handful of people that still do not, and I don't know if they don't feel comfortable, but they don't think there's a place for women...That becomes evident sometimes in meetings and in processing the work that goes on here.

A second vice president described a supportive president who “find[s] leadership opportunities for women.” This participant continued to describe the difficulties that she has encountered in being a woman leader in a Southern Baptist environment.

But there are other people who are very influential like trustees, and pastors in town, and parents who in a Southern Baptist environment are not as comfortable with women in leadership, and that’s a reality of the culture that you have to be sensitive to and aware of and smart in...how you deal with that. I think a big challenge for women in a Southern Baptist environment is not reading that issue into every decision, but at the same time, being aware that it might be there. And it’s more how we respond and react in those situations than really who we are and how capable we are of doing the job. So there are those moments of frustration and those moments where I have to step back and go “OK, is this, is this because I’m a woman or is it just because?”

In these two cases, the participants did not describe the progression of the institution from being less open to more open to women leaders. Instead, these two vice presidents described some of the current difficulties within a culture that has some positive traits. Thus, these responses were characterized as being more mixed rather than being strictly positive.

#### *Negative Institutional Cultures*

Only one participant used mostly negative terminology to describe her institutional culture. When asked the question, she said “sluggish” and then laughed. This vice president went on to discuss how her institution has had only a handful of women in senior leadership. She said, “You have to pay your dues. That is the best way I can describe it. Now there are some women deans...but it’s still very male dominated.” Overall, only one respondent provided a negative description of her institution’s acceptance of women holding senior administrative positions.

In describing the cultures of their institutions, many of the vice presidents commented on whether they envisioned a female president at their institutions.

*Women as University Presidents*

Seventeen of the participants were asked if they envisioned a female president at their institution. Three of the women said yes, seven of the participants said no, and seven of the respondents indicated that there was a chance that a female might be president someday.

Three of the participants said that they could envision a female president at their institution. Each of these respondents also described a positive institutional culture toward women leaders. One of the women identified a change in the makeup of the trustees as the key to accomplish this goal.

We are getting younger trustees, and I think that is going to play a major role, because these younger trustees have wives that come from a different culture. It's not that submissive, and I don't mean that the negative way, but it's not that submissive type behavior like my mom had growing up. For her, you know, it was a woman's place. I do think that youngness on the board is going to make a difference.

Another participant identified the growing number of women administrators and the openness of the Board of Trustees as being indicators that a female president "could actually be possible one day here." Overall, three women described their culture using positive terms and believed that their institutions were open to a woman in the presidency.

Seven of the participants said that a woman would probably not be chosen for the presidency at their institutions. Of these seven respondents, six of the women described positive cultures toward women leaders, but denied that the culture would be open to a woman in the presidency. These vice presidents provided a number of reasons for their views. Two of the women said that the Southern Baptist heritage of their institutions was the barrier to having a female president. One woman said that the president of the

institution is required to be a minister. She continued by saying, “Though [a woman minister], of course, is becoming more and more possible, especially on the more moderate side of the Baptist spectrum...it certainly narrows the potential candidate pool.” Another vice president offered a different perspective related to the president being a minister.

I would think the trustees and the state convention that we interact with [would not want a female president]. It’s not the same, but I think they would view that position as, sort of the pastor role, or the shepherd of the flock of the institution...[I]n the denomination, that’s considered, at least for Southern Baptists, that that is something that women can’t necessarily hold. And that’s my personal perception of it, but that is my feeling, that it would not necessarily be an opportunity open.

One participant provided a more pragmatic view. In describing her perception of her institutional culture, she said, “There’s an understanding that higher ed[ucation] is different than positions of leadership in the local church.” However, she did not believe that a woman president would be able to be an effective fundraiser. She expressed concerns about a woman president “going out to lunch with pastors who are sending their children [to the institution]” and concluded, “I just don’t see it being an effective model right now.” One of the seven participants who could not envision a woman president had a more mixed view of her institutional culture. In her response, the primary barrier for a woman pursuing the presidency would be outside the institution.

Well, I would like to think so, but no, I don’t think that will happen. I think the institution itself, the culture and the institution itself, could handle it, but I don’t think the constituents outside the institution would handle it. So, no, I don’t anticipate that happening. I do think that’s a shame, because I do think some of our Southern Baptist schools are going to lose what I would consider top administrators. And as I look at administrators available coming up through the ranks, there aren’t just that many. And I think our Southern Baptist institutions are going to be in trouble in the next few years. And I think it simply goes back to the Convention digging their heels in that women can’t be president.



Thus, even though the participants were likely to have a positive view of the institution's attitude toward women leaders, seven of the vice presidents did not envision a woman occupying the president's office.

Finally, seven participants did not commit to a strict "yes" or "no" to the question regarding a female president at their institutions. One simply said, "I'd like to think so," and described the progress made at her institution in the past few years. Another participant thought it was a possibility at her institution because the culture "is a bit more liberal than a lot of the Baptist colleges." She continued by clarifying that the candidate would have to "be a known" rather than chosen through a list of resumes. The remaining five of the seven said that they thought a female could be president, but that it would be a possibility only in the future. One vice president said, "Twenty years from now, as the church continues to develop in its thinking about women in the church, so will [my] university, but not before that. It [the institution] will not wish to be a lightning rod for that issue." Another participant provided a future time frame and linked the issue to a "new generation" of board members.

Possibly down the road. We still have a few of the very, very conservative, old school thinking people that are still on the board that are older people who might still have concerns. But I think, as time moves forward, the trustees that are coming on board or are of the new generation and are more progressive in their thinking...I think it will happen eventually, but I don't think within the next 10 years.

Overall, seven of the respondents thought a female president was a possibility, but they also provided some qualifications for their viewpoints. In addition, all seven of the participants had previously described their institutional cultures using positive or mostly positive language.

Although a strong majority of the participants described their institutional culture in accepting women as leaders using positive language, only a handful of respondents could envision a woman in the office of the president. Seventeen women used positive language to describe their institutional cultures, while only one used strictly negative language. The remaining two respondents had a more mixed description. At the same time, the participants were not likely to express confidence that a woman would someday serve in the presidency at their institutions. Only three women could actually envision a female president, while seven said that they could not. Seven other women were hopeful that a woman would someday be president. The remaining three participants were not specifically asked about whether they could envision a female president.

*Item 24: What advice or suggestions would you provide to women who would like to advance to senior-level administrative positions?*

This question led to a variety of responses that can be divided into one of four categories: professional characteristics, professional strategies, professional philosophies, or gender-related advice. Several of the respondents offered multiple pieces of advice.

#### *Professional Characteristics*

Five participants listed characteristics that would benefit individuals who are pursuing leadership roles. These characteristics were: to be professional, to be diplomatic, to listen well, to be yourself, and to be passionate about your role. Each of these characteristics was listed exactly once, other than “be professional” which was listed by two respondents.

#### *Professional Strategies*

Thirteen participants described professional strategies that would help aspiring administrators become effective leaders. These strategies were related to: education, work, networking, mentoring, professional development, strategy development, and accreditation experience.

Six of the vice presidents identified their approach to work as being a significant career strategy. Advice regarding work included, “be serious about your work,” “do a great job,” and “push up your sleeves and work hard.” One participant said, “I just try to work hard to do a good job, and the rest kind of just comes with that.” Another vice president summed up her approach to work by saying, “Take time and do it right, and dig a little deeper...challenge [yourself], and raise questions, and stretch yourself.” Thus, six respondents suggested that aspiring administrators should have a strong work ethic.

Five of the participants listed education as a key to professional success. One respondent represented a direct approach when she stated, “[W]ithout a doubt, it’s education and having that to back you up.” While three women discussed education in general, a fourth vice president emphasized earning a doctoral degree.

I would advise them to get the doctorate, because no matter what they think they might do, or might not do, I have found that what I think I will do isn’t always what happens...I think that having the degree eliminates any question of being qualified for a position. It may not be that it is a doctorate in something that is even an exact match to what you end up doing, but in academics, I just think that’s kind of the baseline. It’s the key that opens doors.

Finally, a fifth participant described a specific degree, a masters or doctorate in educational administration, as being beneficial. Although this respondent did not have this degree, she expressed disappointment that it was not an option when she was pursuing her education. Thus, five participants identified the completion of appropriate degrees as an important professional strategy.

Three vice presidents suggested professional development opportunities to women who are aspiring to be senior leaders. One participant stated that leadership development was as important, and possibly more important, than continued development in a field.

[M]ake the leadership development as equal to, or maybe even prioritize leadership development, just as you would staying professionally astute in your guild... [I]f it means giving up attending your own, whatever your discipline is, your own annual conference to stay up on your area, if you have to sacrifice for the sake of leadership, so be it. Leadership is in itself a discipline, obviously because of the degree programs in it, but it is a calling. It is a specific role within higher ed[ucation] in and of itself, and so my last point there is just to make it that, and study it, and participate in opportunities to develop it.

Leadership camps and conferences related to areas of responsibility were also specifically mentioned. Thus, three participants cited professional development as important for aspiring leaders.

Other advice was mentioned less frequently. Two participants suggested that aspiring administrators develop a career strategy and vision. One vice president said that experience in accreditation was “probably the most effective strategy...to develop leadership.” One respondent mentioned networking as a professional strategy and stated, “[I]t’s important to network, and some of your best recommendations will probably not come from your own institution. Find people you trust to recommend or nominate you for positions and be willing to write strong letters of recommendation.” One vice president suggested mentoring as being beneficial for aspiring women administrators.

I think that the biggest thing is training so that they can be around other women that can be mentors for them. I’ve got a young girl that is one of my directors that I am trying to mentor her in making decisions, good, wise decisions in dealing with people... That does not come as naturally because we tend to back off or, to be nonconfrontive [sic], and sometimes we just can’t do that. So it’s not that we have to think like a man, because I don’t want us to lose our femininity, but I do

think we have to learn some of the tools of the trade. That comes from people who have been in there and can tell you things.

Thus, forming a career strategy, networking, mentoring, and gaining experience in accreditation are other professional strategies for aspiring leaders.

In addition to professional characteristics and strategies, some participants offered personal philosophies as advice for future administrators.

### *Professional Philosophies*

Twelve participants described professional philosophies in response to the request for advice for aspiring women leaders.

The most common philosophy mentioned by the respondents was “Prove yourself.” Five women described the need for administrators to prove themselves. In one case, the vice president linked the advice to being female when she stated, “Regardless the year we are talking about, women very, very much have to prove themselves.” A second participant separated the advice from gender. She suggested, “Prove yourself as anybody would. I don’t see this particularly as a gender-specific point here, but take responsibility and grow it along the way.” The other three respondents simply concurred with the philosophy of “prove yourself,” but they did not mention gender. Thus, the advice “Prove yourself” was expressed by five vice presidents.

A philosophy described by three of the participants was “Take risks and opportunities.” One of the vice presidents stated, “Take opportunities to solve problems...Don’t run away from a challenge. Be the one who steps in and says, ‘I can handle that.’” A second vice president expressed a similar sentiment when she recommended, “Be willing to accept some risks and move into positions.” Another vice president described this philosophy in the context of career paths.

[B]eing open to trying a non-traditional path through things might be good advice as well...Being open to trying different things, even if you can't figure it out how on earth that will all fit together. It's funny how things do.

Thus, being willing to take risks and try new opportunities was a piece of advice offered to aspiring administrators.

Two vice presidents emphasized having a balanced life when they provided advice for future leaders. Both of these participants discussed the responsibilities of the personal life balanced with the demands of the professional life. The first respondent included faith and family as facets of a personal life.

[Y]ou do have to learn how to balance your family and your work and you know, your relationship with Christ and church involvement and all that...[T]here has to be a healthy balance there, and it does require having support of your spouse...So learning to balance everything is really key.

A second vice president provided a caution targeted at women.

Well, I think you have to be very, very careful to balance your personal and your professional career...that it not be out of whack, one or the other. Unfortunately, at times, I see some women put such a high emphasis on their personal lives that it can hinder them from advancing professionally...[I]t's just very difficult if you're...caring for children or you have other responsibilities that can inadvertently happen. And so I think women have to be very careful to give the appearance that they're taking their job very seriously and not allowing external things to pull them away from their commitment...That's a very important thing...But I don't mean be all business, either. All of us need to have a healthy personal life to be complete people.

In both cases, the theme of the advice was the importance of balancing personal and professional lives.

Five other philosophies each received a single mention. One vice president cautioned, "Don't take anything personal [sic]." Another respondent provided a focus for work in higher education.

[T]hink of why you are here in the first place, and that is to help students, and if you focus on that, people will recognize that you can do jobs that are bigger and give you opportunities to be promoted.

One participant suggested that believing in the importance and necessity of having women in leadership is key to success. She said, “The very first step is to make the point very clearly that women in leadership are a must for an effective leadership team.” One vice president approached this question with a different viewpoint when she stated, “My advice is do not do it unless you are called.” She continued by stating, “I feel very few women should attempt this, and the women [who] feel called will be given the grace to do it.” Finally, one vice president summed it up, “Believe that it is possible,” and she offered herself as proof. Overall, there were five philosophies that were each offered by one participant.

Thus, a total of eight professional philosophies were suggested by a total of twelve women as advice for aspiring women leaders.

#### *Gender-related Advice*

Seven women offered advice that was specifically linked to being female, or in some cases, linked to not being male. One participant suggested that women not view their gender as an automatic benefit when she stated, “Don’t expect that because you are a woman, that people are going to be looking to advance you over your male counterparts.” A second vice president expressed that a woman’s attitude in the work environment is important.

[W]e have to be really careful as women about the attitude we have in coming into the workplace. Whether it be administrative or otherwise, but maybe especially administrative, we can’t come in with an attitude of “I’m going to show you.”

Another participant described a similar sentiment when she said, “Don’t be obsessed with the fact that you are a female and go into things assuming you are going to face extra

roadblocks or that people are going to discriminate against you.” One vice president succinctly suggested, “Try not to wear [your] gender on [your] sleeve,” while a different respondent said, “Sometimes women hurt themselves by getting a little too involved in petty things.”

In addition to these suggestions, two of the participants mentioned the “old boy’s network” when they offered their advice to aspiring women leaders. One of the vice presidents said, “Be ready to endure the old boy network...It is still there.” She continued by describing the network as unintentional and “simply habit” and suggested that women “not be resentful of that because it’s human nature.” The other vice president advised, “There is still a little bit of a boy’s club, so you have to work a little hard to fit into that.” Thus, the boy’s network or boy’s club was mentioned by two of the respondents in response to this item.

Finally, one participant provided some gender-specific advice related to different standards for women and how to handle those differences.

[T]he lens is really greater if you’re a woman...[Y]ou’ll be picked apart more. You’ll not be forgiven as quickly. So you really have to be cautious how you deal with people. I know that there are comments made to me in evaluations and in conversations about my personality that would never be said to a man. And I have to swallow part of that and then part of that I have to say, “but is there some truth in this?”...Could I have handled this differently, or could I have said this differently?...I don’t think we can fix that. I think we have to learn how to accept that. But, I really think...you’re not going to change it. This kind of issue takes generations of time and if you find yourself to be with a supportive president, a supportive cabinet, a supportive group of trustees, just say “thank you Lord”, because that’s going to be very unusual if you get support from all three of those. But don’t go in thinking you are going to change it. Go in thinking, “OK, how am I going to work with this?” There’s a lot...of cultural and environmental issues you can’t change, and that’s just one of them. So, fair or unfair, it’s there and you have to deal with it.



Thus, this vice president provided a perspective on being a woman leader within a culture that is not always “fair” to women.

Overall, the participants provided a variety of advice for future women leaders, and the suggestions were categorized in four ways: professional characteristics, professional strategies, professional philosophies, and gender-related advice.

*Item 25: Is there anything that I have not asked you that is important to your story?*

For this item, participants were asked to add any additional information or insight that they felt was important. Three participants had no additional comments or stories, while the 17 remaining respondents provided a variety of responses. The responses can be categorized into three groups: related to the personal story, related to the institution or career, and related to gender.

#### *Related to the Personal Story*

Eight women shared additional details, feelings, or insights related to her personal story. One vice president expressed her gratitude and love for her job. She claimed, “I could not have thought about a better position” and said that she was “the only person who jumps up out of bed and recited their mission statement to go to work.” Another participant declared, “I’ve spent half my life [at this institution], and this is home.” A third vice president discussed her indecision regarding pursuing a doctorate and described the hurdles she overcame to complete her masters. A different respondent described the impact of her divorce on her career. She expressed, “It’s just very hard, because I think there is a stigma that comes with [being divorced], and it’s very difficult to shake.” She concluded, “[I]t’s very difficult for people who are divorced to be in leadership positions at a Baptist institution.” While divorce was mentioned by one woman, faith was

discussed by four of the participants. One vice president, who was not Baptist, expressed, “I wondered if [being non-Baptist] was a big deal, but no one has ever said anything to me about that.” While denomination was mentioned by one, some other participants discussed the impact of faith. One woman acknowledged God and His plan for her.

[M]y story is that I was not a person who graduated from college with a real clear career plan of where I wanted to go. I would say my story is one where God has really led me in ways that I was not expecting... and having that confidence that this is exactly where God wants me to be, and some people have used the example of Esther, that He put me here “for such a time as this.” And, I think, to be really confident in a role like this, which I really feel like I am, God’s given me...a very clear sense this is exactly where God wants me to be, even though it doesn’t necessarily fit with all the traditional gender things that are out there and sometimes the expectations of who’s going to be doing what at what point in their lives.

Another vice president described a similar sentiment, “God’s just career-pathed me...When I look back, I can see His hand and...how every single think made sense and brought me to where I am.” While a few participants described how God impacted their path, another woman expressed the fear that she has regarding the responsibility she holds.

I think it’s important to admit that it scares me to death to have the job I have...There are some days that I feel totally ill-equipped...I think most people in [high] positions are afraid, or they feel inadequate for [those positions], but God equips us as He calls us to task...That is something that I want to help other women especially know.

Overall, in response to Item 25, eight women revealed feelings about their job, marriage, religion, or education.

*Related to the Institution or Career*

Five women disclosed additional thoughts or feelings about their institutions or career strategies. One participant clarified that her institution is “Baptist in history and intent,” but it is “no longer directly affiliated [with] or responsible to the denomination.”

Another vice president gave her president credit for “identifying somebody he thought could do a fairly good job” and then giving her “the resources to be successful.” While this participant gave credit to the president, another respondent acknowledged the role of experience. She described the skills gained through accreditation, education, and professional development, and said, “opportunities personally to develop in those areas is [sic] a part of my story.” A different participant identified her willingness to take advantage of opportunity as an important part of her story.

I never made excuses... I always found a way to take advantage of opportunity. I cannot imagine the president or the provost ever having called me and asked me to serve in some way and me saying, “Oh, I don’t think that I should do that. It’s not a good time for me.” And I’m always amazed with faculty [who] do that...because they are just hurting themselves, and eventually, people will quit asking them. So I think, just take advantage of opportunities. Know what your strengths are....[S]ay yes...sometimes you can’t say yes, but every time you can say yes, say yes...Do what the college needs you to do.

Finally, one vice president discussed the significance of integrity. She described herself as making decisions that are “very true to what is right for the institution” and offered the advice that “Being true to your ethical and moral fiber is probably very important.” Thus, five women focused on their institutions or careers in response to this question.

#### *Related to Gender*

Four vice presidents provided advice or insight that was specifically related to gender, in either a broad or personal sense. One participant shared that women administrators should be role models and said that women need to “step up to the plate and provide leadership” for women faculty, staff, and students.” In addition, women should support all women on campus to pursue dreams and aspirations.

I think it doesn’t need to start when they get their job; I think it needs to start when they are in college. When they hit that freshman year, just to be able to let women dream bigger than what they have dreamed before, aspire to things that

they never thought they could ever reach, but know that if that is the direction they want to go, the support is out there... if you want to be a female president of a university, then these are the steps by which you need to get there and these are the skills that you need to acquire.

While one vice president used the term “role model,” another participant described women as “advocates.”

We are seeing women who are college presidents and proving they can do this...I just think that women just need to continue to be advocates for other women and give them as much support as we possibly can. Even as undergraduates, if they show that kind of potential, there needs to be a venue to give them the kind of encouragement to pursue [it].

This participant acknowledged the progress of women who are college presidents, but another vice president limited her comments to Southern Baptist circles.

I think women do have a lot more opportunities now, than they have ever had to be leaders in Southern Baptist institutions. I think that door is opening slowly, but surely. But it certainly can't be pushed open very quickly. It takes a lot of time.

Finally, for one vice president, this question provided the opportunity to express her view of her own role as a woman administrator. She described herself as “not an ambitious woman” who achieved her position because she was asked to take it. She concluded, “I might not be the best person to be an example [of a woman leader], but I do feel that I am a good example at our institution.”

While many of the responses were easily categorized as being related to a personal story, to an institution or career, or to gender, one answer to this question combined these perspectives and summarized her viewpoint on working in Christian higher education.

[I]n some ways, you would maybe expect it to be a more difficult path for a woman, because...the church itself has been predominantly led by men, and our universities have tended to go that direction as well, in their administrative leadership. But the other side of the experience has been that I recognize that I work with wonderful, wonderful people at a Christian organization. I know

people that work at universities that are not affiliated with a Christian group, and the atmosphere is so very different in that kind of place. Even though there might have been less openness to women in upper leadership at Baptist schools, I feel like that's been offset by the fact that I really have an opportunity to work with wonderful people in such a positive atmosphere. And the people that I have worked for have made profound differences in my life, in a positive way...I feel like that it has been a wonderful experience for me, and that's why I have stayed in Baptist schools, because I really do feel like it is such a positive environment and the work we do is very important.

Thus, for this vice president, the atmosphere, the people, and the opportunity to make a difference counterbalanced the hurdles faced by women pursuing senior administration in Southern Baptist institutions.

Thus, of the 20 participants, 17 shared additional details of their stories. These details were primarily related to their personal lives, to their professions, or to their gender.

#### Summary of the Chapter

In this chapter, the researcher summarized the responses for each of the interview questions. For the demographic questions, the responses were summarized in textual and in visual forms. For the open-ended questions, the responses were grouped into common categories and summarized. In the following chapter, the interview findings are organized by research question. The chapter also includes the conclusions, delimitations, limitations, suggestions for future research, and recommendations for improved practice.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter will discuss the implications of the data presented in Chapter 4. First, an overview of the research design and protocol is presented. Second, the findings for each research question are discussed. Third, the findings are compared to the related literature, and conclusions are presented. Based on these findings, the chapter concludes with delimitations, limitations, suggestions for improved practice, and recommendations for future research.

#### Summary

The purpose of this interview study was to explore the career pathways, barriers, and keys to success experienced by women senior administrators in Southern Baptist colleges and universities. In order to fulfill this purpose, the researcher conducted an interview study with both open-ended and closed survey questions. The interviews primarily involved open-ended questions without response options and were conducted via the telephone. The researcher targeted the population of 42 women senior-level administrators. From this population, 20 women participated in the study. The researcher interviewed the 20 participants and collected a vita for 16 of the 20 women in the sample. Interviews were recorded and transcribed. Member check and triangulation were used to address validity concerns. The responses for each interview question were summarized and presented in the previous chapter.

#### Findings

This section presents the findings for each research question for the study. Although there were interview questions designed to elicit answers for each of the

research questions, the responses were not limited to these interview items. For example, the concept of barriers faced was prevalent throughout the interviews rather than being confined to the two questions that specifically asked the participants about barriers. Therefore, the research questions are answered in this section based on the entirety of the interviews.

### *Research Question One*

Research Question 1: What are the personal, educational, and professional demographics and religious affiliations of women senior administrators in Southern Baptist colleges and universities?

The personal demographics gathered in the interview included age, marital status, and parental status. Half of the women in the study were in their fifties. Two of the participants were in their thirties and two were in their sixties. The remaining four respondents were in their forties. The participants were likely to be married. Fifteen of the 20 participants were married, three were divorced, and two were single. Finally, the women were also likely to have children. Fifteen of the participants had an average of 1.80 children. The average number of children for all 20 respondents was 1.35. Overall, the vice presidents were likely to be in the 40-59 year age range, be married, and have 1 or 2 children.

The data gathered regarding education included the degrees earned and the institutions attended. Almost half of the participants had a doctorate. Nine of the 20 women had doctoral degrees; seven of these were Ph.D. and two were Ed.D. degrees. The highest degree earned for eight of the vice presidents was a master's degree. Of these eight women, three of them had hours toward a doctorate. Only three participants

reported having a bachelor's degree as their highest degree earned. Regarding the field of study, eight of the 20 women earned their highest degree in a field related to business (includes finance, public policy, management, human resources, etc.). Four participants held degrees in education or higher education, while four other women held their highest degree in the arts or humanities. Finally, seven of the 20 women earned at least one degree from a Southern Baptist college or university.

The professional demographics included the title of their current positions, years in position, years at current institution, and faculty status. For the title of the current position, the researcher utilized institutional websites to gather the information for the entire population. For the population of 42 women vice presidents in SBCUs, enrollment management and academic affairs were the most represented areas with eight women each. Three women in the population were over marketing and public relations, and this was the smallest area of representation. For the 20 women in the sample, the interviews and vita confirmed the titles of the vice presidents. Enrollment management reflected the largest percentage of the vice presidential titles in the sample with five of the 20 participants and was closely followed by academic affairs with four respondents. The advancement area was least represented, with one vice president.

The participants held their current positions for an average of 4.7 years. The range of years was 0 (less than 1 year) to 12 years. Only four of the participants were hired from outside the institution; 16 of the women were internal hires for their current positions. The average number of years in the current institution was 15.9 years and ranged from one to 35 years. Finally, half of the participants currently hold or have held faculty status at some point in their careers. However, almost half of these were non-



teaching faculty. Only four of the 20 participants had ever held faculty status and taught courses. Overall, the vice presidents were likely to hold a position in enrollment management or academic affairs, to have served in their position for approximately five years, to be an internal hire, to have been at the current institution for almost 16 years, and be non-teachers.

The religious background of the sample included the religion with which participants are affiliated and whether they hold church membership. Thirteen of the participants identified themselves as Baptists or Southern Baptists. Other affiliations, each with one or two responses, included Catholic, Episcopalian, Methodist, and non-denominational. Nineteen of the 20 participants reported that they were currently members of a church. In all cases, the church affiliations matched their personal religious preferences. The individual who was not a member of a church identified herself as non-denominational. Overall, the vice presidents were likely to identify themselves as Baptists and to be members of a Baptist church.

In summary, the most common profile for the women senior leaders in this study included the following characteristics: is 40-59 years old, is married, has children, has a masters or doctoral degree, is responsible for enrollment management or academic affairs, has been in her position for about five years and in her institution for about 16 years, has not served as a teaching faculty member, is Baptist, and is the member of a Baptist church.

### *Research Question Two*

Research Question 1: What are the career pathways that women follow to become senior administrators in SBCUs?

Although the specific pathways of the participants varied greatly, some commonalities were present. First, the average number of years from completing the highest degree to obtaining the current position was 11.0 years and ranged from 0 to 30 years. In addition, 80% of the participants held other positions in their institutions prior to becoming senior administrators, while only four women were external hires. Therefore, the majority of the women were “known” by the institution. Of the four external hires, two women had served in vice presidential positions at previous institutions. Only two of the 20 participants were promoted into vice presidential positions from outside the institution.

Another commonality was that all of the women who followed the traditional pathway through the faculty, department chair, and/or dean positions became vice presidents in academic affairs. Only one participant began her career teaching with faculty status and then moved out of academics into a different branch of the institution, eventually becoming vice president. Thus, for this sample, every vice president who served as department chair or dean of a college stayed in the area of academic affairs.

On the other hand, 75% of the participants did not promote through the faculty ranks. These women primarily began their career in higher education in a lower position such as director or coordinator and then moved up the ladder to vice president. Only two of these 15 women began their careers in higher education in a sector that was unrelated to their current areas. Thus, the majority of the women did not follow a path through the academic ranks, began in a position with lesser responsibility, and were eventually promoted to vice president in the same area of the institution in which they started.

The method used to achieve these senior administrative positions was also an area of interest for the researcher. Eight of the participants were approached by the president and asked to fill their current roles. Seven of the participants were appointed to their positions. In these cases, the active role of the women varied; some pursued the appointment and others did not. The remaining five women went through a process of application, recommendation, and interview. All four of the external hires came from this last category. Thus, the vice presidents were most likely to be approached by the president or appointed to the role. This is consistent with the fact that 80% of the women were hired internally.

The vice presidents were also asked about their future career plans. The most common future plan was retirement, although some of the women who planned on retiring were also open to other options. Of the eight women who shared that retirement was the next career move, three listed other possibilities. Seven of the 20 participants anticipated that their career movement was complete or had no other plans. Of these seven women, three specifically stated that they did not plan on pursuing a presidency. Only five women shared an interest in pursuing a presidency. Thus, the women in this study were likely to retire from their current positions, and only a quarter of the participants had an interest in being a college president.

### *Research Question Three*

Research Question 3: What barriers have women administrators faced prior to and during their tenures as administrators in SBCUs?

The barriers described by the vice presidents can be categorized under four headings: gender discrimination, family-related barriers, institutional culture, and denominational traits.

*Gender discrimination.* Gender discrimination included salary discrimination, biased perceptions, and tenure/promotion decisions. Only two of the vice presidents mentioned the salary discrepancies based on gender, while four participants described an institutional perception as barriers. These perceptions included the idea that women have to work harder and perform at a higher level in order to be equal to men. A second type of biased perception was that the actions of women were scrutinized more than for men. Only one vice president described a situation where she was not considered for promotion because of her gender. Overall, only four of the 20 participants faced gender discrimination prior to and during their tenures as senior administrators. Thus, gender discrimination was not a common occurrence for the vice presidents in this sample.

A second type of barrier faced by women senior leaders was related to family.

*Barriers related to family.* Sixty percent of the participants in the study expressed that they had faced barriers related to family. Barriers related to family included geographic limitations, family responsibilities, and spousal relationships.

Seven of the 20 vice presidents described an immobility related to spouse or family. All seven of these women described their husbands' careers as being the limiting factor. For these women, relocating their families for their own new positions was an unlikely scenario. For one of the seven vice presidents, having children was also a factor in her professional immobility. In addition to consideration for her husband's career, she chose not to relocate for new positions to keep her children in their current school.

Overall, 55% of the participants faced geographic barriers during their tenures as senior administrators.

Family responsibilities created a barrier for four of the vice presidents. One vice president described her struggle to balance family and work. A second woman experienced some struggle with balancing work and mothering, and she discussed a flex-time option with her president. For one vice president, having children limited her opportunity to pursue a terminal degree. For a fourth vice president, the travel demands of her job conflicted with her parenting responsibilities. She sought a new position in order to solve the problem. Thus, family responsibilities, specifically related to parenting, created a barrier for 20% of the participants.

Family relationships also caused some problems for five of the vice presidents. Three of the women were divorced, and they perceived this as being a barrier for them. Although this would probably not be a factor at many institutions, at a Christian university, this was perceived to be a problem. One vice president described being divorced as a “struggle” specifically because of the “environment” in which she worked. A second woman described her status as being “just another obstacle that is a part of my profile.” She continued this statement by discussing administrator options at non-Baptist schools. The third divorced vice president succinctly stated, “[I]t’s very difficult for people who are divorced to be in leadership positions at Baptist institutions.” Therefore, all of the divorced women in the sample identified being divorced as a barrier.

Three of the vice presidents expressed problems related to working at the same institution as their husbands. In one case, the obstacle was that the vice president was limited with job opportunities because she could not supervise her husband. Another vice

president worried about perceived “conflicts of interest.” A third woman stated that her husband also had a “prominent position” and that this created a hindrance for her. Thus, barriers related to being a dual career couple existed for three women.

Overall, about one third of the women in the sample encountered geographic limitations, one quarter faced barriers caused by family responsibilities, and one quarter confronted hindrances related to their spouse.

*Barriers related to institutional culture.* Half of the women in the study described barriers related to institutional culture. These barriers were related to building social capital and harmonizing with the culture.

Eight women described barriers that hindered them from building social capital. Specifically, characteristics of the culture hindered their abilities to build formal and informal networks. These barriers were evident in the following descriptions: a culture that was “male-dominated;” women who “have to pay [their] dues;” men who could “do what they wanted to;” and women who “had to toe the line.” Some women specifically used the term “old boy’s network” or the “good old boys club.” One suggested a link between this informal network and the denominational affiliation. Half of the women were quite gracious in their attitude towards this barrier. They described this institutional barrier as “not intentional,” “simply habit,” “a type of ingrained attitude” of which people were unaware, and “not necessarily by choice.” Overall, almost half of the sample faced barriers related to formal and informal networks that prevented them from building social capital.

Four of the women expressed difficulties harmonizing with the culture due to informal rules or expectations regarding social interactions or gender roles. Three of

these women described social expectations. Situations described included awkward seating at dinner parties, activities for the “wives” of the cabinet members, lunch appointments with male co-workers, and frequent travel with the president. Although some of the scenarios described would not be a concern at many institutions, “Southern Baptist schools are pretty sensitive to any appearances of impropriety.” As a result, these situations created obstacles through which the women had to navigate. Rather than describing a social expectation, one vice president summarized an expectation regarding gender roles. She said that at her institution, there was a “definite ‘keep the women in their place’ kind of thing.” All of these scenarios described institutional barriers related to harmonizing with the culture.

Overall, half of the participants in the study experienced barriers related to institutional culture. In addition to institutional barriers, some women faced denominational barriers.

*Barriers related to denomination.* Twelve women, or 60% of the sample, described denominational barriers for women in leadership. Eight of these women spoke specifically about women as presidents in SBCUs. Each of these maintained that the affiliation with the Southern Baptist denomination was the primary reason that a woman would not be named president at their respective institutions. One vice president blamed the Southern Baptist Convention for “digging their heels in that women can’t be presidents.” Another explanation was that Southern Baptists “would view [the presidency] as sort of the pastor role, or the shepherd of the flock of the institution.” At some institutions, a criterion for being president is being a minister. Within the Baptist realm, that “certainly narrows the potential candidate pool,” making women less likely to

qualify. Thus, according to eight of the participants, the denominational view of the role of women would make it difficult, if not impossible, for a woman to be president of a Southern Baptist institution.

Rather than discuss women as presidents, the other four women spoke more broadly about women in leadership in Southern Baptist institutions. One institution was described as “conservative Southern Baptist” which implied a lack of “women in leadership positions.” Another description was that the male leadership in Southern Baptist institutions reflected that of Southern Baptist churches. More specifically, the belief that “a Southern Baptist minister cannot be a woman” also became a hindrance for women in higher education. Another vice president stated that many people in the “Southern Baptist environment are not comfortable with women in leadership.” Although the phrasing of the barrier varied, the message was the same. Not only were some institutions perceived as being closed to the concept of a woman president, they were also opposed to the idea of women serving in senior leadership positions.

*Summary of barriers faced by women leaders in SBCUs.* Overall, 90% of the vice presidents in this study faced barriers during their tenure as administrators in SBUCs. Specifically, 20% of the sample described types of gender discrimination, 60% faced barriers related to family, 50% experienced barriers related to the institutional culture, and 60% described denominational views regarding women in leadership that were barriers to advancement.

#### *Research Question Four*

Research Question 4: What are the keys to success that women senior administrators in SBCUs identify from their own experiences?



Throughout the interviews, participants repeatedly described various people and opportunities that significantly contributed to their success. These can be divided into four categories: education, professional experience, professional development, and support networks.

*Education.* Five of the 20 participants identified education as a key to their success. Two of these described education as having “opened doors” for them. One vice president provided a similar view when she described her strategy as being “the more [education], the better.” Two mentioned their specific degrees as being significant factors in their advancement. Overall, a quarter of the sample listed education as a key to success.

*Professional experience.* Eleven women described their professional experience as being a key to their success. In some cases, the participants were vague about the type of experience. Two vice presidents said that “proving” themselves was a significant factor in their advancement. Three participants stated that their cumulative work early in their careers in higher education provided a good foundation for their success. Two women described the experience gained working in their fields prior to moving into higher education as being pivotal.

While several women made broad statements about the benefits of their professional experience, seven participants also described specific opportunities. These opportunities included establishing a new academic program, assisting an institution through a crisis event, overseeing institutional accreditation, and organizing professional development programs. Four women listed experience related to the accreditation process

as being significant. Thus, specific roles and duties led to invaluable experience for several participants in the study.

In summary, over half of the sample identified their professional experience as playing a significant role in their advancement.

*Professional development.* Eight vice presidents described professional development opportunities as being a significant contributor to their success. The specific types of opportunities included leadership training, accreditation training, administrative training, and professional conferences and workshops. Specific hosts were also identified including American Council on Education, Chamber of Commerce, Council for Christian Colleges and Universities, Council for Independent Colleges, Harvard University, Institute of Educational Management, and various accrediting organizations. Women described these opportunities as “invaluable,” “very beneficial,” and “really helpful on learning how universities operate.” Overall, almost half of the sample identified professional development opportunities as contributing to their knowledge, skills, and overall success.

*Support networks.* Three types of support emerged from the interview data as being keys to success for women administrators: familial, professional, and institutional. The role of the president and the type of support provided were also key concepts from the data.

Family support came from husbands and parents. Approximately one-third of the sample described the role of husbands or parents in their success.

Professional sources of support were mentioned by 75% of the sample. These sources of support included organizations, supervisors, colleagues, and other individuals

outside the institution. Four women described support from professional organizations in their road to success. Through membership and activities in professional organizations, vice presidents had an opportunity to meet peers and create networks. In this context, the CCCU was the most frequently mentioned organization. In addition, 15 of the 20 participants described supervisors or colleagues who influenced their success. Many of the participants described multiple individuals. Specifically, 11 women mentioned supportive supervisors including presidents, former presidents, and managers from previous positions. Of these 11 participants, more than half described the role of presidents as being particularly influential to their success.

While the majority of vice presidents described the influence of current and former presidents, the degree of influence of these men varied. For six of the vice presidents, though, the president played a key role in their success. In each of these cases, the president followed a former leader who was not open to women in leadership positions. Some women gave credit to the president for having the “vision” or courage to select women senior leaders. A few women said the president had the ability to influence institutional culture related to this issue. One participant summarized this view as follows:

[How an institution accepts women into leadership positions] is so driven by the president being willing to make strategic appointments and hires....The president really sets the culture, I think, for that particular issue more than for any others, [and] more than any other person or cultural factor. My president now...works very hard to find leadership opportunities for women and is encouraging of me to do that as well.

Thus, for almost a third of the sample, the president played a key role in their success.

Not only were the sources of professional support diverse, but the nature of the support provided also varied. For twelve of the women, their professional support was an important source of encouragement. Four other vice presidents described the increased

responsibility given to them by former supervisors. One participant extolled the benefits of sharing ideas with colleagues at other institutions. Collectively, more than half of the vice presidents received support in the form of encouragement, increased responsibility, or new ideas.

Although the descriptors used by many of the vice presidents to describe their support were consistent with the concept of mentoring, only four participants used the term “mentor” to describe their relationship. For example, one woman described “a leadership mentor who said to me [when I was] in my twenties, ‘You should prepare for a career of leadership.’” Another vice president said she had “a really great, amazing mentor who just let me do things because...he wanted to keep me engaged.” Whether formal or informal, the vice presidents benefited from mentoring relationships that provided encouragement and led to opportunities.

Fully three-fourths of the vice presidents interviewed described some type of professional support as responsible for providing vital encouragement as they ascended to their current positions. Finally, in addition to familial and professional sources, participants mentioned their institutions as providers of support.

*Institutional support.* Eight women in the study described institutional support as being a key to success. Institutional support came in the form of time, money, and policies. Five women said that the institution provided time for them to attend conferences or workshops or to pursue advanced degrees. In four cases, the institution provided financial resources for professional development and continued education. When describing the financial support from her institution, one vice president said, “That was significant for me and really was one of the reasons I decided to pursue the

doctorate.” Finally, one participant said, “family friendly polices” played a significant role in her career advancement. Overall, almost half of the sample identified institutional support as being a key to their success.

*Summary of keys to success for women leaders in SBCUs.* In summary, the women in the study identified a variety of factors that contributed to their success. Education, professional development, and professional experience gained on-the-job were common themes in the interviews. In addition, the participants described individuals and organizations that provided support, encouragement, advice, and opportunities.

#### Research Question Five

Research Question 5: What advice do women senior administrators in SBCUs have for future women administrators?

For the most part, the vice presidents gave advice to future women administrators in response to Item 24 in the questionnaire. The responses to this item were quantified and described in detail in Chapter 4 and were categorized as follows: professional characteristics, professional strategies, professional philosophies, and gender-related advice. In this section, the researcher summarized the advice using three themes: prove yourself, seek opportunities and challenges, and maintain a balanced attitude about gender.

The first theme, “prove yourself,” was specifically mentioned by five of the participants. However, proving yourself encompassed other directives. Women in the study encouraged future women administrators to work hard, to remain professional, and to be a good example. The participants emphasized that women administrators must demonstrate to their colleagues and supervisors that they can perform their duties with

excellence and are not daunted by a challenge. “Prove yourself” also included a high standard of behavior. The vice presidents advised that future women leaders exhibit passion, compassion, professionalism, diplomacy, ethics, and strong morals. Some participants suggested that this unassailable model of behavior, in combination with hard work, was necessary because of gender views. This was evident in the statements “women have to do more” and “[women] are always expected to do twice as good as men.” Thus, the vice presidents encouraged women to “prove themselves” so that their abilities or character would be beyond reproach and so that they would distinguish themselves as being equal to their male counterparts.

The second theme of the advice provided for future women leaders was “to seek opportunities and challenges.” Like “prove yourself,” this theme included several concepts of application. First, women leaders should seek education opportunities. This area of action included pursuing a terminal degree and attending conferences, trainings, and workshops. The vice presidents recommended professional development programs offered by national and regional organizations related to leadership, management, accreditation, and other institutional areas. In addition to availing themselves of educational offerings, women leaders were advised to actively participate in networking and to diligently seek mentoring. Finally, the vice presidents encouraged women administrators to seek challenges, risks, and problems to solve and to be willing to do the job that needs to be done. Thus, the second theme of advice that the vice presidents offered future women leaders was “seek opportunities and challenges,” in order to improve professional qualities and to gain valuable experience and visibility.

The final theme of advice offered to future female administrators was to maintain a balanced attitude about gender. The perceptions regarding the role of gender varied. One vice president counseled women to not “expect that just because you are a woman that people are going to be looking to advance you over your male counterparts.” From this viewpoint, women leaders should hold no expectations of undeserved benefits resulting from their gender. The vice presidents also told future leaders to “not wear their gender on the sleeves” and to not “take things personally.” One participant simply stated, “Don’t be obsessed with being female.” Another vice president cautioned women to consider situations and discern whether gender truly played a factor. Thus, the counsel of some of the participants was that women neither insert gender into situations nor expect partiality based on gender. For these participants, gender plays a rather benign role in their careers.

In contrast, some vice presidents suggested that women administrators should recognize that there are structures in place, such as the “old boy’s network,” that might bar advancement. To deal with these obstacles, the participants encouraged women to “learn how to accept” them and “to work a little hard to fit into” those structures. Some vice presidents asserted that the networks were unintentional, a long-standing habit, or “a type of ingrained attitude” of which people were unaware. One participant said “[T]he lens is greater if you’re a woman.” She also cautioned women that they would be “picked apart more” and “not be forgiven as easily” as their male counterparts and that they may receive evaluations or comments that would “never be said to a man.” As a result of these assessments, some vice presidents cautioned that gender remains a constant issue, and women administrators should be prepared for that. Therefore, taking into account the

perceptions that gender plays a benign role for some and may act as a barrier for others, future leaders are best served by maintaining a balanced attitude about gender.

Thus, the collective advice offered to future women leaders was: to prove themselves by working hard and being women of character; to seek opportunities for learning, growth, and challenge; and to have a balanced view about the impact of gender, being aware that it may be, but is not always, a factor.

In the following section, the findings are compared to the related literature and conclusions are drawn.

### Conclusions

The following section enumerates the conclusions of the study.

1. *Women are underrepresented in senior leadership in SBCUs when compared to institutions nationwide.* Utilizing the institutional databases for the 46 SBCUs in the study, the researcher determined that women held 18.3% of the vice presidential-level positions. This compares favorably to the 2004 data that 16.5% of cabinet-level positions in CCCU institutions were held by women (Lafreniere, 2008), but it is less than half of the 44.6% of senior administrator positions held by women across all institutional types (King & Gomez, 2008). As recently as 2006, women held 23.0% of the presidencies nationwide and 18.7% of the presidencies in private four-year institutions (ACE, 2007). That level of representation is only now being approached in SBCUs and solely at the vice-presidential level. The singular occurrence of a female president at the helm of a Southern Baptist university exemplifies the underrepresentation of women in the senior level administrative positions in SBCUs.



2. *The personal demographics of women senior administrators in SBCUs differ slightly from the national profile of women senior administrators.* In this study, 75% of the vice presidents were currently married, compared to 62.6% of senior women administrators nationwide (King & Gomez, 2008). In addition, 75% of the women in this sample had children, compared to 68.3% of women senior leaders nationwide (King & Gomez, 2008). Finally, the age distributions of the two groups were comparable. In this study, approximately 20% of the participants were over 60, 50% were 51-60 years old, and 30% were 50 or younger. This is consistent with findings for women senior leaders nationwide, which were 19.1%, 46.9%, and 34.0%, respectively. Thus, although the age distributions were similar, the women senior administrators in SBCUs were more likely to be married and more likely to have children than their counterparts nationwide. This is likely due to the emphasis on marriage and family that is common within Christian denominations.
3. *Women senior administrators in SBCUs are likely to be promoted from within and to be “known” candidates to the institution.* In this study, 80% of the vice presidents were internal hires. This is significantly greater than the 49.0% of internal hires for all senior administrations from all institutional types nationwide (King & Gomez, 2008). In addition, although the women in the study were in their current positions an average of 4.7 years, they had been at their institutions for an average of 15.9 years. Some of this longevity may have resulted from geographic constraints to advancement compelled by a spouse’s career. This finding is also consistent with the advice of the women in the study that

prospective administrators “prove themselves” at their current institutions. This was summarized by one vice president as follows:

[R]egardless of the year we are talking about, women very, very much have to prove themselves....I think it would be rare, especially in my setting, for someone just to come from the outside in and be hired at that level. I think that the ones who get to that level have dug in literally, and excelled, and shown their ability and their worth [in order] to be able to receive these types of promotions.

Finally, only a quarter of the participants completed an application and interview process for their positions. Instead, the majority of vice presidents were asked to consider the position or were appointed to the role. Thus, women leaders in SBCUs are likely to come from within the institution, are often long-term employees perhaps due to geographic constraints to advancement, will have to prove their abilities in order to secure promotion, and will likely be approached by the president or appointed to their positions. Each of these findings supports the conclusion that women who become leaders in SBCUs are a “known” quantity to the institution.

4. *Women senior administrators in SBCUs do not follow the traditional career pathway through the academic ranks.* The “traditional” career pathway to the presidency referred to by researchers involves moving up the academic ranks through faculty, chair, dean, and CAO, and this historical pattern is still common in higher education (Eddy, 2009). However, as revealed in this study, women presidents in SBCUs do not exist, and the pathways of the women vice presidents to their current positions varied greatly. The traditional path through the academic ranks was not common; only one-fourth of the participants held a faculty position and were promoted through the ranks. Of these, three of the women were

provosts. Overall, a majority of the sample did not promote through the academic ranks, did begin in a position with lesser responsibility, and did eventually ascend to the vice presidency in the same area of the institution in which they started. These findings are consistent with the studies of career pathways for women leaders by Madsen (2008), T. M. Brown (2000), and Kane (1998). With few women in SBCUs holding the provost position, the pool of women candidates for SBCU presidencies has a more diverse background than the national profile of women presidents. Thus, women who break into the presidential ranks at SBCUs are likely to follow a non-traditional career pathway to the top.

5. *Women senior administrators in SBCUs face all of the barriers that are found in the literature related to women in leadership, with some additional barriers that are specific to SBCUs.* As discussed in Chapter 2, the barriers facing women in higher education include gender discrimination, family-related hurdles, institutional hindrances, and denominational barriers. The three types of gender discrimination were salary discrimination, biased perceptions, and tenure and promotion discrimination. Each of these types of gender discrimination occurred in the study although the frequency was rare.

Family-related barriers included geographic constraints and family responsibilities. This type of barrier was common in this study, with 60% of the participants experiencing family-related obstacles. This is significantly larger than the 32.8% of women presidents in four-year independent colleges who encountered family-related hindrances (T. M. Brown, 2000). This may be due to

the higher occurrence of marriage and children within this sample when compared to national demographics for women administrators.

Within the literature, institutional barriers included dealing with problematic job requirements such travel or relocation, building social capital, harmonizing with the institutional culture, and acquiring desirable assignments (Eagly & Carli, 2007). Several women described the “old boy’s network” as being an aspect of the institutional culture. Although acquiring desirable assignments was not mentioned by the participants, the other institutional barriers were described by half of the vice presidents in this study.

Moreton and Newsom (2004) and Lumsden, Plotts, Wells, and Newsom (2000) posited that denominational barriers were a possible hindrance, because the church’s views regarding the role of women in leadership could be extended to the institution. In this study, this theory was confirmed; 60% of the participants described the accepted role of women leaders in Southern Baptist spheres as a barrier for advancement. Some women explained this phenomenon by suggesting that institutional and denominational leaders view the role of president as being equivalent to the role of pastor. This explanation is consistent with the findings of Lumsden et al.

In addition to this, divorce emerged as a possible barrier. Although only three participants were divorced, all three of the women described their divorced status as a hindrance, especially for future advancement. This barrier was not prevalent in the literature and is likely a barrier distinctive to Southern Baptist institutions due to the denominational view of divorce.

Overall, women leaders in SBCUs experience the barriers commonly faced by women administrators, including some hindrances specifically related to Southern Baptist viewpoints. This is consistent with the work of Adams (1995) that women in Christian higher education have unique barriers to overcome. The women in Adams' study were influenced not only by their own views of gender roles but also by the views of others on campus.

6. *Although there are many factors that contribute to the success of women leaders in SBCUs, presidents play a key role in creating institutional cultures that welcome women in leadership roles.* Overall, the keys to success that emerged through this study are consistent with the findings of other researchers. Informal and formal mentoring opportunities played a role in the success of the women in this study. In addition, the mentors were often men. These findings are consistent with the research of T.M. Brown (2005), Cox (2008), Lively (June 16, 2000), Madsen (2008), and Santee (2006). The significance of support structures, such as spouses or other close family, is consistent with research conducted by Moreton (2001) and Santee. Professional development opportunities also helped women advance to higher positions (T. M. Brown).

In addition to these well-documented factors in success, over half of the sample described the role of a past or current president in helping or hindering their progress. While the influence of the president is significant in any organization, various factors unique to SBCUs may make the president even more strategically positioned to help or hinder the advancement of women administrators. In Christian higher education, the accepted role of women in

leadership affects the institutional culture. A particular denominational view may be more traditionalist or egalitarian (Glanville, 2000) based on that denomination's theological understanding of the Scriptures (Wood, 2008). Wood noted:

Interpretations of the Bible among various faith-based communities play a pivotal role in creating and sustaining organizational culture at these groups' affiliated college or university. What a denomination believes about women and their role in society will be evident at every level of their college or university and thus shape the campus climate for women. (p. 81)

While institutions with cultures that are welcoming of women leaders may help advance women up the administrative ladder (Nutt, 1996; Chliwniak, 1997; Santee, 2006), the 1981 SBC resolution on the role of women reaffirms "the biblical role which stresses the equal worth but not always the sameness of function of women" (Melton, p. 234). This language suggests a more traditionalist view of the role of women. Thus, the institutional culture may not be open to women in leadership, and the culture in a SBCU may be an additional hurdle to overcome. In this environment, the role of the president becomes even more significant in changing the culture so that it is more accepting of women leaders. This view was exemplified in the words of one vice president when she said, "The president really sets the culture, I think, for that particular issue [women in leadership] more than for any others, [and] more than any other person or cultural factor."

7. *Women leaders in SBCUs are better positioned to become presidents now than at any other time; however, this breakthrough may not occur soon.* Women hold

leadership positions in all areas of SBCU institutions, including academics, administration, and student affairs. The majority of the women in this study have served in their institutions for many years and have been devoted to their positions. Several of the women provided testament to the gains made by women in the ranks of administration with their descriptions of the first woman vice president at their institution, their own experiences as the first woman leader, or their observations of the increased number of women in leadership over the past few years. Most of the women in the study also described positive institutional cultures that were supportive, open, or progressive. Generally, these responses provide an encouraging outlook for women administrators in SBCUs. However, when the vice presidents were asked specifically about their institutions' openness to having a woman president, the responses were less positive.

While three of the seventeen women could envision a female president at their institutions, the remaining vice presidents had a more difficult time imagining a woman at the helm. In these cases, the participants listed the institutional culture, the trustees, the denominational views, or external constituents as prominent barriers. As discussed in the previous conclusion, the president plays a key role in determining the institutional culture. As younger and more progressive leaders ascend to the presidencies, the culture of SBCUs are likely to change. Some women in the study suggested that many of the current trustees represent a generation that is more in line with a traditionalist view of the role of women. As younger men and more women become trustees, the views of the boards may become more progressive, and as a result, the institutional cultures

may become more open to women leaders. Other vice presidents described the view of the SBC as being a hurdle that would be difficult to overcome, while other women suggested that external constituents of the denominations would not accept a woman president. As a whole, the women in this study thought that more change was required before SBCUs would be open to women presidents. As one participant stated, “This kind of issue takes generations of time [to change].” Thus, although SBCUs are more open to women in leadership today than they have been in the past, overall, more change is necessary before SBCUs open the door of the presidency to women.

Although there are conclusions that resulted from the research and data, there are also limitations to the study. The delimitations and limitations are described in the following sections.

#### Delimitations

The study was delimited to female senior administrators at 46 of the 54 Southern Baptist colleges and universities. The 46 institutions included in the study were the four-year, co-educational, baccalaureate institutions not directly associated with one of the six seminaries in the Southern Baptist Convention.

#### Limitations

As with all research endeavors, there were limitations to this work. The limitations of the study are as follows:

1. The targeted population of women senior administrators in Southern Baptist colleges and universities was small. Of the 42 women administrators in the



population, 20 vice presidents participated in the study. This was a 47.6% participation rate.

2. It is unknown whether the experiences of the nonparticipants differed significantly from the experiences of the participants in the study. It is possible that the women who have had positive experiences in supportive climates were more likely to be willing to participate. The nonparticipants may have been concerned about confidentiality or may have feared negative repercussions for participating. As a whole, the nonparticipants did not explain their decision. Only one vice president expressed concerns about negative repercussions, although she was very supportive of the study being conducted. Overall, the experiences of the nonparticipants may have differed significantly from the stories reflected in this study.
3. Although the researcher communicated the measures taken to preserve the anonymity of participants, confidentiality concerns on the part of the participants may have existed, especially considering the relatively small size of the targeted population. These concerns may have impacted accuracy and depth of responses.
4. The use of telephone interviews prevented the researcher from having direct contact with the participants and gaining observational data.
5. The researcher had limited experience in interview techniques. Through the transcribing process, the researcher identified follow-up questions that would have provided clarifications or richer data. Thus, the lack of interview experience for the researcher may have affected the quality of the data gained through interviewing.

As a result of this study, there are several implications for improved practice and for further research.

### Recommendations for Improved Practice

Institutions should seek diversity in their leadership teams and support women in senior administrative positions. In doing so, the blend of diverse perspectives and talents leads to a stronger leadership team and to a stronger institution (ACE, 1994; Giannini, 2001). As one of the women in the study stated, “[W]omen in leadership are a must for an effective leadership team.” To achieve this goal in SBCUs, recommendations are provided for the institution and for the prospective woman leader.

#### *Recommendations for the Institution*

The keys to success for the women in this study were consistent with the keys to success identified in the literature. Mentoring relationships, networking opportunities, professional and leadership development, and institutional support are all important for the advancement of women into senior leadership. As a result, institutions should encourage mentoring relationships on campus. Supervisors should be trained on how to mentor, on the barriers that often face prospective women leaders, and on the common keys to success. Women should also be encouraged to join professional organizations and to network with their peers at other institutions. This helps women to gain confidence and support. In this study, multiple women mentioned the opportunities provided by the CCCU, such as the Women’s Leadership Development Institute. Organizations such as the CCCU are likely to offer opportunities that are aligned with the mission and values of SBCUs. Supervisors should also identify women with management or leadership potential and encourage those women to seek opportunities like the WLDI, additional

degrees, or professional training. In order for women to pursue education or professional development opportunities, they may need flexible work schedules, financial support, and personal encouragement. Institutions should consider how to provide these various types of support. Policies should be reviewed, and family-friendly policies should be adopted that consider the barriers that are often created through the tenure process or through job requirements such as travel or evening work hours. Overall, SBCUs should review their current support structures and make changes that promote the success of prospective women leaders.

In addition to structural changes, SBCUs should examine their institutional cultures and implement policies that shape an accepting culture for women leaders. Cultures often have accepted norms that have not been consciously examined and considered. As described by one vice president in the study, an institution might have a tradition for the “wives” of the cabinet members. This tradition is gender-based and presumes that the cabinet members will be male. Institutional leadership should develop a strategy for examining cultural traditions related to gender bias. One example to consider is the Nine Presidents (Wood, 2009), a group of CEOs from universities that are known for gender inequity and male-dominated cultures. The Nine Presidents pledged to “develop equitable academic personnel policies at its institutions, support those policies through institutional resources, and take steps to create more family-friendly and gender-equitable campus cultures” (Felde in Wood, p. 87). A second example is the CCCU, who also examined the role of gender in their member institutions through efforts such as the Comprehensive Assessment Project (Longman, February 2002a). Leaders should utilize the approaches of other organizations to conduct an honest examination of the

institutional attitude toward leadership and gender, as well as consider the role of denominational views regarding that issue.

Finally, institutional leadership should be aware of their influential role in shaping institutional culture. The senior administration, especially the president, and the board of trustees are pivotal to changing cultures and policies. The women in this study were gracious in their descriptions of institutional cultures. Even though they described “old boy’s networks” and other institutional barriers, they were also quick to point out that the negative aspects of the culture were not intentional. While there are many positive aspects of the institutional cultures related to gender, trustees and senior administrators are positioned to move universities forward in their acceptance of women in leadership positions. Senior administrators and board members need to lead the way in examining all aspects of the institution and encouraging change that embraces diversity.

In addition to recommendations for institutions, the findings of this study lead to recommendations for women who are aspiring to be senior leaders in SBCUs.

#### *Recommendations for Women Leaders*

In this study, the women vice presidents were asked to provide advice for women aspiring to be senior leaders. The advice given addressed both the common barriers faced and keys to success. Prospective women leaders in SBCUs will likely have to “prove themselves” and are likely to be promoted internally. Consequently, aspiring female leaders should develop a strategy for advancement. This strategy should incorporate the second theme that emerged in the advice provided by current vice presidents: seek opportunities and challenges. Women leaders should seek mentoring relationships, networking opportunities, and professional development. In addition, women should

volunteer for key committee assignments and pursue additional education and training that is aligned with their career goals. Finally, women leaders should approach the issue of gender with a balanced and healthy attitude. While the old boy's network may be a reality, women should be cautioned not to insert the issue of gender into every conflict. Gender may be a factor in some circumstances, but women should try to examine situations with fairness and honesty, to react with professionalism, and to elevate the discourse with regard to gender.

Overall, institutions should work to improve institutional cultures and practices in such a way that encourages and assists women to advance to senior administration, and women leaders should consider the barriers and keys to success and develop a plan for advancement.

#### Suggestions for Future Research

Although this research provides insights related to women administrators in SBCUs, there are many aspects of the issues facing women leaders that require further examination. The following section outlines the recommendations for future research.

1. Although this research led to a demographic profile for women senior administrators, the entire population of presidents and vice presidents in SBCUs has not been studied. All senior leaders in SBCUs should be surveyed and profiled so that similarities and differences based on specific demographics can be identified.
2. The career pathways of all presidents and senior administrators in SBCUs should be studied. The findings should be examined for differences based on gender or based on other specific demographics.

3. A study similar to the Comprehensive Assessment Project that was conducted by the CCCU should be conducted within SBCUs. This would help illuminate specific gender issues within the administration, faculty, and student populations of SBCUs.
4. This study focused on gender, but the researcher did not include race or ethnicity as part of the profile. Future work should include an examination of racial and ethnic diversity within SBCUs.
5. The members of Boards of Trustees should be profiled and surveyed or interviewed regarding their views of the role of women in senior leadership in SBCUs. A factor that should be considered is the strength of the relationship of each institution to the state convention and whether the trustees are elected by the convention or by the institution.
6. Although this study identified keys to success such as mentoring, the relationship between mentoring and personal development, career satisfaction, and career advancement should be the focus of future research. Diaz-Bolet (1999) conducted a similar study within the member institutions of the CCCU.

### Closing

It has been a privilege to interview the 20 vice presidents who participated in this study and to learn from their inspirational stories. I have grown through the process of listening to and reflecting on the successes of these women, and I have been challenged to consider the barriers and hindrances that they have faced. It is my hope that this study assists women who are aspiring to be senior leaders and inspires presidents and trustees to create cultures that accept women in leadership. As SBCUs endeavor to fulfill their

missions, it is my hope that both men and women are encouraged and empowered to be instrumental in leading the way.

## APPENDIX A

## Letter of Invitation

Dear (name):

As a senior administrator at (institution name), you are one of 45 women who has achieved a position of senior leadership in a Southern Baptist institution. It is because of this achievement that I am inviting you to participate in dissertation research through the Higher Education Leadership Program at the University of Arkansas.

The results of this study will help to profile the demographics and experiences of women senior administrators in Southern Baptist colleges and universities. Your insight and experiences will be invaluable to other women who endeavor to serve as leaders in Southern Baptist institutions and will contribute to the current gap in the literature in this area.

I have also included a letter of informed consent that summarizes the purpose, procedures, and ethical considerations associated with the study. You will incur no negative consequences for not participating in the study or for withdrawing from the study. There are no anticipated risks associated with participation. All information will be coded for confidentiality and accessible only to the researcher. Your identity and the name of your institution will not be published. You will be given an opportunity to review the study when completed, prior to publication.

I know that you have many demands on your time. I am asking that you give one hour of your time for a telephone interview scheduled at your convenience. In order to analyze the data with integrity, I would like to record the interview.

Please consider participating in this study. I will contact you via telephone within the next two weeks to confirm your participation, answer any questions you may have, and schedule an interview time.

Respectfully,

Allison Langford  
Graduate Student, University of Arkansas  
Assistant Professor, Southwest Baptist University  
417-328-2093  
alangford@sbuniv.edu



## APPENDIX B

## Informed Consent

*Title:* Climbing the Ladder: The Experiences of women senior administrators at Southern Baptist Colleges and Universities

*Researchers:*

Allison Langford, M.S., Graduate Student  
 Dr. James Hammons, Faculty Advisor  
 University of Arkansas  
 College of Education & Health Professions  
 Department of Higher Education  
 141 Graduate Education Building  
 Fayetteville, AR 72701  
 479-575-5113

*Administrator:*

Ro Windwalker, Compliance  
 Coordinator  
 Research & Sponsored Programs  
 Research Compliance  
 University of Arkansas  
 120 Ozark Hall  
 Fayetteville, AR 72701-1201  
 479-575-3845  
 irb@uark.edu

*Description:* The purpose of this study is to explore the career pathways, barriers, and keys to success experienced by women senior administrators in Southern Baptist colleges and universities. You will be asked to submit a curriculum vita for the researcher to use to verify your career path. You will also be asked to participate in an interview that will be conducted over the telephone, be digitally recorded, and last no longer than one hour. After the data have been compiled and analyzed, you will have an opportunity to read the findings of the researcher and provide any corrections or feedback. The study should be completed by October 1, 2010.

*Risks and Benefits:* The benefits include contributing to the current research on women administrators in Christian higher education. There are no anticipated risks associated with participating in the study.

*Voluntary Participation:* Your participation in this interview study is completely voluntary. There is no monetary compensation for participating.

*Confidentiality:* Your name and institution will not be recorded with your interview responses. The researcher will not identify your responses, nor mention your name or institution in the study. All information will be kept confidential to the extent of the law. Recordings and transcripts will be stored on a password-protected computer.

*Right to Withdraw:* You may refuse to participate in the research or withdraw from the study at any time. Your decision to withdraw will bring no penalty to you.

*Informed Consent:* I, \_\_\_\_\_, have read the description including the purpose of the study, the procedures to be used, the potential risks and side effects, the confidentiality, as well as the option to withdraw from the study at any time. Each of these items has been explained to me by the investigator. The investigator has answered all of my questions regarding the study, and I believe I understand what is

involved. My signature below indicates that I freely agree to participate in this study and that I have received a copy of this agreement from the investigator.

---

(signature)

---

(date)

## APPENDIX C

## Interview Protocol and Questions

*Instructions:* The interview will be conducted via telephone and digitally recorded. The interview will be less than one hour in length. The first questions are demographic questions followed by open-ended questions that relate to the research questions.

Research Questions:

1. What are the personal, educational, and professional demographics and religious affiliations of women senior administrators at Southern Baptist colleges and universities?
2. What are the career pathways that women follow to become senior administrators at SBCUs?
3. What are the keys to success that women senior administrators in SBCUs identify from their own experiences?
4. What barriers have women administrators faced prior to and during their tenures as administrators at SBCUs?
5. What advice do women senior administrators in SBCUs have for future women administrators?

*Introduction:* In the past 30 years, many studies have been conducted on the experiences of women administrators in higher education. These studies have identified barriers faced by women in the process of advancing to higher positions, the career pathways followed by women leaders, and the perceived keys to success for women administrators.

However, the senior-level women administrators in Southern Baptist institutions have not been studied. Therefore, the focus of this study is to explore the barriers faced, career

pathways followed, and keys to success for successful women leaders in Southern Baptist colleges and universities. This interview is being digitally recorded and confidentiality will be maintained as outlined in the consent form. Are you ready to begin the interview?

1. What is the title of your current position?
2. How many years have you been in this position?
3. How many years have you been in this institution?
4. What is your age? under 30 30-39 40-49 50-59 60+
5. What degrees do you hold and from where did you receive them?
6. What is your marital status? Married Single Divorced Widowed
7. Do you have any children? If so, how many?
8. How do you describe your religious preference?
9. Are you a member of a church? If so, what denomination is affiliated with the church?
10. What was your career goal after graduate school?
11. What was your strategy for obtaining this goal?
12. How many years passed between obtaining your highest degree and being appointed to your current position?
13. Have you ever held faculty status?
14. What was your first position in higher education administration?
15. What was the position you held immediately prior to your current position?
16. How did you achieve your current position?
17. What do you perceive to be your next career move? (probe: do you envision yourself pursuing the presidency at some time in the future?)

18. What role did institutional structures and policies play in your advancement as a woman into senior administration?
19. Describe a person or network of people who have provided you encouragement, support, or feedback in your career advancement.
20. Describe any important events, opportunities, or occurrences that played a key role in your current success.
21. Describe any personal events that hindered your ascent to your current position.
22. Describe any factors or events in your professional life that hindered your ascent to your current position.
23. How would you characterize the culture at your institution in accepting women into positions within the upper-level administrative branch?
24. What advice or suggestions would you provide to women who would like to advance to senior-level administrative positions?
25. Is there anything that I have not asked you that is important to your story?

*Closing:* Thank you for your participation in this study. As previously discussed, your responses will not be connected to any identifiable information.

*Nondirective probes for open-ended questions:*

- Anything else?
- Can you tell me more about it?
- Can you explain this a little more?
- Can you be more specific about this?
- Why do you feel that way?

- Can you tell me more about your thinking on this?
- Why is this?
- Are there any other issues involved?

## APPENDIX D

## Copyright Permission Letter

September 27, 2010

American Council on Education  
One Dupont Circle NW  
Washington, DC 20036

Dear American Council on Education:

I would appreciate receiving your permission to use data from two of your publications in my dissertation entitled, *Climbing the Ladder: The Experiences of Women Vice Presidents in Southern Baptist Colleges and Universities*. When completed, a copy of my work (both paper and electronic) will be available through the library at The University of Arkansas. The data I am asking to use are from the following publications:

1. *On the Pathway to the Presidency: Characteristics of Higher Education's Senior Leadership*, by Jacqueline E. King and Gigi G. Gomez, p.4, 8, 10, 11, and 13.  
On the pages listed above, there are charts with characteristics of senior administrators organized by institutional type. In each chart, there are two lines that compare characteristics based on gender. I would create one chart that reflects the characteristics for each of the institutional types based on gender.
2. *The American College President: 2007 Edition*, p. 15.  
On p. 15, Table 4 displays the percentage of presidencies held by women by institutional type and selected years. I would like to use the data from the 1986 and 2006 columns in a table in my work.

I will give proper acknowledgement of title, author, copyright owner, and copyright date using APA standards. I have enclosed a copy of the proposed tables and how they would appear in my work, if permission is granted.

Would you please consider this request and indicate your permission below and return this request? An extra copy of this request is enclosed.

Respectfully,

Allison Langford  
Graduate Student, University of Arkansas  
4020 S. 115<sup>th</sup> Rd., Bolivar, MO 65613

(417)-599-1169

---

The above request is granted with any conditions listed below and with understanding that full credit will be given for each source.

---

Signature

---

Date



## REFERENCES

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