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Perceptions of Roane State Community College Presidents on the Events Shaping the Institution's Leadership History

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ABSTRACT

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A major focus of policymakers in recent years has been community colleges, which have been viewed as potential engines for economic advancement and student success. I examined the leadership history of Roane State Community College, a two-year institution of higher learning serving a nine-county service area mostly in rural East Tennessee as perceived by individuals who have served as the college's presidents. Five current and former presidents were interviewed about their experiences as president and their perceptions of the college's history. Narrative research was used to recount a history of Roane State Community College, and the key events and factors shaping it, as well the role played by various leaders. The results of this study illuminate the history of Roane State Community College, provide insight into the leadership of community colleges in general, and add to the literature on the history of community colleges in the U.S. Among the findings were that the founding of Roane State, funding concerns, the establishment of satellite campuses, the use of technology, and the establishment of Pellissippi State Community College were considered among the key historical events. Participants also reported that they valued collaborative, consensus-building styles of leadership.

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to the late Dr. John Thomas, a longtime history professor at Roane State Community College who nurtured in me a love of history that has never departed. It is also dedicated to my mother, Patricia Norris Brown, a retired math professor at Roane State, who instilled in me a love of learning from an early age. To my wife, Maggy, for always being there for me. I also want to dedicate this study to my son, Ian Gabriel Gerald Brown, who I hope will dream big, and work hard to make his dreams come true.

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Chapter 1. Introduction

Community colleges have received increased attention by policymakers and the public in recent years, a result of shifts in the global economy and changes in the landscape of higher education in the United States. Although there has been a decline in enrollment in over the past few years (Fain, 2019), more than one third of undergraduate students in the U.S. attended two-year colleges in 2017. These students are more likely to come from underserved populations than students at four-year institutions ("Community College FAQs," n.d.), making the role played by community colleges all the more crucial.

This increased role for community colleges has been particularly apparent in Tennessee, which has placed greater emphasis on community college education as a strategy to improve workforce readiness in the state. The advent of the Tennessee Promise and Tennessee Reconnect programs, which provide tuition-free education at community colleges or colleges of applied technology, to all high school graduates ("Tennessee Promise Scholarship") and adult students ("Tennessee Reconnect Grant"), indicate that community colleges are perceived by policymakers in the state to play a significant economic role. "At the end of the day, there is no higher potential for providing more opportunity for our citizens than increasing access to high quality education," then Gov. Bill Haslam stated in announcing the advent of Tennessee Reconnect ("Haslam: Community College Tuition-Free for All Tennesseans").

In launching these initiatives, Tennessee has established itself as a national leader in higher education. Shortly after the launch of Tennessee Promise, President Barack Obama called for a similar, nationwide program (Smith, 2015), a call which was echoed more recently by First Lady Jill Biden, herself a community college professor (Superville, 2021). Although this plan has not yet come to fruition, other states have followed suit with their own programs. In 2019,

California, home to the largest higher education system in the U.S., launched a new initiative allowing first-time, full-time students free tuition at community colleges in the state, bringing the number of states offering comparable programs to twelve (Trammell, 2019).

While they have been much discussed in recent years, community colleges are not a new institution. Their concept first emerged from the leadership of William Rainey Harper in the early twentieth century (Kane & Rouse, 1999), which gave rise to associate (two-year) degrees. Soon the idea spread, ultimately leading to a proliferation of junior colleges, which served as precursors to community colleges (Drury, 2003). Though predated by junior colleges, Tennessee's modern community college system developed during the 1960s, in response to the 1957 *Public Higher Education in Tennessee* report (commonly known as the *Pierce-Albright Report*). This report called for greater accessibility to higher education for students, noting that much of the state's population lived more than fifty miles from an institution of higher education (which has been identified as a major barrier to educational equity), among other recommendations (Byrne, 1989).

In the years following the *Pierce-Albright Report*, community colleges blossomed under the leadership of education commissioner J. Howard Warf, who became known as the "father of Tennessee community colleges." In 1965, the state legislature appropriated funding for three community colleges, one in each of the state's three grand divisions. Over the next few years, seven more institutions were established, bringing the total to ten by 1972, when they were formed into a single system by an act of the legislature (Smith, 1983). Among these new institutions was Roane State Community College. Authorized by the Tennessee General Assembly in 1969, the college offered its first classes in the fall of 1971 in temporary locations until moving to its permanent location just outside the city limits of Harriman in 1973 ("College

History"). Today, the institution serves around 5,000 students and operates in a nine-county service area, mostly in the rural Appalachian region of East Tennessee.

Statement of the Problem

The leadership of each of the college's six presidents, as well as historical events and factors, have shaped Roane State Community College's history and culture as an institution of higher learning. This dissertation will examine the perceptions of these presidents concerning their views of the key events in the institution's history and their perceptions of the impact of presidential leadership. As the chief executive officers of their institutions, college presidents have an almost impossible array of duties and responsibilities and serve a vast number of constituencies. They also have the ability to understand and relate to all disciplines at the institution (Bowles, 2013). Thus, college presidents are in a unique position to have the most impact on an institution's culture and history, as well as unique qualifications to evaluate their own leadership and that of others.

The presidency of Roane State Community College has not been studied sufficiently by scholars, and has been largely absent from the literature for more than thirty years. Byrne (1989) examined the institutional history of Roane State most recently, but this work only touched on the presidency of Dr. Cuylar Dunbar. A more thorough examination of Roane State's presidents, reflecting the changes of the past three decades therefore isneeded to fill this gap in the existing literature. Additionally, a study such as this contributes to the overall literature on the history of community colleges, an area which has received little attention from historians (Dorn, 2017).

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative narrative study is to examine the leadership and historical perspective of leadership of Roane State Community College, a two-year community college

with nine campuses mostly located in rural East Tennessee, and the key events that have shaped it, as perceived by its presidents. I will employ a qualitative design, using a detailed narrative description of the history of Roane State Community College, utilizing interviews with current and former presidents in order to examine the key events and leadership styles and approaches of each of Roane State's presidents. The institution's six presidents are as follows: Dr. Cuyler Dunbar (1970-1988); Dr. Sherry Hoppe (1988-2000); William Fuqua (interim president, 2000-2001); Dr. J. Wade McCamey (2001-2005); Dr. Gary Goff (2005-2012); and Dr. Chris Whaley (2012-present). Five of these presidents agreed to sit for an interview.

Research Questions

The research questions were intended to guide the study toward a better understanding of the perceptions of Roane State presidents about the key events and factors in the institution's history. The following questions were asked to help determine this.

Research Question 1

What do Roane State Community College presidents perceive to be the key events shaping the institution's history and culture?

Research Question 2

What factors are perceived to have led to the founding of Roane State Community College?

Research Question 3

What does each president perceive as being the key events of their term as president, and how do they believe these events shaped the history and culture of Roane State?

Research Question 4

What does each president perceive as being the key events occurring before and after their term as president, and how do they believe these events shaped the history and culture of Roane State?

Research Question 5

How does each president describe their style of leadership? How do they contrast their style of leadership with that of other Roane State presidents?

Research Question 6

How does each president describe RSCC's history and their role as president within the context of other educational institutions?

Research Question 7

What other administrators, faculty, staff, students, or community leaders does each president perceive to have influenced the history of Roane State Community College?

Significance of the Study

This historical examination of institutional leadership draws on interviews with presidents to understand their perception of the emergence and evolution of Roane State Community College's institutional history and culture. The history of Tennessee community colleges in general, and Roane State Community College in particular, is a topic that has received limited attention from scholars. Perhaps the most recent scholar to thoroughly examine the history of community colleges in Tennessee was Smith (1983), while Byrne (1989) was probably the most recent to examine the institutional and leadership history of Roane State Community College. As both these studies were published during the 1980s, a new study can provide a more modern perspective on this topic, as well as information on developments in subsequent decades.

The year 2021 marks the fiftieth anniversary of Roane State's first classes, making it the ideal time for a study of the institution's history. According to Dorn (2017), the study of community college history is challenging due to insufficient preservation of many documents and archives, but this study of the institution's leadership was aided by the fact that all former presidents are living and able to be interviewed as of this writing.

Delimitations and Limitations

This dissertation is limited to one institution, Roane State Community College, though its findings may be transferrable to similar institutions (i.e. rural community colleges, community colleges in the Appalachian region, etc.). Additionally, as I used interviews and available archival records, my research was affected by what was publicly available, as well as what participants were willing to share with me. As this is a narrative study, during all interviews, I used bracketing (i.e., put aside all judgements and opinions in an effort to understand how individuals make sense of their lived experiences) to minimize potential bias. Likewise, the use of triangulation, i.e., the collection of qualitative and quantitative data at the same time, which can strengthen the quality of the study (Creswell & Poth, 2018) in order to gain a more comprehensive picture of the institution.

During the preparation for the interviews, I examined previous Roane State Community College catalogs and yearbooks, as well as college publications. Resources available online and through Roane State's Office of Alumni Relations were used. Though my main goal was to utilize these prior to the interviews in order to structure interview questions, I also used some to contextualize interview responses, particularly those resources which came to light after the interviews were conducted.

As a tenured faculty member and alumnus of Roane State Community College, as well as the child of another alumnus and retired faculty member, I realize that the study may have a bias toward the institution and the limitations that my relationship with Roane State creates. Additionally, I am personally acquainted with some of the people I have interviewed. I am a strong believer in the transformative power of education in general, and of community colleges, Roane State Community College in particular, having been a beneficiary of this power.

This connection, however, need not disqualify my data. Insider research, that is, research conducted by community members of the institution being studied, is widely accepted in ethnographic work. Additionally, peer interviewing is becoming more common in qualitative research, with Devotta et al. (2016) contending that it can be both positive and capacity building for all participants, provided adequate resources (for example, time) are invested. Additionally, precedent exists for the study of people close to researchers, including such well known scholars as Jean Piaget (Olson & Hergenhahn, 2012).

During the research process, I engaged in reflexivity by providing a detailed justification for each of my decisions. My decisions were also made in consultation with my dissertation committee, who reviewed and debriefed the data. My committee members are not directly connected to Roane State, and, thus, are more likely to be disinterested (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Definitions

Most of these terms are used widely understood, but some can have unclear or multiple definitions. The definitions here are intended to clarify their uses for the purposes of this dissertation.

- Leader: An individual in a position in which leadership is exercised (Northouse, 2016).

- Narrative research: A qualitative strategy where the researcher studies individuals' lives and asks them for stories about their lives. The information is then retold by the researcher in a narrative chronology (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).
- President: The chief executive officer of the institution; for the purposes of this study, I have included Roane State's only exclusively interim president.

Overview of the Study

This research focused on identifying the leadership and historical factors which have contributed to Roane State Community College's history and culture, as perceived by current and former presidents. This was accomplished by gathering data through interviews with the presidents. This narrative research qualitative study includes five chapters. Chapter 1 includes the introduction, the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, the research questions, the significance of the study, the delimitations and limitations, definitions, and an overview of the study. Chapter 2 is a review of the literature. Chapter 3 explains the research design and methodology. Chapter 4 includes the research findings. Chapter 5 includes emergent themes, recommendations for future study, and the conclusions of this research study.

Chapter 2. Literature Review

The historical leadership of all past presidents of Roane State Community College is simultaneously both an extremely narrow and extraordinary broad topic for study. Although the literature specific to Roane State Community College presidents and history is extremely limited, there is a wealth of literature on the broad areas of the history of higher education and of leadership, both of which are very important to this study. Much of the literature, particularly with regards to higher education, tends to be factual rather than analytical, recounting facts rather than research findings. This is not true of all the literature, but a significant amount falls into this category. I have included only the most relevant literature here, attempting to focus on research findings.

This chapter provides a broad overview of the scholarly literature relevant to this study by focusing on the literature relevant to the following areas: the history of higher education, the history of community colleges, leadership, and Roane State Community College specifically. By reviewing the literature on the history of higher education generally and community colleges specifically, a better understanding of the cultures, environments, and events of community colleges can be achieved, thus allowing for this study to have greater historical context, as well as an understanding of the types of issues presidents are tasked with addressing. Through examining community college leadership, it was determined what leadership models and approaches are most prevalent or perceived as most effective in this community college setting. Finally, by examining the literature specific to Roane State Community College, I have shown what scholars have found about the institution's characteristics and have connected this dissertation to that research. This approach has allowed this study to remain grounded in existing research and placed the institution in the context of history and culture.

General Historical Overview of Higher Education Historical Research

There exists a robust literature on the history of higher education dating back several centuries. The literature surveyed in this section is related to American higher education, the system from which Roane State Community College emerged. While much of the literature is descriptive in nature, controversies and disagreements among scholars are common.

The Birth of the University to Colonial America

Higher education in the Western world began nearly a thousand years ago in Western Europe, with the earliest universities appearing in Bologna, Paris, and, later, Oxford. All of these universitites broke with the monasteries of the late Middle Ages, but were nonetheless heavily influenced by them. These institutions generally served the scions of elite families, and awarded the titles of Bachelors to those who completed lower components and Masters to those who completed higher components. According to Shugart (2013), this set into motion the history from which higher education systems of today would emerge, and indeed, many institutions still have commonalities with the earliest ones.

The first college established in the Anglo-American colonies of North America was Harvard, which was founded in 1636 primarily as an institution for the training of clergy and colonial leaders. In the decades that followed, other colleges appeared in the colonies, among them William and Mary in 1693, Yale in 1701, and the University of Pennsylvania in 1740. Though today these institutions are considered among the most elite in the world, Thelin (2011) contended that their prestige is partly the result of their longevity, and that these institutions' greatest influence on American higher education has been their architecture styles, curriculum, and structure.

Virtually all colonial institutions were religious in nature, particularly in Puritan New England, where colleges viewed their main purpose as ensuring that "the main end of [a student's] life and studies is, *to know God and Jesus Christ which is eternal life*, Joh. 17.3" (Geiger, 2015, p. 28). Each day, students were required to attend morning and evening chapel and on weekends they were required to spend most of their time studying or reciting theology.

The consensus among historians is that meaningful change in the religious culture of colonial colleges did not occur until after 1740 when Enlightenment thinkers such as Locke and Descartes began to appear in curriculums. By 1760, as a result of the Enlightenment, which was spreading throughout Europe and the colonies, colleges were facing great pressure to reform and embrace a more empirical (and secular) approach to learning. Some leaders resisted, arguing that colleges should continue with their historic focus on Christianity and training ministers, but even at church-affiliated institutions, there was a greater expectation of religious toleration (Geiger, 2015).

Naturally, the colleges of Colonial America were influenced by their counterparts in England, especially Oxford and Cambridge, not the least of which being that they served primarily the sons of elite families. Thelin (2011), however, argued that there were some key differences from the beginning. Unlike their English counterparts, colonial colleges were smaller and lacked the resources to establish the sophisticated architecture more common in the Old World. Perhaps most significantly, most colonial colleges were controlled by external boards, not by faculty, unlike Oxford and Cambridge. This style of government would prove enduring for colonial, and later, American institutions of higher education.

Another divergence from the English model can be seen in the emergence of the college presidency in this period, which became strong relative to college presidencies in England. This

was not by design, but rather a product of circumstance. Harvard was governed by the Harvard Corporation, which consisted of a president, treasurer, and five fellows, who were initially intended to be teachers at the college. In practice, however, because teachers did not have permanent posts, local dignitaries were often recruited to fill those roles, reducing faculty governance on campus in comparison to what existed in England. This had the effect of necessitating a strong president (Geiger, 2015).

The American Revolution, the Industrial Revolution, and the Early 20th Century

American colleges during the American Revolution overwhelmingly supported independence for the colonies, and in the years following the revolution emphasized public service and the common good through educating those considered likely future leaders of society. Many elites and Revolutionary leaders believed that the Republic's survival was tied to the education of future leaders instilled with virtue. Colleges, thus, were seen as a means of recreating the natural aristocracy of the founding generation. Curricula were redesigned to reflect a more republican character (Geiger, 2015). As one result, such institutions did not typically train students for careers, but rather educated them using a classical curriculum, based in mathematics, moral philosophy, Latin, Greek, and the classics. Students, who were almost always white males, were expected to be "gentlemen" and held to rigorous standards of morality (Dorn, 2017).

Thelin (2011) stated that the American Revolution influenced American colleges and universities by helping establish their decentralized nature. Many of the political and educational leaders of the early republic, influenced by the British system, were skeptical of centralized power, leaving colleges to be chartered by the states with little oversight from the national government. This is evident today by the fact that public colleges and universities are almost always governed by state governments, not the federal government.

Most scholars have contended that colleges during the nineteenth century essentially served as bastions for the elite, focused on training future political leaders. Though some changes began during this century, they admitted relatively few students of modest means. One scholar argued that during this time, a consumer model of education began to emerge, as institutions encouraged a lifestyle of campus activities, rebellion, and extracurricular activities to lure students, echoes of which are still apparent today. This new model appears to have been successful, evidenced by growing enrollment and more students of modest means attending by the mid-1800s (Thelin, 2011).

These changes came as the result of a subtle shift in the dialogue of education, which Geiger (2015) stated, occurred shortly after the Revolutionary War. At that time, the idea of republican virtue began to give way to ideas about unifying the nation, and the discussion shifted toward educating a larger segment of the population. Leaders began pushing for public education, more colleges, education for women, and even a national university. By 1800, this helped lead to thirteen new colleges being established, adding to the nine that existed before the Revolution. Many of these institutions were connected to their states.

State support for education did not extend necessarily to supporting new institutions once established, however, as many suffered from limited local support and little funding. Many struggled to offer classes, and some failed. These challenges led North Carolina Federalists to establish what was arguably the first state university with the University of North Carolina, establishing a new model for higher education in the United States (Geiger, 2015) (though some contend that the University of Georgia was actually the first, by virtue of having received a state charter earlier [“The birthplace of public higher education,” 2017]),.

After a decline in college interest, a major boom occurred between 1820 and 1840. The Industrial Revolution, westward expansion, and the resulting economic growth, coupled with the advent of professional schools fueled a major rise in higher education. The number of functioning colleges in the United States grew spectacularly, from 28 in 1815 to 8,324 by 1840. During this time, a number of new models of higher education emerged, some with a more vocational theme as opposed to the traditional coursework. These news models both complemented and challenged the historical view of college (Geiger, 2015).

Changes happened quickly during the early to mid-nineteenth century. Thomas Jefferson had founded the University of Virginia with a non-classical track, while a Harvard professor publicly argued that Greek and Latin should no longer be required. Both broke with the traditional view of what college should be (Pak, 2008). Many college leaders were concerned about this shift toward a consumer model of education, believing that colleges and universities should exist to serve society by producing intellectual and moral leaders for society. Such ideals were behind the landmark 1828 *Yale Report*, which called for the retainment of the Greek and Latin classics and warned against the commercialization of higher education (Dorn, 2017). The *Yale Report* became emblematic of the debate about the purpose of college, a debate which continued in the famous *Two Cultures* lecture of C.P. Snow in 1959, and remains present today (Timmons, 2007).

This new variety of colleges available, each with the ability to adopt their own curriculum, provided potential students with more choices than ever before. The gradual shift toward a consumer model of higher education was further accelerated by the passage of the Morrill Land-Grant Act, signed into law by President Abraham Lincoln in 1862. The act allowed for the selling of public lands to create “colleges for the Benefit of Agriculture and Mechanic

Arts" (Loss, 2012). There is debate among scholars about what the true objective of the Morrill Act was. The "received view" is that it was an attempt by the federal government to expand access to higher education for more students (Key, 1996). However, this view has been challenged by Thelin (2011) and Key himself, who suggest that the Morrill Act was primarily an economic policy, with access to higher education only an afterthought.

Regardless of the motive, there is general consensus that the Morrill Act's greatest significance was the fact that it was a national policy incentivizing the establishment of "useful education" at public institutions. This was a concept which appears to have been largely absent from colonial institutions, but which would continue through the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, as industrial leaders increasingly became donors for colleges and universities (Thelin, 2011). According to one historian, "During the ten years after 1865, almost every visible change in the pattern of American higher education lay in the direction of concessions to the utilitarian type of demand for reform" (Geiger, 2015, p. 269). This emphasis on *useful education* would be significant for the creation of junior and community colleges.

Some scholars contend that collegiate culture became more egalitarian (though mostly only for white men) during the early twentieth century (Thelin, 2011; Dorn, 2017), and that many modern aspects became more prominent, notably sports (football, particularly, which became a source of revenue), and party culture, fueled by alcohol, which shifted the popular perception of college students further away from the "gentleman" archetype (Thelin, 2011). By the 1920s, higher education entered a period one scholar has dubbed *mass education*. Between 1915 and 1940, the percentage of 18- to 21- year olds attending college in the U.S. nearly tripled to 15.5 percent, greater growth than in any other country in the world (Geiger, 2015). Colleges

also became more competitive with each other, as commercialism became more prominent (Dorn, 2017).

Not everyone shares this somewhat optimistic view, however. Paschal (2016) contended that modern research universities emerged as one of many institutions shaped by the rise of industrial capitalism following the Civil War, primarily as an institution to protect the then-emerging professional class against challenges from lower classes.

The GI Bill to the 1960s

Perhaps the most influential legislation in the history of higher education, claimed by some scholars to be the most influential law ever passed by Congress, was the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, popularly known as the GI Bill. The GI Bill provided funding for most veterans to attend four years of college. This changed the landscape of higher education forever. In the immediate wake of World War II, many GI Bill beneficiaries were what would today be termed nontraditional students: older and often married. Additionally, they were often more interested in learning marketable skills than in a traditional liberal arts education, forcing colleges and universities to adapt (Thelin 2011). Rose (1994) contends that campus environments were permanently changed in that they became much more welcoming to adult students, a student population that had been previously shunned on many campuses.

This influx of new students nearly overwhelmed institutions' ability to serve them all, and many institutions were forced to make drastic changes. Many teachers' colleges became public universities, and many women's colleges became co-educational (Shugart, 2013). A presidential commission, which became known as the Truman Commission, recommended a massive expansion of higher education, by combining liberal arts junior colleges with industrial

education centers created during World War II. Shugart (2013) claims this laid the groundwork for commuter colleges and community colleges.

Altschuler and Blumin (2009) consider the GI Bill to be a watershed moment in the public's perception of American higher education, paving the way for mass higher education. In this view, the most consequential impact of the legislation was that it helped forge a new public consensus that college education should be open to a wider range of students from more diverse socio-economic backgrounds. In their words, "Americans began to perceive undergraduate and graduate degrees as gateways to the professions, the new route to the American Dream" (p. 87).

In the years following World War II, the tension between the liberal arts and vocational skills increased on many college campuses. Using the University of South Florida as an example, Dorn (2017) argued that many universities, while not jettisoning the liberal arts, began to shift toward an emphasis on preparation for the job market, bowing to the demands of students, who overwhelmingly chose to attend college to prepare for work. This shift reflected the ethos of the 1950s, as described by economist John Kenneth Galbraith's famous work, *The Affluent Society*. By 1958, the public had come to view a college degree as a route to the good life, and many students enrolled almost exclusively for personal gain.

The post-World War II years were also a time of changes in how institutions were funded. Before the war, very few institutions received federal funding for research, with private industry paying for most research and development at universities. This began to change with the advent of the Manhattan Project and accelerated during the Cold War years of the 1950s, particularly with the launch of Sputnik. By the 1960s, federal investments in university research had increased by nearly 900 percent, a fact that one scholar believed led many universities to

shift their focuses away from local and regional concerns and toward the federal government (Dorn, 2017).

The 1960s was a time of significant political and social upheaval, particularly with regards to the Civil Right Movement. School segregation had been ruled unconstitutional with the *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) decision, but most researchers view many institutional responses to this ruling as "halfhearted, token compliance" at best, or outright violent resistance. Notably, the threat of violence at some Southern institutions necessitated responses by the federal government. Though most graduate programs became more accepting, the consensus among scholars is that African-American students remained underrepresented, marginalized, and harassed even after integration was nominally achieved in 1968 (Thelin, 2011). African-Americans would continue to remain an underserved population for decades, continuing to the present day.

Lazerson (1998) contended that the success of higher education during the decades following World War II was based on three patterns of beliefs related to vocationalism, public higher education, and multiple sectors of postsecondary schooling. In this view, vocationalism (or training in job skills for specific industries) became popular at colleges and universities by the late nineteenth century, and accelerated after World War, especially for women, who most commonly attended college to become teachers. Also during these years, higher education came to be viewed as a public good, rather than simply a bastion for the elite, and more diverse institutions were established, attracting more students from different backgrounds.

Community Colleges

The study of community colleges, described by Dorn (2017) as the workhorse of American higher education, was largely ignored by scholars until the 1980s (Cohen & Brawer,

2014). Specifically, the history of community colleges has largely been ignored by historians, a fact attributed to their low status in the higher education hierarchy and to poor preservation of their records (Dorn, 2017). Nonetheless, they have been examined to some degree in the literature, both in larger works of higher education history and by scholars specializing in this area. In this section, I present a survey of the literature examining eras and themes in the development of the community college.

Junior Colleges and Other Precursors

Community colleges are generally considered to have emerged from the tension between those who favored a traditional liberal arts approach to education and those who favored an emphasis on the "useful arts." Another factor was societal changes occurring during the early twentieth century, a phenomenon one scholar partially attributes to the ethos of commercialism, which rose to new heights during that time. This tension in higher education's identity led to the creation of many different types of institutions, from law and medical schools to less savory institutions such as diploma mills, which essentially offered degrees for a price (Thelin, 2011). Early state-sponsored colleges for professional training, notably Normal schools, are also considered by some a precursor (Beach, 2011). The rationale behind these new institutions was that higher education was an investment that would pay off financially, if the right skill or credential was obtained. Cohen and Brawer (2014) identified industrialization, and the need for more workers to support the nation's growing industries, as well as changing perspectives which recognized adolescence as lasting longer, as major social forces leading to the rise of junior colleges during the early decades of the 1900s. They contended that the populist culture, which pushed for greater social equality, was also a major factor leading to the establishment of community colleges.

Kane and Rouse (1999) argued that junior colleges emerged from the vision of William Rainey Harper, president of the University of Chicago at the turn of the twentieth century, who advocated for separating the first two years of college from the second two years, creating six-year high schools and two-year colleges, which was inspired by the German "Gymnasium." The goal was to allow universities to eliminate freshmen and sophomore students, removing the need to teach general education courses, and allowing them instead to focus on academic research (Drury, 2003).

Harper did not see his vision fully realized, but he did divide his university into a *junior college* and a *senior college*, introducing the associate's degree for students who completed the junior division. The idea of separating the first two years of college became popular among educational reformers, beginning with the establishment of the first junior college in the United States, Joliet Junior College of Illinois in 1901, and leading to the establishment of nearly fifty junior colleges in the U.S. by 1914 (Drury, 2003), though at least one scholar argued that Lasell Female Academy of Massachusetts predates Joliet as the first junior college (Woodroof, 1990). Many of the first junior colleges were private, religious institutions (often Catholic), who had dropped their upper classes, and took advantage of the relatively low startup costs, though they were soon outnumbered by public junior colleges (Geiger, 2015).

California became the first state to officially authorize the creation of junior colleges in 1907 (Smith, 1983). The law allowed secondary school boards to offer college classes which approximated lower-division college courses, and became a model for similar legislation in other states. Some high schools in the state, however, had already been offering such courses, especially those schools located far from four-year institutions. Thus, many of the first junior colleges were essentially extensions of high schools (Cohen & Brawer, 2014).

In subsequent years, California and other states passed laws allowing for junior colleges to be organized independently of secondary schools. At this point, they began being more closely associated with universities and, indeed, were supported by some university leaders. One possible idea was to essentially make the first two years of college become grades 13 and 14, with universities being responsible only for junior and senior-level instruction (along with graduate education). Stanford president David Starr Jordan proposed several times that the state should limit his institution and the University of California to upper-division courses and graduate and professional studies, though this never came to fruition. Instead, community colleges developed a place outside the tradition of higher education, complementing four-year institutions instead of becoming fully integrated into their system (Cohen & Brawer, 2014).

Scholars contended that, from the beginning, junior colleges had many characteristics that are today associated with community colleges: they offered associate's degrees as their highest degree (Kane & Rouse, 1999), and emphasized the liberal arts in their curriculums, encouraging eventual transfer to four-year institutions. Additionally, most began with local initiatives, served local populations, were locally funded, and employed mostly local faculty, administrators, and staff. The role of local initiatives in the establishment of community colleges is a major theme in the literature, with junior and community colleges often formed using local school facilities, and became a matter of civic pride for local citizens (Cohen & Brawer, 2014).

Junior Colleges experienced significant growth during their early years: by 1918, nearly two percent of all undergraduate students in the United States were served by junior colleges. This growth would continue during the 1920s, as vocational education became more prominent at junior colleges (Dorn, 2017). This shifted emphasis was at least partially the result of pressure from universities who feared competition (Thelin, 2011), though some university officials

viewed junior colleges as a screening service for potential students (Beach, 2011). The role of vocational training was debated by junior college leaders throughout the 1920s (Dorn, 2017).

A 1932 Carnegie Foundation report on California junior colleges recommended these colleges as an effective means of teaching general education and vocational skills for the masses, giving them new credibility. The report also endorsed a new organizational structure for higher education in the state, with the flagship university being the only institution approved to grant both doctoral and professional degrees, while the rest of the public universities in the state would award bachelor's and master's degrees. The report assigned junior colleges the role of vocational programs for students, designed to get them into the workforce more quickly than universities (Dorn, 2017).

During the Great Depression, junior college enrollment nearly tripled, reaching 150,000 students by 1940. Drury (2003) attributed this growth to increased high school graduation rates and high unemployment. Most of these institutions had relatively small enrollments: Brawer and Cohen (2014) found that the 610 junior colleges that existed in the U.S. in 1940 on average enrolled about 400 students each. Nonetheless, according to Dorn (2017), two-year education programs remained somewhat unpopular among most students until the early 1940s.

Community Colleges and Junior Colleges

The Truman Commission Report of 1947 largely accepted the recommendations of the Carnegie Foundation report by tying the justification of two-year institutions directly to the push toward vocational training. The report is also significant for the recommendation that the term *junior college* be changed to *community college* to further stress this shift (Dorn, 2017), which many, though not all, two-year institutions did.

The differences between junior colleges and community colleges is not always apparent. Cohen and Brawer (2014) noted that during the 1950s and 1960s, *junior colleges* increasingly came to be seen as two-year colleges administered by churches or independent organizations, or as the lower-division branches of private universities. Meanwhile, *community colleges* increasingly became known as comprehensive, public two-year colleges. However, during the 1970s, the term *community college* was applied to both these types of institutions. They defined community colleges as "any institution regionally accredited to award the associate in arts or the associate in science as its highest degree" (p. 5).

The rise of community colleges correlated with a decline of junior colleges, as the latter sector began shrinking following the end of World War II, as private junior colleges were unable to compete with publicly-funded community colleges. Between 1940 and 1988, the number of private junior colleges in the U.S. declined from 349 to only 89 (Woodroof, 1990). Though community colleges had an adverse effect on the existence of junior colleges, they did not necessarily drive them out of business. In some cases, junior colleges responded to the competition by transitioning into four-year institutions (Medinger, 1994).

The Community College Movement

Researchers view the 1960s as perhaps the most important decade in the history of community colleges. During these years, junior colleges became known as community colleges as their missions became more complex (Drury, 2003). The decade also saw huge enrollment growth, reaching more than two million by the early 1970s, a five-fold increase since the 1960s. By some estimates, a new community college opened every week (Thelin, 2011). Scholars have partially attributed this growth to an influx of Vietnam War veterans using the GI Bill, others

who enrolled to avoid the military draft (Kane & Rouse, 1999), and the post-World War II baby boomers coming of age (Drury, 2003).

The Mission of Community Colleges

Brewer (2016) noted that although mission statements have existed for much longer, research on mission statements in general was largely absent until the mid-1970s. Since that time, they have become more prominent, leading to their adoption by many different organizations, including community colleges. Since the mid-1970s, mission statements have become important for marketing purposes for institutions of higher education, though Brewer (2016) contended their characteristics have not been widely studied.

At the time of their emergence in the early 1900s, community colleges lacked blueprints, and it fell upon the leaders of these new institutions to establish institutional purposes which would distinguish them from other institutions and guide them into the future, as well as meet societal expectations. No single vision for community colleges emerged, and leaders debated the role of these new institutions for more than half a century. In fact, it would be the 1970s before community college leaders began using the mission, following the popularizing of *missioning* as a management strategy (Ayers, 2017).

From their very beginnings, scholars have found the missions of community colleges to be complicated and even confusing (Thelin, 2011). During the 1960s, various new programs were added, including continuing education courses, certification programs, community interest courses, remedial courses, and others, perhaps unintentionally attempting to fulfill the vision of Ezra Cornell, who famously said he would found an educational institution where anyone could study anything. Not surprisingly, these various and at times contradictory aims resulted in growing pains for the institutions. Thelin (2011) pointed out that one criticism of community

colleges is that in attempting to be all things to all people, community colleges lost sight of their goals. In some states, the number of transfer students declined, and those who did transfer performed poorly, leading to criticism from universities that community colleges were not adequately preparing students for their curriculum.

Ayers (2015) has argued that, due to the contradictory and often fluid nature of their environment, community colleges must continually pursue legitimacy, which, in this view, is the only factor allowing institutions to continue to exist. Ayers further contended that community college mission statements in recent years have become more focused on communication, diversity, and sustainable practices. This reflects a shift in emphasis away from vocational education and toward degree completion, which is argued to currently be the more salient marker for legitimacy. This shift in emphasis should not be overestimated, however. Pierce (2017), for example, examined grants available to community colleges, finding many aligned closely with the community college's career and technical education emphasis, though recommended that community colleges only apply for grants directly relevant to their mission.

Ironically, this lack of a single, coherent vision has been cited by some scholars as a major reason community colleges have grown and thrived. Unlike four-year institutions or technical schools who have more specific mandates, community colleges are turned to by policymakers and the public to solve nearly all problems, social or personal (Cohen & Brawer, 2014). Thus, this nimbleness means that community colleges can always find a use for themselves.

This nimbleness has been a feature of community colleges for decades. Though vocational education had long been associated with community colleges, the years between 1970 and the mid-1980s saw an even greater shift in emphasis toward vocationalization. Additionally,

with funding decreases during the 1970s and 1980s, many community colleges responded by changing their missions to become economic-development partners: by the 1990s, community colleges had become the main source of contracted employment training for state agencies, major industries, and local businesses, with nearly every state having such programs, despite the fact that such programs often did not offer courses to regularly enrolled students (Dorn, 2017).

Gumport (2003) contended that community colleges are viewed as the area of higher education most responsive to external pressure, which they experience from a wide variety of stakeholders. In this view, community colleges may be viewed as being overly passive and assumed to simply do whatever is asked of them. Community colleges generally will do so, eager to meet changing demands. Unfortunately, this can also make it appear that community colleges lack a central core.

Ayers (2017) contends that community college mission statements serve three purposes: public relations, management, and sensemaking. During the early years of community colleges, advocates used missions as a sort of public relations tool; they needed to distinguish community colleges from universities and secondary institutions, which they often attempted to do through college catalogues, flyers, and advertisements. By the 1970s, as mission statements became more formalized, they were seen as a way to more effectively manage institutions, and by the 1990s, as a way to make sense of the various roles and functions of community colleges, particularly at times of reduced resources.

Poverty reduction has long been associated with the community college mission, but a recent study of more than 200 community college mission statements somewhat surprisingly found that it was absent from the overwhelming majority of mission statements. Though the authors stated their belief that many community college leaders view the reduction of poverty as

a major aspect of their agendas, they contended that adding clear language to community college mission statements stressing institutional obligations to the poor would help institutions to meet this challenge more effectively (Williams & Nourie-Manuele, 2018).

The evolution of views over the proper mission of community colleges continues today, with some scholars contending that more emphasis on social justice is needed. With widening economic inequality, Heelan and Mellow (2017) argued that community college can and should emphasize providing a route to the middle class for underserved populations and maintaining our social contract.

In recent years, the growing diversity of the United States in general, and among community college students in particular, became a theme in the literature, with scholars examining its implications for the community college mission. Brewer (2016) found the theme of diversity was present in over 40 percent of the college and university mission statements in his work. A study of the mission statements of 70 Hispanic-serving community colleges found many referenced culture and access, but absent were references to the institution's Hispanic-serving function, which the authors argued should be added to these institutions' mission statements (Andrade & Lundberg, 2018). Another scholar argued that this increasing diversity should be addressed by recruiting faculty who are more representative of the communities they serve, arguing that individual college's missions, which typically include commitments to diversity, can aid in the recruitment process (Magloire, 2019).

The most thorough study of college and university mission statements was conducted by Brewer (2016), who found that the most common, core competencies in mission statements were teaching (present in nearly half of the mission statements surveyed), research or knowledge creation (present in nearly 60%), service (present in nearly a third), and specific academic focus

(present in nearly half). In terms of institutional and student outcomes, academic growth appeared most frequently in mission statements, with community improvement, personal growth/development, and leadership skills development closely following. Surprisingly, career preparation/employment ranked second to last in terms of frequency in the mission statements surveyed. Interestingly, little consensus was found in college and university mission statements with regards to strategies for product delivery: experiential learning was the most common theme, despite being present in only 10.5 percent of the mission statements reviewed. The study, however, surveyed only national universities and liberal arts colleges, so the findings may not be applicable to community colleges.

These factors, as well as the fact that community colleges serve every student who is able to enroll, led one scholar to describe community colleges as the "most egalitarian system of higher education in the world" (Rodriguez, 2015, p. 17), a theme Cohen and Brawer (2014) echoed when they contended that community colleges are distinctly American institutions, noting that such institutions did not appear in Western Europe, a point also made by Dorn (2017) and Beach (2011). They attributed this to the American ethos of encouraging all citizens to achieve their highest potential, as well as the fact that the U.S. lacks of a national ministry of education, which most developed nations possess.

The Development of Community Colleges

Community colleges flourished, with generous public funding, until budget crunches of the late 1970s forced them to become more focused on narrower missions. This led to difficult questions about accountability. Given that many community college students were from underserved populations, it is predictable that they would have lower success rates than those from more privileged backgrounds (Lovell, 2007). This raised questions about what constituted

success. If a student fails to complete a program at a community college, it could be evidence that the college failed them, though it could also be seen as evidence that the college maintains rigorous standards.

Regardless of these concerns, community college enrollment continued to grow, accounting for nearly half of all college enrollment growth between 1980-1994 (Kane & Rouse, 1999). Lovell (2007) wrote that community college students accounted for nearly half of all undergraduate students by 2005, with African-Americans, Hispanics, and Native American overrepresented. This is not surprising, as Trainor (2015) posited that community colleges were among the first to diversify, as well as serving as pioneers in distance education, summer classes, and campus social services, all of which would ultimately become staples at nearly all institutions of higher learning.

Since the 1970s, the distinction between vocational and collegiate education has lessened, with the education offered by community colleges in vocational fields no longer necessarily considered terminal, as many vocational students now transfer to four-year institutions to pursue bachelor's degrees. Additionally, there have been great increases in the volume of remedial education offerings, and a greater push for achievement indicators to quantify educational success, as evidenced by the greater role played by accreditation agencies (Cohen & Brawer, 2014).

Criticism of Community Colleges

Almost from their beginning, community colleges have been controversial. Beach (2011), for example, argued that junior and community colleges were established with the contradictory goals of providing greater educational opportunities to underserved populations, as well as a means of preventing the lower classes from entering the more elite four-year universities. Over

the years, they have been reformed to allow more access, but they remain on the lower tier of higher education, which Beach argued has the effect of limiting access to underserved populations to the higher tiers of society.

This view is also shared by Paschall (2016), who claimed that educational elites, citing President Lowell of Harvard, viewed junior colleges as functioning to give the illusion of democratic openness, by providing the lower classes access to limited vocational skills and only a very narrow route to affluence. Other scholars have interpreted similar views from Alexis F. Lange, an early advocate of junior colleges in California (Geiger, 2015).

The argument that community colleges limit access by underserved populations to elite universities has a long history in the literature, dating back to the early 1960s. Clark (1960) argued that community colleges performed a *cooling out* function, in which they purposely dissuaded students from transferring to four-year institutions to pursue bachelor's degrees, instead encouraging them to focus on vocational training. Brint and Karabel (1989), in what one scholar referred to as the seminal work on the controversies surrounding community colleges (Dorn, 2017), were less damning, finding that community colleges provide valuable services, especially to nontraditional students, but that they nonetheless frequently sidetrack students who otherwise might have completed four-year degrees from universities.

Tennessee Higher Education Research

Unsurprisingly, there is far less literature on the history of higher education specific to Tennessee. Much that is present are individual institutional histories, which may be of limited relevance to this study. Much of what exists is in the form of dissertations, some of which (though not all) were published decades ago.

The 1700s Until the Mid-1900s

There is very little scholarly literature from this era of higher education in Tennessee, perhaps reflecting Witherington's (1931) contention that higher education did not become a public function in the state until around 1900. Merriam (1893) criticized colleges in the 1800s, claiming that *pseudo colleges* and even some of *the better classes of institutions* gave out honors so readily that "academic honors [had] become a cheap commodity in Tennessee" (p. 19).

Prior to statehood, a seminary teaching the liberal arts and sciences, Latin, Greek, English, philosophy, and other disciplines was established by Samuel Carrick in 1793 in present day Knoxville. A year later, the territorial assembly granted a charter to the institution that would become Tusculum University, and, months later, voted to make Carrick's seminary a college, naming it Blount College. While Tusculum was a religious institution, Blount College declared itself nonsectarian from the beginning. It was Blount College that would eventually evolve into the present-day University of Tennessee.

In spite of these early attempts at higher education in the state, there was great division between what is now East Tennessee and the settlements surrounding Nashville, which Worthington (1931) contended inhibited cooperation on any form of statewide higher education. It would be the 1850s before there was any tax to support education at any level in Tennessee, which Worthington posited was due to the state's religious culture. He further argued that Tennessee was held back from establishing higher education during the 1800s due to a number of factors, including slavery, religious culture, mismanagement and general lack of public funds, geography, and the curriculum offered, which appealed to the *leisure class*. It was not until around the turn of the twentieth century that reformers gained ground in standardizing the state's system of higher education (Allison, 2005).

Writing even earlier, Merriam (1893) contended that in the nineteenth century and prior, Tennessee's state government had done virtually nothing for higher education in the state, with all colleges and universities having been founded and supported by private initiatives, with occasional help from the federal government. This lack of funding was also noted by Stinson (2003) more than a century later. Most early colleges in the state were founded by churches, with the University of Tennessee, West Tennessee College, and the University of Nashville being the only exceptions at the time of Merriam's writing. Most smaller colleges in the state admitted women by the late 1800s, though coeducation was not widely accepted. Colleges for African-American students were founded largely by Northern churches following the Civil War.

Worthington's and Merriam's research is today extremely dated, as much has changed over the past eighty years, in terms of subsequent events and how history is approached. Rice (2001) more recently examined the role of religion in Tennessee education and contended that religious leaders were generally opposed to state funding of higher education in part because they feared that tax-funded institutions would have an unfair competitive advantage over their favored religious denominational colleges, and these religious leaders tapped into anti-elite populism to bolster their arguments. Indeed, this controversy has been a theme throughout much of the history of the state (Stinson, 2003).

Higher education for women in Tennessee between the years of 1880 and 1925 was examined in detail by Allison (2005), who found that while women gained access to many colleges and universities in the state during those years, educational opportunities remained limited for women beyond conventional roles. This change was partially the result of reformers who, seeking to standardize the state's higher education system, had helped opened many

colleges and universities to women for the first time. Ironically, however, led to the decline of the women's college which consequently limited what women could study.

Stinson (2003) found that the state provided occasional funding for some colleges as early as 1831, but began providing more direct funding during the first decade of the 1900s, providing appropriations to the University of Tennessee and for the creation of colleges to train teachers (Normal schools), and by the 1950s, state appropriations accounted for nearly half of public college budgets.

The Pierce-Albright Report and the Community College Movement in Tennessee, 1950s-1970s

Though there had been private junior colleges previously, there is general agreement that the advent of Tennessee's community colleges can be traced to a 1957 report entitled *Public Higher Education in Tennessee* (commonly referred to as the Pierce-Albright report, after its authors), and to the efforts of education commissioner J. Howard Warf (sometimes considered "the father of Tennessee community colleges"). Smith (1983) contended that the purpose of the Pierce-Albright report was to propose a plan to meet the educational needs of the state. It called for greater access to higher education for state residents, though it did not call for community colleges. In 1965, the state legislature appropriated funding for three community colleges, one in each of the state's grand divisions. Over the next few years, six more such institutions were established, bringing the total to ten by 1972, when they were formed into a single system by an act of the legislature (Smith, 1983).

Leadership Studies

The concept of leadership has been studied by scholars for more than a century, with a rich literature available. Because this study focuses on community college leadership, I have

focused on a brief but broad examination of the concept of leadership before reviewing works specifically about community college leadership.

Historical Overview of Leadership

Though leadership has been studied by scholars for more than a century, it remains a somewhat amorphous concept, and scholars are still unable to settle on a universally agreed upon definition, despite the concept having existed since the time of Plato. The study of management arose around 1900, and though scholars tend to view this as separate from leadership studies, the two concepts overlap. A general consensus in the literature exists that leadership is both a trait and a process, indicating that individuals may have innate characteristics that make them leaders, but that observed leader behaviors may also be learned (Northouse, 2016).

Approaches to Leadership

Northouse (2016), in the book *Leadership: Theory and Practice*, identifies four approaches to studying leadership: the trait approach (focusing on the inherit attributes of leaders, such as extroversion), the skills approach (focusing on knowledge and abilities which can be learned), the behavioral approach (focusing on task behaviors and relationship behaviors), and the situational approach (focusing on leadership in various situations). It seems clear that each of these will play a role in institutional leadership, and have been examined in more detail by scholars of leadership.

The trait approach to leadership gave rise to modern leadership studies in the early twentieth century (Walter & Scheibe, 2013) and was one of the first systematic attempts to study leadership. It was believed that innate characteristics of *great men* such as Lincoln or Gandhi explained their leadership successes, though this view was challenged by the mid-twentieth century (Northouse, 2016). Nonetheless, it is still examined by scholars today. Meng et al.

(2011), for example, suggests traits as part of a three-dimensional construct of leadership, involving self-insight, shared vision, and team collaboration. Walter and Scheibe (2013), in a comprehensive review of the literature related to the leader's age as such a trait, proposed a complicated relationship between age and leadership: older ages had a negative impact on leadership in situations requiring high cognitive demands, but a positive impact on those requiring low cognitive demands.

In comparison to the trait approach, the skills approach appears to be more prominent in literature in recent years. Perhaps more encouragingly for aspiring leaders (and of interest to organizations wishing to develop potential leaders), advocates of the skills approach contended that, while personality certainly matters, people can acquire skills that will help them become effective leaders. This viewpoint had gained traction during the 1950s, with a distinction being made between who leaders *are* (traits) and what they *can accomplish* (skills) (Northouse, 2016).

Scholars found that leadership skills can begin developing very early in childhood. In one study, individuals between the ages of two and 29 were examined using a longitudinal study, which found that young children who approach other children tend to develop into extroverts by adolescence, and have stronger social skills in adulthood, a factor closely identified with leadership. On the other hand, young children who withdraw from social situations are more likely to become introverted as teenagers, and not develop social skills as well. Interestingly, the study found no relationship between adolescent IQ and adult leadership abilities (Guerin et al., 2011).

The development of leadership skills was also examined by Megheirkouni et al. (2018), who focused on the leadership skills of technical, human, and conceptual skills. They found a

significant relationship between these skills and the transformational and transactional leadership styles. Also, they found leadership styles to be equally as important as these skills.

The behavioral approach to leadership studies emerged following World War II, and focuses exclusively on what leaders do and how they act. According to this approach, how leaders act consists of two basic types of behavior: task behaviors (which facilitate the accomplishment of goals) and relationship behaviors (which help followers feel comfortable with themselves, each other, and their situations). Most research of this approach was conducted between the 1940s and the 1960s (Northouse, 2016).

There appears to be a dearth of recent research on the behavioral approach to leadership. Boyatzis (2011) studied emotional, social and cognitive intelligence as competencies for leadership from a behavioral perspective, finding them to be predictive of leadership success in many sectors. He also contended that these competences can be developed in adults, which may blur the distinction between the behavioral and skills approach. Most of the other literature is much older: Mosley (1998) examined the increasing diversification of organizations and contended that a behavioral approach would be an effective means of working toward multicultural organizations. Earlier, Davis and Luthans (1979) proposed a variant of the behavioral approach as more empirical and predictive than alternative approaches.

Finally, the most flexible leadership approach is probably situational leadership, which was developed in the late 1960s by Paul Hersey and Ken Blanchard. This approach is based on the fact that varying follower behavior requires different types of leadership, with the effective leader able to adapt as the situation dictates. This approach involves a directive and supportive dimension, with leaders matching their style of leadership to their followers' abilities and commitments (Northouse, 2016).

A theme in the literature particularly relevant for this study is education. At least two studies in recent years have examined situational leadership in the context of education. Meirovich (2012) proposed applying Hersey and Blanchard's model for situation leadership to the classroom as a means of creating a favorable emotional climate for students. It is posited that the model can be used to provide the appropriate emotional reaction in the classroom (based on the situation), thus maximizing the benefits of a positive emotional climate for students.

Another study focusing on situational awareness and education was conducted by Salehzadeh et al. (2015). They adapted the Kano model, which is used to categorize products or services based on how well they satisfy customer needs, to evaluate the leadership needs of Iranian college students. Perhaps not surprisingly, they found that undergraduate students (who have lower educational maturity) benefited from a directing style of leadership, with a coaching style sometimes used for motivational purposes. Postgraduate students benefited most from a coaching style, while for PhD students, both coaching and directing should be avoided in favor of a supporting style. It should be noted, however, that this study involved students at the University of Isfahan, an Iranian institution, and thus may not be generalizable to American students.

Community College Leadership

There is a robust literature on the role of leadership at community colleges. A broad overview is provided in the form of a report from the American Association of Community Colleges (2018). This report, which was intended as both a guide for institutional leaders, and those striving to become leaders, identified the following focus area for community college leaders, summarized here:

- **Governance, institutional policy, and legislation:** Effective leaders must become familiar both with their own institutional culture as well as the external community they serve, and be familiar with the governance framework and policies guiding it.
- **Support for student success:** An effective leader must be engaged with the development of the student success agenda, be open to (and willing to suggest) bold changes to areas not meeting needs, and be willing and able to use data to maximize enrollment, retention, and completion.
- **Institutional leadership**: Effective leaders must understand and build personal relationships and possess management skills to create a student-centered college.
- **Institutional Infrastructure:** Leaders must effectively manage the foundational aspects of the college, including helping to establish strategic plans, manage both finances and facilities, oversee accreditation, and a technological master plan.
- **Information and analytics:** Leaders must be able to use data to give holistic representation to institutional performance, and be willing to accept that the data may reveal uncomfortable truths.
- **Advocacy and mobilizing:** Effective leaders must understand and champion community college ideals, and be able to motivate stakeholders in support of the college.
- **Fundraising and relationship cultivation:** Leaders must form relationships with prominent figures and raise funds in support of their institution.
- **Communications:** Community college leaders must be strong communicators, and must accept the role as a spokesperson for their institution.
- **Collaboration:** Leaders must establish and nurture ethical internal and external relationships promoting the success of the institutional mission.

- **Personal traits and abilities:** Effective leaders must hone or possess traits and abilities key to institutional success, including authenticity, emotional intelligence, courage, ethics, self-managing, planning and time management, understanding of the impact of leadership on one's family, forward-looking philosophy, and willingness to embrace change.

Servant Leadership in Higher Education

Servant Leadership, first proposed by Greenleaf in 1970, was defined by Northouse (2016) as a style of leadership in which leaders place the good of followers ahead of their own, and exhibit moral behavior toward all parties. One scholar argued that it is uniquely suited for community colleges, as it ties closely to the mission of community colleges, with executives acting as servant leaders, and faculty and staff acting as servants (Kelly, 2008). The thesis of Letizia (2017) was similar: servant leadership should play a key role in the reframing of the roles of higher education. Such views are not universal, however, as Clegorne (2016) warned that servant leadership can create a savior complex in individuals, and Stoten (2013) determined that servant leadership was one of the least recognized forms of leadership in colleges.

Evolution and Changes in Leaders and Leadership

Scholars have also examined the changing roles of presidents at community colleges. Sullivan (2001) contended that early generations of community college presidents mostly fit a specific profile: they were primarily married white men, usually in their fifties, who had risen through the academic ranks. Most held doctoral degrees and utilized a traditional, top-down leadership style similar to that used in private businesses, though often supplemented with collective bargaining and the university model of faculty relations. This model led community colleges from early beginnings on creative but limited budgets into large bureaucracies, with vast

resources and community support. This model of community college leadership largely faded by the late 1990s, as these presidents retired.

Young (1996) suggested that early generations (pre-1960) of community college leaders operated in an environment that was "erratic, haphazard, and largely without plan." There was little coordination or overall plan in developing or governing community colleges, and in some regions most colleges were not accredited. This would begin to change by the late 1950s, in time for the community college boom of the next decade, with organization models based on districts becoming common in many states. Furthermore, Young argued, these changes required leaders with skill sets and mentalities distinct from both university and public school leaders, leading to the advent of institutions to train such leaders.

One early scholar of community colleges presidents emphasized the importance of open communication, involving all stakeholders in the decision-making process, mediating conflicts between groups, and establishing clear objectives and an institutional philosophy. The last task becomes more difficult in established institutions with entrenched institutional cultures. In this view, the president must also serve as a teacher to various parties, including trustees, the community at large, and students, establishing positive relationships with each to be able to administer the institution effectively (Blocker, 1972).

Community college leaders since the mid-1990s have differed substantially from earlier generations, according to Sullivan (2001). They are significantly more diverse, with increasing numbers of female and minority presidents, and many were influenced by the civil rights, antiwar, or women's movements. They have also followed different paths to leadership, with many earning advanced degrees in higher education or leadership. Though they have built on the foundation established by their predecessors, they have also adapted to new challenges, including

recessions, increasing numbers of underprepared students, decreasing public trust, and the rise of the internet.

The changing leadership environment in which community college presidents operate was also examined by Gumport (2003). Noting that community colleges are often characterized as being hypersensitive to external pressure, this scholar contended that presidents have at times an unclear role: when they speak, do they do so on behalf of the public interest, their sector's interest, the interest of their institution, or their own interests. Citing the broad responsibilities community colleges have traditionally taken, the study finds that presidents often do whatever is asked, but do at times resist on issues they do not believe support the community college mission, notably growing enrollment through remedial education and workforce training. In these areas, the concern was they did not want their campuses overrun with students in noncredit programs, or the perceived poor resource allocation of having many students in remedial courses.

The changing leadership environment has led some scholars to suggest that leadership programs aimed at community college leaders may not have kept up with the changing reality. Brown et al. (2002), for example, suggested that reform is needed, in part to reflect the levels of diversity that have increased since the 1970s, a theme also examined by Rodriguez (2015), who argued that changing demographics at community colleges necessitate new and innovative leadership styles, particularly with regards to hiring faculty and staff. To facilitate this, presidents must make the case for initiatives which encourage diversity, equity, and inclusion.

The changing environment in which community colleges operate has generated both optimism and concern among community college presidents. A recent survey found that while most presidents supported the idea of free community college (similar to the Tennessee Promise and Tennessee Reconnect programs) and felt the debate over it had raised awareness of the needs

of community college students, they are divided on whether the policy will be widely adopted. A majority also reported declining enrollment at their institution, a phenomenon most often attributed to an improved job market (Jaschick & Lederman, 2016).

Scholars have also examined the management styles and most salient challenges of more recent community college presidents. A survey of 41 community college presidents within the North Carolina Community College system found that all respondents consider their own leadership style to fall within the Team Management orientation, as defined by the Blake and Mouton Managerial Grid (Blake & Mouton, 1964). The same survey found that over 75% of respondents were 56 years of age or older, 95% were White, and 80% held Doctor of Education degrees. The biggest challenges for these presidents were found to be lowering costs, maintaining access, and managing enrollment (Price et al., 2016).

Potential Leadership Crisis

One theme in the literature is that of a leadership crisis, which is expected as members of the baby boomer generation retire, leaving a leadership void as there are believed to be fewer next generation workers with the skills to replace them (Corbett, 2012). This problem was recognized by the American Association of Community Colleges during the early 2000s (Forthun & Freeman, 2017), and further warned of by Appadurai (2009), who cautioned that the economic downturn of 2008-2009 was likely to contribute to this crisis.

One of the earliest scholars to examine the predicted crisis was O'Banion (2007), who suggested that the impending retirements of baby boomer administrators and faculty could become a *calamity*. Two solutions were proposed: in-house programs for faculty and administrators, or university programs for faculty and administrators. O'Banion noted that the former had been the primary response by community colleges to the crisis, but that these

programs typically do not lead to doctorates, which are usually required for presidencies and vice presidencies.

Corbett (2012) studied the situation among the 16 community colleges in the Kentucky Community and Technical College System (KCTCS), surveying ten presidents within the system for their perceptions of the crisis. The findings were mixed, with some presidents not anticipating a crisis at all for their institutions, while others feared losing most of their senior administrators. There was little consensus on how new leaders would be recruited or on how well their campuses were doing in developing new leaders, though nearly all mentioned using the President's Leadership Seminar, a KCTCS leadership program, as a development tool for high potential employees.

The findings of Corbett (2012), however, might not be as reassuring as they appear. An earlier study (López-Molina, 2008) found that the presidents of community colleges in three states were largely unaware of the extent to which their institutions were preparing future leaders. All the presidents reported that their leadership development and mentoring programs were unstructured and informal. The study further determined that diverse leadership was not being cultivated. Another scholar, building on López-Molina's work, found disagreement between community college upper-level leaders and subordinates: while upper-level leaders understood succession planning and succession leadership, subordinates did not, and wished upper-level leaders would clarify (Smith, 2011).

In more recent years, scholars have examined campus leadership pipelines with an emphasis on generational changes in leadership. Tanner (2017) found that while many community colleges provide leadership training for their employees, many of these programs do not meet the needs of younger generations, specifically millennials. This may be a significant

problem, since the Gen X cohort is much smaller than either the baby boomers or millennials, and thus cannot alone take over leadership roles formerly held by baby boomers. The problem of campus pipelines not suiting changing demographics was also a problem examined by Wrighten (2018), who found that, while community college student populations became more diverse, this diversity was not reflected by candidates in leadership pipelines.

Leadership Qualifications for Community College Presidents

As the environment community colleges operate in has changed, so have the desired qualifications for community college presidents. One study found that community college trustees place less emphasis on traditional academic experience, and are now more willing than in the past to consider candidates from outside the academic pipeline. The same study found trustees overwhelmingly viewed leadership styles incorporating listening ability, being a team player, and having a vision for the institution's future as among the most important traits for community college presidents (Plinske & Packard, 2010).

A study on the academic qualifications of community college presidents and chancellors in Texas found that the Ed.D. was held by slightly more presidents (51.2%) than the PhD (42.9%), with about six percent not holding a terminal degree, a shift from previous decades. Most of these presidents appear to have earned their doctorates from institutions within their state, suggesting convenience was a major factor (Leist & Travis, 2013).

In a literature review of community college leadership program offerings, Forthun and Freeman (2017) found there was very little standardization of curriculum, though this might be related to the great diversity of individual community colleges and the differing types of leadership needed for each individual institution. Some institutions choose to offer in-house training for existing employees to become administrators, a strategy that may work for the

community college it serves, but is unlikely to create leaders with the necessary skills to serve other institutions. Additionally, as noted, these programs rarely lead to candidates attaining doctoral degrees (O'Banion, 2007). Forthun and Freeman (2017) also found that community college presidents surveyed in existing literature tended to emphasize personal leadership over organizational leadership, and found that they believed the key attributes needed for success are the following: use of data, critical evaluation of ideas, forward planning, and a preference for a nontraditional work culture.

These findings are broadly similar to those from another study, which examined the perceptions of community college presidents. These presidents believed that leadership must be participative, leading the authors to suggest that top-down leadership may not be capable of bringing lasting change to community colleges, and that a more participative approach is needed, one that incorporates faculty and staff into the leadership process (Grasmick et al., 2012).

Women Leaders at Community Colleges

An area of the literature that may be relevant to Roane State's leadership is that related to women in leadership roles, as Roane State was led by one of the earliest female presidents in Tennessee: Dr. Sherry Hoppe, who served as president from 1988 to 2000. Northouse (2016) reported a consensus among researchers that women leaders are generally rated as less likable than male leaders. Unfortunately, this may help account for the findings of Eddy and Khwaja (2019) whose meta-analysis of community college leadership found that masculine ideals remain expected of community college leaders, especially in rural areas.

Hogue (2016), in a survey of 201 college students, found that expectations for servant leadership were greater for women leaders than for men; while men leaders were expected to exhibit a more authoritarian style of leadership, women were expected to act more as servants.

The author suggested that working to reduce gender bias, as well as the incorporation of more feminine qualities to leadership ideals, will help reduce this disparity. Donohue-Mendoza (2012) found that ineffective supervision, a problem at community colleges, has inhibited women from advancing upwards in community college administrations. This was partly due to supervisors not being trained as such, lacking adequate time to do so, and a relative lack of female supervisors.

On the other hand, community colleges have been viewed as good places for women to work, due to their history of democratizing education and because they employ a higher percentage of women than four-year institutions. Nonetheless, the majority of community college presidents remain white men, a phenomenon one scholar suggests is related to gendered expectations: leaders are often expected to exhibit masculine qualities, while women are expected to care for young children or elderly relatives instead of focusing on their careers (Eddy, 2010).

Leadership of Rural Community Colleges

Leadership of rural community colleges may also be relevant to Roane State Community College. Research indicates that isolation, lower pay, and fewer cultural events are barriers to recruitment at these institutions. Additionally, because they are much more visible in the community, leaders of rural community colleges must accept a loss of anonymity and represent their institutions well in their communities (Eddy, 2007).

Raich's 2013 study of six rural community college presidents was also guided by this fast-changing environment, in which they identified rapidly changing technology, competition with for-profit institutions, and online education, coupled with a significant drop in funding. Contending that single frame leadership is no longer adequate, the author constructed a multidimensional leadership model based on five dimensions of leadership the study contends

are essential for rural community college presidents. These presidents must be discerning speculators, impassioned advocates, hope-builders, decisive action-makers, and relationship-architects.

Rural community colleges such as Roane State may present unique challenges for presidential leadership. Leist (2007), utilizing a survey of fifteen rural community college presidents, found that three characteristics were reported as being particularly important by rural community college presidents: situational awareness, in order for the president to understand, embrace, and eventually assimilate into the local culture; communication skills, so that presidents can *tell the story* of the college's contributions to the community; and rural roots, or a country background, which the author suggested may be the most critical trait for dealing with rural constituents.

McGraw (2016) examined leadership traits cited as most important by community college presidents in the Central Appalachian region, finding that communication, collaboration, and resource management were viewed as most vital. At the same time, the management of scarce resources in an impoverished area, as well as adapting to the local culture were seen as very important by the presidents, one of whom explicitly stated that Appalachia lacks a culture of education.

Roane State Community College

There is little research specific to Roane State Community College, though there is a small amount which addresses specific topics at the college. Additionally, broader research about Tennessee community colleges and the Appalachian region provides useful context for studying the institution.

Institutional History and Characteristics

There are few works specifically concerning Roane State Community College in the scholarly literature, but the few that are present are useful. Smith (1983) reported that Cuyler Dunbar, Columbia State's dean of students, was appointed the first president of Roane State in 1970, by education commissioner J. Howard Warf, and that the college was named for Archibald Roane, Tennessee's second governor, at the request of Roane County citizens. During the early 1970s, Roane State saw massive enrollment growth, reaching as high as 59.9% for the fall of 1974.

Among the earliest literature available about Roane State is a report from the Office of Institutional Research (1975). This report found that the top reason reported by students for dropping courses at Roane State during the early 1970s was conflicts with work, other classes, or other duties. These issues remain a major barrier for educational attainment for community college students.

Jordan-Henley and Maid (1995) examined a project undertaken between Roane State Community College and the University of Arkansas at Little Rock (UALR) in which Roane State students emailed essay drafts to English graduate students at UALR, followed by a synchronous writing conference which was held online between both parties, an experience found to be helpful by both participants. This program was established at a time when public use of the internet was still in its infancy, suggesting that Roane State, like many community colleges, was a pioneer in utilizing the internet.

Raines (2003) examined the experiences of nontraditional female students enrolled in Developmental English courses on the Oak Ridge branch campus of Roane State Community College. Like many nontraditional students, it was found that these students struggled at times to

balance coursework with responsibilities at home and work, as well as problems with finances, transportation, and certain institutional and racial barriers. On the other hand, the students showed strengths in maturity, commitment, motivation, family support, work experience, and patience.

Roane State Community College's service to the community is also noted in the literature, with a U.S. Department of Education (1991) report on the college's Workplace Literacy Program, which helped employees of local businesses obtain basic literacy skills, and with a discussion of the college's popular "Lab in a Box" program, which provides necessary materials for hands-on science lessons for middle school students. The program also reflects the increasing popularity of education in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) (Yaffe, 2018).

By far the most significant work dealing with Roane State's history is Byrne's 1989 dissertation, which provides a history of the institution from its founding until the late 1980s. This work places Roane State's history in the broader context of community college history in the United States, and provides an in-depth examination of the leadership of the institution's first president, Dr. Cuyler Dunbar. Byrne found that while Roane State followed many of the same trends as other community colleges, it was also unique in several ways. Among these, the college seemed to remain more focused on the liberal arts than vocational programs, and that the average age of students decreased during the 1980s, both of which were atypical for community colleges of that era. Byrne also contended that politics played a major role in the site selected in Roane County for the college in 1969, and that politics continued to play a role in decisions made on campus, sometimes to the detriment of reason and logic. Nonetheless, the college remained financially sound and exceeded enrollment projections throughout the 1980s.

Another significant factor in Roane State's development, Byrne (1989) contended, is the Oak Ridge community. The city of Oak Ridge (situated in both Roane and Anderson Counties, though most of the population resides in Anderson) is quite different from the rest of Roane County, having been established as a *secret city* as part of the Manhattan Project, a World War II program to aid in the development of the atomic bomb. Additionally, Oak Ridge remains significantly larger than other cities in the college's service area. Even today, Y-12 National Security Complex and Oak Ridge National Laboratory remain among the city's largest employers. Anderson County has historically provided a large number of students for Roane State, and local businesses and leaders provided funding and leadership for the institution. Byrne's study is today over thirty years old, and examines only the presidency of Dr. Cuyler Dunbar, indicating a more recent study is needed to understand Roane State presidents since 1989.

Regional Characteristics

Roane State Community College is an institution serving mostly rural students from the Appalachian region, and as such, it is useful to examine the literature on such student populations to place the institution in a broader cultural context. The Appalachian region has a unique cultural identity that likely shapes Roane State's culture, as well as presents challenges to the mission. Scholars have found that the region provides many challenges for students pursuing higher education, including poverty (Elam, 2002), cultural skepticism toward education (Elam, 2002; Wallace & Diekroger, 2000), and resistance to change (Welch, 2013; Wallace & Diekroger, 2000).

A culture of skepticism toward education is common theme in the literature. Wallace and Diekroger (2000) found that many students had been discouraged from pursuing higher

education through being accused of "acting better" than those who did not attend college, being told they would never complete a degree, being ignored when talking about college experiences, and being expected to do extra work which kept them from their schoolwork. Women were much more likely to receive such messages than men, and the frequency of such messages had not decreased by the late 1990s.

Negative messages toward higher education are likely to be rooted in poverty, which delayed the development of public education in the region and was a powerful barrier to attending school or college. Elam (2000) contended that poverty was the most powerful and consistent factor shaping education in the Appalachian region, and led to the view, expressed by one woman from the region, that "livin's more important than schoolin'" (p. 10). Such values are reinforced by the views that success and hard work are the sole keys to success, a strong commitment to families and local communities, and the negative way the Appalachian region is often viewed by outsiders (Gibbons et al., 2019).

Women in the region are especially impacted by culture, though not always in predictable ways. While Wallace and Diekroger (2000) found that women were less encouraged to pursue higher education than men, later research somewhat challenges this. Though finding that traditional roles for women were still seen as ideal among many in the region, participants in Welch's 2013 study reported being encouraged to do well in school so they could go to college. Many of the women interviewed viewed obtaining degrees not only as important for themselves but as important for their entire families, reflecting the close-knit family dynamics of the region.

It is understandable that such poverty would create a culture where work skills are more valued than the traditional liberal arts. Educational institutions may have not been effective in making the case for higher education. Hendrickson (2012) suggested that a disconnect exists

between educational institutions in the largely white and poor regions of rural Appalachia, a disconnect that is fueled by misunderstanding between a culture that tends to encourage the values of family and vocational work, and institutions encouraging higher education and abstract learning, though a community college encouraging both may be a better cultural fit for the region. Evidence for this disconnect may also be found in the research of Gibbons et al. (2019), which found many Appalachian students lack concrete information about higher education as well as college educated role models.

Briggs (2010), on the other hand, suggested that this disconnect may have become less significant in recent years, as a homogenized culture emerging in the late 20th century may have lessened the cultural distinction between Appalachia and the world at large, though this is a mixed blessing. Though Appalachian students may now experience less of a culture clash on campus, like other students, they now view higher education as a hurdle that must be surmounted to achieve career goals. However, during the first few decades of Roane State's history, this would not have been true.

Gunnin (2003) studied the experiences of first generation Appalachian students at Walters State Community College, a sister school of Roane State. This study used a purposeful sample of ten students, and found that, contrary to much of the literature, most of these students, and their families, appreciated the value of a college education. All these students came from lower income backgrounds, chose Walters State to remain closer to home, and planned to remain in the area after graduation. All had work and/or family responsibilities beyond their classes, and all came from backgrounds emphasizing close ties to families. Some were not encouraged by high school guidance counselors to attend college. Nonetheless, the majority reported receiving

encouragement and support from their families, who viewed education not as threatening, but as an opportunity for betterment.

Chapter Summary

This chapter has examined the existing scholarly literature directly related to or relevant to presidential leadership at Roane State Community College. It has reviewed scholarly literature relevant to the history of higher education, with an emphasis on both higher education in Tennessee and on community colleges. It has also reviewed the literature on leadership of higher education institutions, with particular emphasis on community college leadership. Finally, I also sampled some of the literature related to higher education the Appalachian region, a portion of which forms RSCC's service area.

It found that the presidency of any community college is a complicated vocation. Various factors, including technology, institutional and local culture, and the credentials and beliefs of the president, all play a role in presidential leadership. Additionally, factors such as history, geographic location, and culture (both regionally and institutionally) are very important in the leadership of institutions such as Roane State.

Chapter 3. Methodology

The purpose of this narrative study was to examine the perceived impact of the leadership of past and current presidents at Roane State Community College, as perceived by the presidents themselves. Findings from this study may be used to identify effective and ineffective leadership styles for similar institutions of higher learning, as well as to better understand the history and culture of community colleges in general, and of Roane State Community College specifically.

Research Questions

The overarching question of this research study is "How do Roane State Community College presidents perceive the impact of presidential leadership and key events as shaping the institution?" The focus questions to guide this research are as follows:

1. What do Roane State Community College presidents perceive to be the key events shaping the institution's history and culture?
2. What factors are perceived to have led to the founding of Roane State Community College?
3. What does each president perceive as being the key events of their term as president, and how do they believe these events shaped the history and culture of Roane State?
4. What does each president perceive as being the key events occurring before and after their term as president, and how do they believe these events shaped the history and culture of Roane State?
5. How does each president describe their style of leadership? How do they contrast their style of leadership with that of other Roane State presidents?
6. How does each president describe RSCC's history and their role as president within the context of other educational institutions?

7. What other administrators, faculty, staff, students, or community leaders does each president perceive to have influenced the history of Roane State Community College?

Research Design

A qualitative narrative approach based on the constructivist worldview was applied to gather data and to add meaningful depth to the collected and existing data. Narrative research is a type of inquiry in which researchers ask participants to recount stories about their lives, which the researcher then retells as a narrative chronology (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This study utilized interviews with current and former Roane State presidents in order to understand the leadership history of the institution, as perceived by the college's six presidents.

The qualitative method design was chosen because it focuses on concepts and text data, as opposed to quantitative designs, and allows for an interpretative approach by the researcher (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This approach allows for narrative reporting of the way people view and approach their own experiences. By conducting qualitative research, the researcher had the opportunity to become a storyteller, explaining and analyzing participants' experiences in meaningful ways by using themes instead of numbers, thereby allowing flexibility to create a systematic approach in gathering evidence (Sweat, 2020). Further, leadership involves both common goals and influence on followers (Northouse, 2016), so understanding it in the context of Roane State can help explain how the institution emerged from an idea in the early 1970s to a vital educational and economic engine for a substantial portion of East Tennessee.

This study is represented in a narrative format through narrative inquiry, which has emerged as a specific approach to studying organizations. Narrative inquiry uses personal narratives, life stories, and literary nonfiction to reveal cultural and social patterns through the lens of individual experiences. Researchers collect stories of formal and informal experiences,

helping us learn about the individuals and the society and culture more generally. The stories are then used as data, with the narrative serving as analysis, which involves interpreting the story, putting it in its proper context, and comparing with other stories. In this regard, stories offer "especially translucent windows into cultural and social meanings when understood and analyzed as narratives" (Patton, 2015, p. 127-130).

Though narrative is a branch within the qualitative tradition. It has become increasingly used in education, perhaps because teachers are by their nature storytellers, and because it allows for individuals to make sense of how human beings experience the world. Using narrative research allows for these stories to be collected and organized in a chronological way (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Because this study concerns how Roane State presidents experience their leadership, a narrative approach is an appropriate method.

The history of Roane State's leadership is shaped by specific leaders and events from the college's history. The narrative approach allows for the construction of the story of Roane State, from the point of view of the presidents. The interviews allow for the gathering of information which can then be contextualized and used to explain the story of Roane State's history of leadership. The questions have been chosen to illuminate important events and phenomenon from the college's history, as well as to gain knowledge of events and phenomena that may be less obvious but also important. The final result was a narrative which tells a coherent story of the institution from the point of view of its leaders.

Role of the Researcher

Roane State Community College has been an integral part of my life since childhood. My mother attended her first two years of college there, and, when I was four years old, began

teaching there part-time. She later became a fulltime faculty member, a position she held for almost 20 years.

Likewise, my higher education journey began at Roane State as a college freshman in the fall of 1999. While a student, I was involved in a number of activities at the school, including the student newspaper and the theater department, made many friends, and was mentored by several faculty members. Years later, I returned to the institution as a faculty member myself, first as an adjunct and then a tenure-track professor. Having now achieved tenure and having served at the institution in a full-time role since 2011, I now hold the rank of associate professor. I am a 39-year-old white man who grew up in the small town of Harriman, Tennessee (where Roane State is located), and who has lived most of my life in this area, save for a few years in North Carolina and a year in South Korea. I currently live in Oak Ridge with my wife and young son.

Qualitative research requires the understanding of a researcher's personal bias. This bias is not automatically a disqualifier, as it is widely understood that researchers cannot separate themselves from the people or phenomenon they study, and that closeness to a population may even have benefits for the study (Devotta et al., 2016). Narrative research is a research method, but it can also be the phenomenon being studied (Creswell & Poth, 2018), which is the case in this study, which is a narrative of RSCC's history. My longtime association with RSCC has allowed me to become immersed with my topic of study, which may suggest advantages for the purposes of this study. As a researcher, I will work to mitigate potential bias by engaging in member checking (i.e. providing each participant with the transcript of their interview to verify accuracy).

Ethics

Any study involving humans must address ethical considerations. Given the current Covid-19 global pandemic, such concerns extend to activities that would previously have been considered low risk, such as in-person interviews. In light of this, I chose to interview all participants through video conferencing software or over the phone to ensure their safety. Additionally, all participants signed a letter of informed consent which addressed all guidelines listed by Creswell and Creswell (2018). Additionally, this study applied for and received approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at East Tennessee State University prior to contacting any of the participants.

Access and Recruitment

The researcher interviewed five of the six individuals who have served as president of Roane State Community College since its founding. These individuals were chosen because they are among the most likely to have knowledge of information related to the research questions and because there are only a small number of individuals who have served as president of Roane State Community College.

The subjects interviewed for this study are the current and former presidents of Roane State Community College. Because this is a historical study, this population includes such individuals beginning with the college's founding in 1971, and continuing to the present day. This includes all individuals who have held the presidency of the institution (including interim presidents): Dr. Cuyler Dunbar, who served as president from 1970 until 1988; Dr. Sherry Hoppe, who served from 1988 until 2000; Mr. William Fuqua, who served from 2000 until 2001; Dr. Wade McCamey, who served from 2001 until 2005; Dr. Gary Goff, who served from 2005 until 2012; and Dr. Chris Whaley, who has served from 2012 until the present.

The researcher compiled a list of current and former Roane State Community College presidents by accessing institutional records. Once this list was compiled, the researcher obtained contact information from Roane State Community College's archives, as well as from the internet and other sources, and contacted each potential participant. Email was the preferred method of contact, but phone calls, messaging through social media, and postal mail were also used if e-mail addresses were unavailable, or if the participant did not respond to email.

Data Sources

The information needed was that which addresses the research questions. The goal was to interview all former or current Roane State Community College presidents using purposeful sampling. Therefore, a large sample is not needed, as this consists of only six individuals, five of whom agreed to be interviewed. Interview questions were chosen carefully so as to align with the research questions and not to lead participants in any way, though follow up questions were also used to elicit greater information and build on responses. These questions and follow ups were also chosen to elicit stories to be examined for common themes and ideas.

In addition to interviews, the researcher utilized historical records and artifacts relevant to Roane State Community College's history. These sources included historic catalogs dating back to the college's founding, as well as college yearbooks, newspaper articles, records from the Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR), primary sources from those involved with the institution, and other resources housed among Roane State's archives. This data was used in order to familiarize the researcher with key events and factors in the institution's history, as a basis for creating questions to ask the presidents, and to place the narrative into a broader historical perspective. The use of such materials allowed the researcher to formulate more appropriate

questions and follow up questions for the participants by becoming aware of important events and how they were perceived at the time they occurred.

Informed Consent

The researcher obtained approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at East Tennessee State University before beginning the research. The researcher made clear to participants that participation was voluntary. Each participant was informed during first contact that, due to the small pool of participants and the events and time periods discussed, confidentially of participants could not be guaranteed in the study. At the start of each interview, the agreement was discussed and signed by both the participant and the researcher. Consent forms were signed by all participants, and the transcribed interviews were kept in a password-protected computer, or in a locked filing cabinet.

Interviews were recorded using a recording device, and stored in a password-protected computer to protect privacy of the participants. Informed consent forms were placed in a locked file. Data will be preserved for at least six years, per federal regulations.

Data Collection

Data were gathered for this study using two methods: archival research and interviews with participants. Generally, the archival research supplied the *big picture* and background, giving the researcher the knowledge necessary to ask relevant questions of the presidents, while interviews provided more personal information. Additionally, the researcher attempted to collect any qualitative documents that may be relevant to the study from each participant. Qualitative documents include, but are not limited to, official documents, newspaper articles, personal journals, letters, and images (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Archival Research

The researcher utilized primary sources and archival data, including catalogs, newspaper articles, and resources from the college's archive, to outline the history of Roane State Community College, and to identify key figures and events in the institution's history. This information was then used to design interview questions, as well as assist in identifying potential interview participants, as well as to create a background to work against during analysis of the interviews.

Interviews

Once potential participants had been contacted and agreed to be interviewed, interviews were scheduled. The goal was to interview, on average, at least two individuals per week, allowing for appropriate follow-up with each participant. Due to health concerns related to the ongoing global coronavirus pandemic, all interviews were conducted using video conferencing software or over the telephone. Though the video interviews were recorded of all interviews when possible, and audio was recorded when video was not possible (when the interviews were conducted over the phone), notes were taken throughout the interview in case of a recording failure, as recommended by Creswell and Creswell (2018).

Data Analysis

Interviews were transcribed weekly using transcription software or by hand by the researcher. Following transcription, the transcripts were checked for errors, which were corrected wherever found. The interviews were then examined by the researcher, using the narrative approach, for common themes, similarities, and differences. The information obtained from these interviews was also compared with data obtained through archival research. As the researcher

engaged with the data, common themes were constructed and developed. This allowed for the data to be winnowed into a small number of themes (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Interpretation

According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), interpretation of qualitative research involves the following procedures: summarizing the overall findings, comparing the findings to the literature, discussing a personal view of the findings, and stating limitations and future research. The researcher has examined the findings in light of the existing literature, examining areas of the study which conform to previous findings as well as areas which diverge from it. Additionally, the findings have been examined from the researcher's personal view as a former student and current faculty member, as well as the child of a retired faculty member at Roane State Community College. Finally, limitations and recommendations for future research were also discussed.

Broad themes found in multiple interviews have been identified and coded. Coding is defined as "the process of organizing the material into chunks or segments of text and assigning a word or phrase to the segment in order to develop a general sense of it" (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, n.p.). Through coding, I have shown the major themes that have emerged in the interviews to illustrate areas of agreement and disagreement among the participants. Each participant has been allowed an opportunity to comment further on these areas once the interviews have been transcribed and coded.

Trustworthiness

The importance of trustworthiness has long been noted by researchers, and was refined by Lincoln and Guba (1985), who introduced the criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability and key metrics of trustworthiness. They contended that

credibility is established when, among other things, readers are confronted with the experience, they are able to recognize it; transferability refers to how generalizable a study is; dependability is ensured by the research being traceable, logical, and clearly documented; and confirmability is established by readers being able to examine the research process (Nowell et al., 2017). Credibility can be improved by spending prolonged periods of time engaging with the participants and the information, as well as through member checking, which I utilized through checking in with participants regarding new research findings and allowing participants to review transcripts of their interviews. The findings of this study are very specific to Roane State Community College and therefore may not be transferable to other institutions. I have provided thick descriptions of the process so that the reader may judge the transferability of this study. Dependability is enhanced by ensuring the research process is open and clearly documented. Toward this end, I have provided thick descriptions of all steps in the process and have been clear throughout this study on the reasons for all steps. Finally, that this study is confirmable can be established when the previous four markers are achieved, as well as reasons for all choices made by the researcher throughout the study are explained.

In addition to this, Creswell and Creswell (2018) recommend eight primary strategies for establishing validity, of which I used the following:

- **Triangulation**: I have used information from public records, newspapers, and other sources to build on themes elucidated by participants. This has allowed for the verification of information presented by participants, as well as provided background events and factors that may have influenced the events discussed.

- **Member checking**: Participants were also asked to verify the accuracy of statements and transcripts, and of quotes attributed to them, as well as offered an opportunity to comment further.
- **Thick description**: I have described in detail and from different perspectives the setting and themes of the research.
- **Clarify bias**: I have explained my connections to Roane State.
- **Presentation of negative information**: Participants have spoken in their own voices. When one presents information or views that contradicts those of others, the contradictory views have been included.
- **Prolonged time in the field**: I have spent many years at Roane State, as a community member, student, and faculty member, have studied the institution thoroughly, and have spent significant amounts of time interviewing each president.

The researcher kept a research journal, in which the researcher reflected on the approach, methods, and perspective, as well the researcher's own connection to Roane State Community College and other potential biases. After each interview, the researcher reflected in the journal on the interview to improve future interviews. Additionally, a research log was kept to record any changes to methodology, and the rationale for them.

Chapter Summary

This study was performed by using a purposeful sample of all individuals who have served as president of Roane State Community College throughout the institution's existence. Specifically, the researcher interviewed all six individuals who have served as president and identified common themes and events viewed as significant by multiple presidents. Chapter 3 described the research design and methodology for this study. Chapter 4 includes a description of

the findings from the analysis of the data. Chapter 5 provides a summary of the findings and final conclusions.

Chapter 4. Research Findings

The purpose of this qualitative narrative study was to examine the leadership and historical perspective of leadership of Roane State Community College and the key events that have shaped it, as perceived by its presidents. The results of this study will provide insight into these events and factors and allow for a broader understanding of community college leadership and history in general, and RSCC in particular.

Research Questions

A qualitative guide of seven open-ended questions was composed and comprised of the following core questions:

1. What do Roane State Community College presidents perceive to be the key events shaping the institution's history and culture?
2. What factors are perceived to have led to the founding of Roane State Community College?
3. What does each president perceive as being the key events of their term as president, and how do they believe these events shaped the history and culture of Roane State?
4. What does each president perceive as being the key events occurring before and after their term as president, and how do they believe these events shaped the history and culture of Roane State?
5. How does each president describe their style of leadership? How do they contrast their style of leadership with that of other Roane State presidents?
6. How does each president describe RSCC's history and their role as president within the context of other educational institutions?

7. Other than presidents, what administrators, faculty, staff, students or community leaders do you consider to have been most influential in the history of Roane State?

Description of Participants

All six former and current presidents of Roane State Community College (including interim presidents) were contacted for an interview, of which five agreed to be interviewed. Each served as president of RSCC for a period of time between 1970 and 2020. The shortest term served was 20 months, while the longest was 18 years. Each interview lasted between 35 and 90 minutes and was conducted through Zoom videoconferencing, or in one case, via the telephone, at a time of the participant's choosing. Remote, rather than face-to-face, interviews were chosen due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Research Questions Responses

Research Question 1: What do Roane State Community College presidents perceive to be the key events shaping the institution's history and culture?

Responses on what were perceived to be the key events of RSCC's history fell into three broad categories. The founding of RSCC and its early years were seen as important for having set the tone for the college. The establishment of satellite campuses and adoption of technology were also mentioned, both at least partially the result of the establishment of Pellissippi State Community College (PSCC). The Appalachian region and the city of Oak Ridge were also considered to have been important factors, the former due to the student population RSCC serves, and the latter due to its vast resources.

The Founding Era

Participants identified a number of events they felt were influential in shaping the college's history and culture. Two participants identified the establishment of the college, and

the leadership of the first president, as crucial to the development of the college. One participant noted that, while the state legislature had authorized the creation of Roane State, there was no guarantee that the college would succeed, and the first president "did such a good job pushing things into existence" under challenging circumstances. Due to the campus site not being completed, classes had to be offered on temporary sites, including a church, a former school site in the Fairmont community of South Harriman, and in temporary trailers. "It just always warms my heart to not only hear [the first president] tell about going to the church basements and Fairmont school and… then the mobile homes that were made into offices," the participant noted.

Literature on rural community college leadership indicate a strong importance for leaders to embrace and eventually assimilate into the local culture (Leist, 2007). Skepticism of education in the Appalachian region has also been detected by scholars (Wallace & Diekroger, 2000). These findings suggest that the temporary sites may have been a mixed blessing for RSCC in that they literally forced the college to begin "out in the community," an ethos that may have helped lead to the creation of various satellite campuses.

In addition to the logistical challenges faced by offering classes at temporary sites, these two participants credited early presidential leadership as having set the tone for the culture of RSCC. One reported that, in their view, the first president established momentum for the college that no subsequent president wanted to lose on their own watch. One of the first actions of the first president came in 1971, when the first faculty and staff members were hired, a group that has become known as "the Dirty Dozen" (Simpson, 2011). One participant reported that, from speaking with some of these employees, they reported "a genuine concern to create a collegiality amongst the faculty and a few staff members that were employed" during the early years, and

that this sense of collegiality remained at RSCC throughout his term as president, decades later. This collegiality stood in contrast to the participant's experiences at other community colleges, which were far less collegial.

The establishment of RSCC occurred at a time of growth for higher education in the U.S., a growth that Lazerson (1998) argued was the result of vocationalization, public higher education, and multiple sectors of postsecondary schooling, the latter of which the community college was a new example of. Community colleges in particular were experiencing rapid growth during the 1960s and 1970s, seeing a fivefold increase by the early 1970s (Thelin, 2011). This growth was also fueled by new populations of students who had been previously largely excluded from higher education, in particular women (Lazerson, 1998) and adult students, who permanently changed campus environments (Rose, 1994).

Satellite Campuses

The establishment of satellite campuses was identified as a major event in the history and culture of Roane State by three participants. A participant noted that this was necessary given the diversity of the college's service area, which includes Oak Ridge as well as some very rural regions. "I think the fact that the we had to serve two different types of populations and come up with ways to do that really as part of what was the guiding thing that expanding to the off campus centers," the participant reported, who also stated that counties such as Campbell and Scott have many characteristics that are typically associated with the Appalachian region, while counties such as Roane and Anderson had fewer such characteristics. The participant described the large number of satellite campuses as "our trademark."

The establishment of satellite and branch campuses, along with better utilization of technology, was identified as a strategy for growing enrollment following the establishment of

Pellissippi State Community College (PSCC). PSCC had been created partially from a Roane State satellite campus in Knox County in 1988, and, according to this participant, was predicted to result in a twenty-five percent decline in enrollment for RSCC. This participant reported:

> I knew what we could do when I got there to try to keep enrollment from decreasing but that was just temporary to do a lot of advertising and just telling people about the campus. But immediately then my vision was to expand the opportunities for people who lived in the counties served by Roane State but [who] had to drive, some of them more than an hour and a half. For example, the ones in Scott County had to come down the mountains and back up just to go to classes. And I knew that one of the best things we could do would be to increase the number of students we had by increasing access to those students so they wouldn't have to travel so far. So our early vision was to create satellite campuses… Thus, early on, we started offering classes in several different counties and over a period of time eventually built satellite campuses. Of course, there were already classes going on in Oak Ridge when I got there. We started offering classes in Scott County, in Loudon County, in Cumberland County, several other counties, and over the period of time I was there we built satellite campuses in six of those counties. Before I left we already had classes in Morgan County. RSCC did build a campus in Morgan County after I left.

Today, RSCC maintains campuses in each of the nine counties it serves ("Campuses"), perhaps reflected Thelin's 2001 contention about the long history of American colleges being decentralized, as well as a need for community colleges to get out into the community.

Technology

One participant noted that technology was closely linked to satellite campuses in importance to the college. “The combination, I think, of the satellite campuses and beginning to offer online classes made a tremendous difference in access to higher education, but also made it possible for us to grow enrollment.” They further noted that RSCC was the first community college in Tennessee to offer live video teleconferencing classes, and offered web classes beginning in 1996. In this participant’s view, RSCC served as a model for utilizing technology. This contention is supported in the literature by an online project between RSCC and the University of Arkansas at Little Rock which occurred when use of the internet was still in its infancy (Jordan-Henley & Maid, 1995).

The Appalachian Region

There was wide agreement among the participants that the Appalachian region has had a large impact on the history and culture of RSCC, with all five of them citing it as influential. The goal of providing education to students previously neglected by higher education is a reflection of the populist culture, which emphasized greater social equality, which was a major force in establishing community colleges (Cohen & Brawer, 2014). One participant noted that the region dictates the kind of students RSCC serves, noting that many of them came from mountainous regions which had previously lacked access to higher education, and these students typically wanted to work within their home communities.

The desire to work within their home communities was cited as a reason for the importance of satellite campuses. “[E]ven though it’s taxing, resource wise, I think it demonstrates just how critical it is for Roane State not to try to serve those students and those communities from one or two larger campuses, an hour and a half away. I think the rural nature

demonstrates why it is so essential for us to have a presence there in those communities…" The participant further reported this as a rationale for expanding dual enrollment and other programs in area high schools.

Another participant credited the Appalachian region with influencing the philosophy of RSCC toward establishing multiple campuses:

> Roane State operates inside the Appalachian region and so Roane State has adopted the philosophy that first generation students need higher education and either have limited funds or limited access to Roane State. And, you know, Roane State has these extensive campuses, one in every one of the counties that they're responsible for has really opened up and made higher education available for citizens that live in Appalachia. I think that [my predecessors] really saw the emphasis of expanding campuses and access to the citizens of Appalachia.

The participant further noted that being located in the Appalachian region had also paid off for RSCC in terms of opportunities and support, through the Appalachian Regional Commission, the city of Crossville, and Cumberland County, whose investments helped spur the Cumberland Business Incubator at the Cumberland County campus.

The City of Oak Ridge

There was unanimous agreement on the importance of Oak Ridge to RSCC, with all five participants reporting various ways the city has impacted the college. "The city of Oak Ridge has played a tremendous role in the college's history, and that goes way, way back until we started classes," according to one participant. Several reported strong support for the college in Oak Ridge. "Roane State has been instrumental, to a great degree, because of the great amount of assistance coming from Oak Ridge. I can't remember anything over the years that we went to

Oak Ridge for help with, that help in some form was not provided." The support came from multiple stakeholders. Support from political leadership was reported by multiple participants, with one participant recalling former State Representative David Coffey and State Senator Randy McNally helped provide funds for the establishment of the permanent Oak Ridge Branch Campus, and how unusual state funding was for a satellite campus. Another participant recalled how easy it was to meet with former Oak Ridge mayor David Bradshaw. One participant mentioned their participation in the East Tennessee Economic Council (ETEC) and noted

> […] Oak Ridge, just for the mere fact of fundraising to support Roane State and support student scholarships and faculty development opportunities and building new buildings, Roane State has benefited by having a partnership with Oak Ridge. And the biggest donors come from Oak Ridge, the corporations that are there are very favorable toward Roane State. You know, being on the Board of ETEC and Methodist Medical Center when I was the president paid dividends, because it opened doors to Roane State to interact with other partners. It allowed me to go ask the Oak Ridge City Council to give us $250,000 and they gladly agreed and then went and asked the county, Anderson County, for $250,000 and they agreed as well to support creating the new Health Sciences and Technology building.

These partnerships were also noted by another participant:

> You know you have Oak Ridge National Laboratory within your service area, CNS, Y-12, Oak Ridge Associated Universities, all of the different governmental, quasi-governmental entities through the Department of Energy. Those resources are something that are extremely unique to Roane State, amongst certainly the community college, the 13 in our state... I tend to think that Roane State has

> reached out and partnered with those entities in Oak Ridge as well as I've heard anybody else. That's not me, that predates me, that's the reason I can brag on the presidents before me and others who did it. But we have strong partnerships. I mean, active projects going on all, seems like all the time with those major entities and subcontractors. Trainings that we do for them, expertise that they bring to us, scholarship situations, guest speakers. So their presence is beneficial mutually. And then as we work together I think the mutual benefit then for the community is that as drivers of economic impact training, etc., like that. I think it's a huge upside for the region to have, again, DOE entities and Roane State partnering as closely together as we do.

Oak Ridge has also provided a talent pool for RSCC to draw from. One participant noted that, during the early years of the college, many faculty members came from the Oak Ridge area. These faculty members were often spouses or family members of people who worked in the federal facilities in the city. The participant stated they felt this led to RSCC faculty having a very high number of faculty with terminal degrees during the college's early years. As the largest city in the service area, Oak Ridge is the most financially affluent area in RSCC's service area, and it came as no surprise that two participants noted that the biggest donors came from Oak Ridge.

The city has also provided the college with a large source of enrollment. One participant noted

> Oak Ridge is tremendous… [D]uring my tenure, we had more students attending the campus at Oak Ridge than the main campus in Harriman… [T]hat's where the growth is and it continues to be there. And so the outlook for Roane State and the

> continuation of that growth had us branch out and create a campus in Clinton, at the National Guard Armory, and that was again demonstrating the value of Roane State graduates to the county commissioners and the mayor of Clinton in specific was able to give us the building so we could create the manufacturing technology program there, so Oak Ridge and Anderson County was the springboard for almost everything.

It is clear that the city of Oak Ridge has provided a number of major opportunities for RSCC, which the presidents have successfully utilized dating back to the establishment of RSCC.

Research Question 2: What factors are perceived to have led to the founding of Roane State Community College?

A number of common themes emerged from the interviews. Participants identified the community college movement and the leadership of Education Commissioner J. Howard Warf as being key factors in creating an environment in which community colleges could flourish. State and local politics were considered to have been crucial in selecting Roane County for a community college, as well as the selection of the specific site within the county. The goals of establishing RSCC were reported to have been making college accessible to the area as well as economic development for the region, missions they consider RSCC to have accomplished.

The Community College Movement

There was broad agreement that the community college movement played a major role in the decision to establish RSCC, with four of the five participants citing it as significant. According to one, "I definitely think a community college movement… was part and parcel of" establishing RSCC. "[I]t would be my belief that certainly what was going on in other places

across the country and had been successful. And I think you tend to emulate things that look like they're working well for other states and other organizations so I think it was a primary driver."

The community college movement sought to make higher education accessible to more citizens. One participant noted that the national strategy during the 1960s was "to advance economic growth and development within the United States, we needed to have a higher education facility within 50 miles of any American citizen and so out of that was created the community college strategy, and Tennessee signed on to that strategy." Another president stated that, once the movement began, and legislators learned about it, almost "any size town or county wanted" a community college.

One landmark event in the history of community colleges in Tennessee was the Pierce-Albright Report in 1957, from which community colleges in the state would eventually result. According to one participant, the report galvanized the state legislature to create community colleges, with each of the state's three grand divisions wanting one. A participant noted that local governments or entities had to request that they be established by the state legislature. "And once the word started going out as to what was happening across the country and the limited history of the first three community colleges as they were developing a lot of places wanted one next."

The Leadership of J. Howard Warf

Two participants credited the leadership of John Howard Warf as key to establishing RSCC. Warf served as commissioner of education in Tennessee from 1963-1971 (Lester, 2017). One noted:

> [B]asically, somebody had the vision to know we need to have a more educated workforce and more educated population if our state is to progress. I think that was the primary purpose of establishing the community colleges was to get that

> education out [to the citizens]. The universities were great thing, but there was a fairly limited number of kids and people that could attend the universities and by establishing the community college system it allowed us to expand that all over the state and to vastly improve the opportunities for regular people to either renew their education or to continue their education after high school.

Warf is sometimes referred to as father of Tennessee community colleges due to his having initiated the development of community colleges and recommending their establishment (Smith, 1983). It was not surprising that he is seen as a driving force behind the establishment of RSCC.

Accessibility and Economic Development

Every participant interviewed specifically mentioned the desire to establish higher educational institutions closer to citizens, and three of them discussed the desire for economic development as factors in the establishment of RSCC. One participant summed up the drive to establish community colleges as a desire to increase economic prosperity within states by making education available to citizens closer to home at a lower cost than university tuition. During the 1960s and 1970s, a growing number of jobs did not require bachelor's degrees or higher, which also boosted the movement.

The Politics of the Roane County Site

A general consensus was found on the reasons the current site was chosen for RSCC. Though two participants expressed uncertainty about why the site in Roane County was chosen, three credited political leadership in the county for the establishment of RSCC. One stated:

> [T]he leadership of Roane County saw the need, and they were able to pull together some of the other counties around to work with them, [and say] hey, look

> at what what's happening in Columbia, [Columbia State Community College has] only been there a year or two, or three, or whatever it is, but look what's happening and we need that here. We need to bring in something that will provide the opportunity for these youngsters and the older adults to have this kind of educational opportunity. And so you had the forward thinking leaders of the county and the cities saying, you know, we'll join together on this. And I think one of the big things in Roane County was, it was Rockwood, Kingston, Harriman and Oliver Springs, people all joined together to try to make it happen, and they did. And Oak Ridge people were also involved in that heavily.

Echoing this sentiment, another participant stated that, as they understood it, some *political jockeying* was happening in state government at the time to establish community colleges. Roane County sought to be in the first round of community colleges established, which was not successful, but did place Roane County in line for their own community college in the future. The desire of the political leaders of Roane County to bring a community college to the county may echo a theme noted by Geiger (2015) of colleges being seen as means of training natural aristocrats, that is, the future leaders of society.

The decision of where to locate the college within Roane County was fraught with controversy between the cities. Indeed, politics was determined to have played a major role in selecting the site by a previous scholar (Byrne, 1989). One participant noted that "there used to be a lot of pull between Kingston, Rockwood, and Harriman and there still is to some extent." Another recalled that, at the time, the state required that local communities seeking a community college had to present three potential sites of at least 100 acres, with utilities provided, from which the state would choose the site. The participant recalled two other sites were presented in

addition to the one ultimately chosen: one in Rockwood, and another along the Clinch River near Oak Ridge.

The site chosen was located between Harriman and Rockwood, partly because the land was fairly inexpensive according to one participant, but also, according to another, "It was kind of a compromise to the politics of where it should be located… It was a neutral site and was not intended to favor one city over the other." The rivalries between these cities have been slow to depart. The same participant reported "I got counseled by Mr. Cooly during the first 30 days I was there, because I kept saying the campus of Harriman and he counseled me, said no, the campus in Roane County."

Both the rivalries over the location, as well as the local leadership and cooperation that went into establishing RSCC are a common feature in the history of community colleges. Cohen and Brawer (2014) noted that junior colleges, predecessors to community colleges, usually were founded following local initiatives, and often became a matter of civic pride for citizens. Despite these rivalries, another participant reported that, in their opinion, RSCC has been "an opportunity to bring people together, certainly initially that was an opportunity for the community to take some pride in a new a new organization that has been developed to provide a hopefully a very positive opportunity for the members of the community."

The Roane County Site

Though the site ultimately chosen may have been the most politically uncontroversial, it was not without complications. Building the Dunbar Building (the first building on campus) proved to be a major challenge due to foundation problems. One participant reported the "foundation underneath it is just really questionable but they put in and [another president] can

tell you how much concrete they had to put into to lay the foundation for the Dunbar building and it was astronomical what they had to do to firm up that foundation."

Construction delays made opening RSCC's permanent campus impossible for the first two years of the college. One participant recalled

> [W]hen we started in the first two years and we were operating out in South Harriman at the elementary school and we had a house trailer that we pulled all the furniture out of in the front of the elementary school building and another one in the back. And those two trailers housed the administration pretty well. The Dean of Students was put in the building where the principal's office would have been and the cafeteria was used as a library. We only had vending machines. We didn't have anything in a way of food service. And then in the second year, enrollment increased, we worked with the county and county came to help us many times over the years. Ed Williams and county leadership and the city schools. Everybody was in the parade. We then rented South Harriman Baptist Church during the week and several other places around. We rented a couple of small houses across from the Fairmont school for faculty offices and everybody, the houses were so small they said they stacked the desks one on top of the other. And anyway, those were the things that developed during the first two years. We worked out a bus system whereby you can get off the bus at Fairmont or get on the bus and go to South Harriman for your next class. Instead of having the usual ten minute break we had 15 as I remember it, and you could be able to go from one place to the other and not have to miss a class schedule time and still be on time for your next class.

The difficulty in establishing a permanent campus, and the willingness of leaders to hold classes in unusual locations may reflect Thelin's 2011 observation that, from their early history, American institutions of higher education were distinct from their counterparts in Europe due to their less sophisticated architecture and smaller enrollments. Cohen and Brawer (2014) also noted that early junior colleges were often founded using local school facilities. These early challenges also had practical effects on the curriculum.

One participant reported that the temporary housing limited what programs could be offered. Specifically, this necessitated that the college focus more on general education courses. "[I]n the first year we only had a very few vocational technical offerings. We had a few, but not many," a statement consistent with Byrne's (1989) findings that RSCC was, atypically for a community college, more focused on the liberal arts than vocational programs during the early years.

RSCC's Mission

All participants reported that, in their view, RSCC has fulfilled the role of providing access to higher education to underserved students. One contended that the college has served "an opportunity to bring people together." Economic development was another theme in the interviews. Another noted that RSCC has provided "educational opportunities for the citizens of the region, certainly of Roane County. It has improved the economic development of Roane County" by providing training opportunities for new businesses locating in the county. "Roane State was engaged in bringing businesses to Roane County. At the same time, educating its workers for the skill sets that were needed, but also providing growth and in economic development for the county."

One participant noted the changing mission of RSCC:

I think [RSCC's role has] changed over the course of the 50 years, and I think that's good that it has changed. I think early on, there was a much more limited focus on the community colleges as a whole, more as the junior college sort of transfer institution, so that you get your freshman and sophomore years at Roane State and then you go on to UT or you go on to [Tennessee] Tech. That is certainly still a mission that we fulfill, but in the intervening years with a huge number of Associate of Applied Science degrees and a huge number of certificates. ... I think what really changed then, over time, is not just looking at the opportunity to transfer on to a four-year degree, but again, those growing opportunities to get a two-year degree or a certificate and go straight to the workplace. Now that has expanded even beyond Health Science. We have, I guess 19 or 20 programs in those areas, depending on how you count them, we are now growing into manufacturing areas like Mechatronics and Plastics and Chemical Technology and things of that nature. So I think in serving as an economic driver, that bettering oneself vocationally through education, I think that the focus has expanded from only looking at transfer opportunities to now a number of opportunities to get a degree or certificate and go straight to work. Which has then expanded even into opportunities, more and more, for high school students to get an early start in their higher education, whether they want to take a single course or through Middle College if they really want to challenge themselves to try to complete an entire associate's degree, while there while they're still in high school.

RSCC's changing mission over the years reflects what a number of scholars have noted as the debate and evolution over what is perceived to be the purpose of higher education. Early universities in the U.S. began to shift away from the classical model of Greek and Latin toward a more practical model which emphasized employability. This evolution was noted by Pak (2008) and Dorn (2017), and the debate has continued to the present day, as noted by Timmons (2007). Geiger (2015) argued that this evolution became prominent as a result of the Industrial Revolution and western expansion during the 1800s, and was reflected by an emergence of vocational models of education, as opposed to older models. Thelin (2011) argued that this model further accelerated following World War II, as the GI Bill allowed millions of students to attend college who were more interested in acquiring a marketable skill than a liberal arts education. This change also made campuses more accessible to adult students (Rose, 1994), a population often served by community colleges today.

Community colleges have long lacked standardized missions. Ayers (2015) noted that, when junior colleges emerged during the early 1900s, no single vision emerged, and debate about their role continued for decades. Most did not have mission statements until the 1970s, though this may have paradoxically allowed them the flexibility to endure, as they can usually shift to address new issues.

In some ways, RSCC specifically, and community colleges in general, might be coming full circle with regards to Middle College and other dual enrollment opportunities. Cohen and Brawer (2014) noted that junior colleges, precursors to community colleges, began essentially as arms of local high schools.

Research Question 3: What does each president perceive as being the key events of their term as president, and how do they believe these events shaped the history and culture of Roane State?

There were a few common themes among the participants with regards to the key events of their terms as president. Two participants mentioned the establishment of satellite campuses, while four mentioned themes related to funding, specifically, acquiring construction appropriations from the state, state budget cuts, the Complete College Tennessee Act of 2010, and raising money for scholarships. Other participants named the establishment of online courses, a proposed jail near the Roane County campus, delays in constructing the main campus, and the attacks of 9/11 as the major events of their presidency.

Establishing RSCC

As has been previously stated, construction problems necessitated a delay in beginning classes on campus. One participant noted "we went two years before we were able to move on campus, and that was because of the construction problems that developed... They ran into some pretty serious construction problems. And we had to go back and get an additional appropriation to help overcome those problems as the two years of construction went on." These delays created some skepticism in the community that the college might never get off the ground. As a result, the president lobbied Nashville to allow RSCC to open on temporary sites, something the state had allowed for a previous community, although the results had "not been extremely good." Ultimately, this was allowed, which the participant credited to strong community support.

RSCC's earliest years were a crucial time for establishing legitimacy, a very important task for community colleges (Ayers, 2015). A participant noted:

> Many universities, in that day and time, did not feel that the community college student was totally capable of success at the university in the third and fourth years, and we had to disprove that. And the kind of student we were getting and sending home just totally did that for us. I think at that time UT published, or the papers published, the top student in the various colleges at UT for the year, and one year there we had two or three of our graduates that were the top students. So that word been around that, you know, there is some academic strength to this and those people over there have a number of people with PhDs and doctorates that are teaching and you're not losing anything by going to the community college.

The early years were crucial, because, as another participant noted, there was no guarantee the college would succeed. The leadership of the first president was key to the college's long-term success.

Satellite Campuses

Two participants named the establishment of satellite campuses as key events of their presidencies. One president reported on the importance of both satellite and online classes

> [I]n 1988, it had been predicted by the Tennessee Board of Regents that we were going to lose 25% of our students because of the Pellissippi State Community College being formed, and we were losing 15 faculty and 15 staff, but thankfully, even that first year we only lost 8% of the students because we worked really hard at publicizing our institution. … I knew what we could do when I got there to try to keep enrollment from decreasing but that was just temporary to do a lot of advertising and just telling people about the campus. But immediately then my vision was to expand the opportunities for people who lived in the counties served

> by Roane State but had to drive, some of them more than an hour and a half… The ones in Scott County had to come down the mountains and back up just to go to classes. And I knew that one of the best things we could do would be to increase the number of students we had by increasing access to those students so they wouldn't have to travel so far. So that our early vision was to create satellite campuses, and also to expand technology. Thus, early on, we started offering classes in several different counties and over a period of time eventually built satellite campuses. Of course, there were already classes going on in Oak Ridge when I got there. We started offering classes in Scott County, in Loudon County, in Cumberland County, several other counties, and over the period of time I was there we built satellite campuses in six of those counties. Before I left we already had classes in Morgan County. RSCC did build a campus in Morgan County after I left. The combination, I think, of the satellite campuses and beginning to offer online classes made a tremendous difference in access to higher education, but also made it possible for us to grow enrollment while I was there.

Another noted that the completion of the Loudon County campus, noting that it nearly completed RSCC's desire to establish satellite campuses. The only remaining one to be built was Morgan County, which was completed a few years later.

The Attacks of 9/11

The attacks of September 11, 2001 were also mentioned as a major event. One participant commented on the attacks

> [I]t was a very frightening time, I think, for a lot of people and the fact that we did stay open for the most part, I think we did maybe shut down a little bit right here

> on the first day or so, but the fact that we continue to try to put forth an image that this was not going to negatively affect how we operate our organization because we had a terrorist attack on our soil. And I think it was just to give some confidence to the people that things were still going to go on, things are going to be maybe not business as usual, but we were going to continue to move forward.

A Proposed Jail and Funding Issues

One participant discussed a potential jail which had been proposed next to the main campus:

> Within the first 30 days of my arrival the Roane County Commission voted to put a $30 million jail right next to the campus… [M]y thoughts were, that's a 50 year thing; that jail is going to be there for 50 years and I just thought that having a jail with guard towers and concertina wire razor wire along the top of the of the complex was not really good curbside appeal for new students or their parents coming on the campus. The county commissioners that already bought the land and were moving forward to build the jail. And when I got there within the first 30 days I was confronted with this. And so I appeared before the county commissioners several times arguing against putting the jail next to the campus. And of the 15 members of the county commission, eight of the 15 voted to build the jail, but they had to borrow $30 million. So what they were voting on was borrowing $30 million to build a jail and seven of them agreed with me and decided not to approve the borrowing of $30 million.

After consulting with a lawyer, it was determined that if ten percent of registered voters in the county signed a petition against borrowing the money, the matter would be placed on the

ballot during the next election for a vote. By getting faculty and staff involved, the participant was able to get about 20% of the voters of Roane County to sign on to a petition to force a vote on borrowing the money. In the ensuing election, the decision to borrow the money was soundly defeated. “It was the first time ever in the history of Roane County that the county commissioners’ decision was reversed.”

The participant also reported a 30% cut in funding from the state as being an important event of their presidency. They discussed performing “a complete analysis of what really is our mission. What really should we be doing and what really should we not be doing… [S]ome of the things we cut just broke my heart.” Nonetheless, they remained “optimistic that we’ll find a way. And we did.” Indeed, funding concerns were a common concern of participants, as another mentioned raising money for scholarships as one of the key events of their presidency.

The matter of the jail and the budget cuts were significant beyond their immediate ramifications. The president also believed they had long term benefits for the college:

> [They] added to the connectivity of the people inside the organization. In other words, they saw challenge, they banded together, worked together to defeat the outside challenge. And I think it made them closer and that collegial attitude continued and that collegial respect for each other continued because it was taken on kind of as an informal all hands on deck mission to work the jail issue. And then all hands on deck to work the budget cut issue. So I think it bonded the institution and continued to reinforce the collegiality within the institution, because everybody had a say about what’s important and what’s not important to be funding, since we can’t fund at all.

Performance Funding

Reconfiguration of the college toward a central mission was mentioned by another participant as a key event of their presidency. This occurred after the Complete College Tennessee Act was enacted in 2010, which tied state funding to positive student outcomes. The participant felt that this event has "set the tone for everything" RSCC has tried to do, and that it will be considered a key event by those looking back in the decades ahead, a statement echoing the contentions of Ayers (2017) and Another participant mentioned raising money for scholarships as one of the key events of their presidency a prDorn (2017), both of whom contended that the mission of community colleges were typically broad and hard to define, as well as Gumport (2003), who argued that community colleges often change their mission in response to external pressures.

Caretaking

One participant, who served a relatively short term as interim president, stated "I didn't feel it was my role to try to initiate any big new initiatives. It was my role to try to maintain what we're doing and continue to make progress towards achieving those things that we've already identified."

Research Question 4: What does each president perceive as being the key events occurring before and after their term as president, and how do they believe these events shaped the history and culture of Roane State?

Five events were identified as being key events outside participants' own terms as president: the establishment of Pellissippi State Community College (PSCC), the establishment of satellite campuses (partially in response to the establishment of PSCC), the switch to

performance funding by that state, the college more closely associating with business and industry, and the founding and early years of the college.

Establishment of Pellissippi State Community College (PSCC)

Three participants named the establishment of Pellissippi State Community College (PSCC) as one of the key events to have occurred outside their term as president. One participant stated that when RSCC shared a campus with PSCC's predecessor, "the setup of that was not necessarily the best. They had us too tied into was then the State Technical Institute at Knoxville, and that was a little detrimental in some ways."

The establishment of PSCC was seen by many at Roane State as a threat. Another participant reflected that its establishment, and the resulting loss of enrollment, could have "meant some very bad things for Roane State," adding:

> I remember people talking about how bad that might have been. But thanks to the way Roane State folks always pulled together and knowing how important it was for folks in the areas that we serve or Roane State not to lose a step, that's pretty remarkable… I mean it could have been pretty bad. Roane State going from the second or third largest enrollment in the state when Roane State included all of Knox County students in particular. And that was a major blow but Roane State came through. Although we're certainly not the largest in enrollment those folks made sure that we're still operating in a strong way.

Two participants also considered the fact that RSCC did not lose as much enrollment as predicted as being a key event. One noted that, though RSCC lost 15 faculty members and 15 staff members, the institution's loss in enrollment was only eight percent, much lower than the 25% projected by the Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR). Another credited the president of

RSCC immediately following the split for being "very resilient in [their] determination that Roane State would not lose too much ground."

Satellite Campuses

Another common response was the establishment of satellite campuses, which was noted by one participant as partially being in response to lost enrollment due to the establishment of PSCC. One specifically mentioned the establishment of the Knox County Center for Health Sciences as significant for allowing RSCC to become active again in Knoxville County. Another noted that when they were there, "we'd really only had two or three places that we could consider to be a branch and now I think that they consider that have a branch in every county of the college's service area. So that's a major impact for the public in a positive way." The participant further credited local support as key to establishing the satellite campuses.

Performance Funding

The college's shift toward performance funding, and the effects of this on institutional culture were mentioned by two participants as having been important. One participant praised another president's decision to focus "quite a bit on state performance funding, that was important." Another president mentioned how graduating students was "the most important and then putting things in place to remove obstacles to keep them from graduating," citing the One Stop concept as an example.

Business and Industry

Cohen and Brawer (2014) suggested that the need for more workers to support industrialization was a key factor in establishing junior colleges during the early twentieth century. The concept continued through mid-century when Truman Commission Report, which explicitly cited industrialization as a rationale for junior colleges, assigning them the role of

getting students into the workforce quickly (Dorn, 2017). This concept appears to have remained present in community colleges. The establishment of connections to business and industry was also seen as a key event by two participants. This is perhaps not surprising, given the large role community colleges had in contracted employment training by the 1990s (Dorn, 2017). One mentioned working closely with business and industry in the region to train employees and provide graduates employable in those industries as being important. This theme was expounded on by another participant who noted

> [The] critical connections that he grew with the Oak Ridge community, but also with business and industry throughout our region. And he had a clear vision for the connection between what community colleges do and the economic well-being of the communities they serve. And those were dots that [one of my predecessors] was very intentional about trying to connect.

The Founding Era

The founding of RSCC was reported as having been a key event by one participant, who cited presidential leadership in the early days of the college as being decisive. They credited the first RSCC president as having done "an excellent job when he came to start the campus because he not only attracted a large number of excellent faculty and staff. … [The president] did an excellent job on hiring the people to help him lead the institution and to teach."

Research Question 5: How does each president describe their style of leadership? How do they contrast their style of leadership with that of other Roane State presidents?

In describing their own leadership styles, a common theme of collaboration and support appeared in the interviews. The support of others was emphasized. Though reluctant to compare

their leadership styles to that of other presidents, two participants provided answers echoing similar themes about the leadership styles of RSCC presidents.

Personal Leadership Styles

When asked how they would describe their own leadership style, there were varied descriptions. Four participants chose to use an adjective to describe their own leadership style. Each used a different term: visionary, advocacy, servant leader, or consensus builder and caretaker. Two of the participants were reluctant to describe their leadership styles, and four were reluctant to compare their styles of that of other presidents, though two did discuss other presidents' leadership styles in some detail. Most participants suggested a varying style of leadership as dictated by the situation.

The participant who identified with visionary leadership elaborated that work at other Tennessee community colleges had provided experience allowing them to be visionary in what they wanted to accomplish. However, vision requires support and collaboration, which the participant found at RSCC. "But I also want to make it very clear that I could not have achieved all that we accomplished if we had not had excellent leadership, superb faculty, and very efficient staff."

One participant also stressed support and collaboration as being key their leadership style. Stating that they were "not the smartest" or "the most capable person that works at the college," the participant noted that RSCC had "such great folks that have such great ideas" who had helped achieve the participant's goal of being an advocate. "[O]ne of the things that I hope that I do is advocate for our students, advocate for our faculty, advocate for our staff. And what I mean by that is to get behind them, support them, challenge them when needed."

Another participant replied that they viewed themselves as a servant leader, explaining "I was there to serve others to help them advance… I'm there to serve them, not myself." Servant leadership, though one of the least recognized forms of college leadership (Stoten, 2013), has been argued to be uniquely suited for the community college (Kelly, 2008). Under this model of leadership, leaders place the good of followers ahead of their needs (Northouse, 2016).

One participant described themselves as a reluctant president, saying it was necessary to "twist my arm" to get them to serve as president. "I did not want to be president of Roane State Community College. That's not the type of thing that I enjoy. I'm more the backroom type of guy. I'm the financial guy. I run the finances for the college," they reported, also noting that their predecessor had left to serve as interim president of another institution, with the assumption that they might return to RSCC. Therefore, "I didn't feel it was my role to try to initiate any big new initiatives. That it was my role to try to maintain what we're doing and continue to make progress towards achieving those things that we've already identified." The participant added

> Primarily my leadership style was pretty much, you got a good staff, rely upon them, give them the authority to do what they need to do, provide appropriate oversight and then when necessary step in, make a decision, and move forward. So I'd say I'm probably more the consensus builder…

In the responses, a number of the focus areas recommended by the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) (2018) were addressed. Student support was reported, with a willingness to evaluate and change policies to increase enrollment, retention, and graduation rates, as well as fundraising, advocacy, collaboration, and institutional culture. Additionally, participants noted a style of leadership consistent with the behavioral approach, in which leaders engage in both task behaviors (facilitating the accomplishment of goals) and relationship

behaviors (helping followers feel comfortable with themselves, others, and their situations) (Northouse, 2016). Furthermore, a theme among participants was a style similar to the Team Management orientation, as identified by Blake and Mouton (1964), a finding suggesting that RSCC presidents' leadership styles may be similar to those of community college presidents in neighboring North Carolina (Price et al., 2016).

Others' Leadership Styles

Four participants expressed hesitation or unwillingness to compare their leadership styles to that of other presidents. One responded, "That's tough for me to know, I wasn't there!" Another replied they did could not, because they did not "know any of them well enough to know exactly how or what they did." Another participant was unsure if they could comment on other presidents' leadership styles, but did credit earlier presidents with continuing "the collegiality of the institution and the quality of the institution."

One responded that, though they did not wish to compare their own leadership style to other presidents, they would describe the styles of some presidents. They reported:

> I always think of Dr. Dunbar as, and I mean this is the supreme compliment, as sort of the pioneer, the founder, you know the hard work that he did to establish [RSCC]. And then Dr. Hoppe grew on that, again in the midst of losing Roane State Oak Ridge and having to pull out of Knoxville and sort of reestablish Roane State's Oak Ridge campus in within the city limits of Oak Ridge. And so not only bringing us through that, but then also, again, the starting the expansion of campuses. Cumberland County, Scott County, we'd offered classes in those locations before but to actually plan and say, Okay, let's actually have honest to goodness campuses and in each of those areas. Very tough leader. I mean, no

nonsense. Anybody that worked around her or with her knows that. Then Dr. McCamey came, and because under Dr. Hoppe's leadership there had been such a high sort of acceleration, foot on the gas. Dr. McCamey came in and he had a very soothing personality. He is clearly a people person. He got to know a lot of people across the Roane State campuses. He continued the growth, and again, I think in many ways was… the right person for the right time. And then Dr. Goff came in. And again, having had his stellar military career, I remember not really knowing what to expect, but I remember on his first day that he interviewed with a group of faculty members and they let the Academic Deans sit in. At that time, and he came in, shaking hands and everybody's introducing themselves. So there's 100 people in the room and everybody saying their name and thinking, there's no way he's going to be able to remember everybody. And so he shook my hand. I told him my name, and he took a step, and took a step back. He said, okay, you're one of the deans, aren't you, and I was impressed by that.

Another participant echoed this assessment:

You had Dr. Dunbar, who I thought was a little more methodical and a little more consensus building and then we had Dr. Hoppe which was the other side of this. She basically took some risk and had a vision for where we wanted to go and pushed us to go in that vision, a little harder. And then after her you had Dr. McCamey, we sort of went back to a little more of the Dr. Dunbar style, where Dr. McCamey was truly a consensus builder and liked it to get everybody together and get everybody to come to agreement on what we needed to do. And then of course we had Dr. Goff. And Dr. Goff, I thought was a little bit more like Dr.

> Hoppe in terms of having come from the military. He was a little bit more authoritative and willing to make that decision and move on, move forward immediately.

Participants seem to have perceived the leadership history of RSCC as having moved back and forward between a more directed, visionary style and a more consensus-oriented style. Regardless, all agreed that open communication was important, reflecting the contention of Blocker (1973), who argued that establishing clear objectives and an institutional philosophy was vital for educational leaders, and that this process becomes more difficult as institutional culture becomes more entrenched. This would suggest that RSCC was successful in establishing a positive environment for student success early in its history, an environment which is perceived to continue to this day.

Addressing Problems

When asked about problems they dealt with, one participant described the importance of consensus building through an incident following the opening of RSCC's main campus:

> [O]ne of the big things that the faculty, when we moved out to the permanent campus, was concerned about was in order to develop some of the outdoor facilities that we have now, we had to cut some pine trees. Well, I remember that concerned a number of the faculty. So we have a sit down discussion about it and we talked about the value of having the facilities available that needed to be made available. We talked about cutting down the trees and that type thing. And ultimately, some of them rather reluctantly, but ultimately, accepted what needed to be done. And, we did it, and fields developed and an outdoor space developed, and, I guess, has continued to this day.

Another participant discussed the challenges of a major cut in state funding:

> [W]e were at the point where we were going to have to shut down all of our athletic programs. And you know I was bound and determined not to be the president that shut down the athletic basketball and softball, baseball programs. I wasn't wanting to be that President to do that. And I was just optimistic that we'll find a way. And we did. We found our way. At meetings, I'd tell everybody I know we're in the middle of a hailstorm but we're going to learn to dance in the rain and we're just going to figure out what we can do and get on with doing it.

The budget cut proved to be a challenge to virtually everything at RSCC, but the participant stated that it, along with changes to the funding formula for higher education in the state, had the advantage of forcing the college to consider new ideas and to reconfigure more specifically around student success. This led to creating a grants office in order to pursue over $9M in grants and over $9M in foundation funding. This also led to many changes for the college, including the One Stop concept, Success Coaches, and 24/7 call center. It also led to the participant challenging his staff to increase the number of graduates per year from around between 800 and 850 to 1,000 within five years. This move which led to increasing the number of tutors. The goal of 1,000 graduates was reached within three years.

One the strategies used to achieve this goal was the implementation of Success Coaches. Success Coaches aid students in enrollment and financial aid, as well as helping students build confidence and self-determination ("How Success Coaching Works"). This is a style similar to the directing style of leadership, which was found by Salehzadeh et al. (2015) to be effective for meeting the needs of undergraduate students. A recent survey of community college students in

North Carolina found evidence that this strategy is helpful to students (St. Amour, 2020b). It may not be surprising, therefore, that this strategy proved effective.

When asked about the most challenging issues faced in their own presidencies, several participants referred back to previous statements they had made, including the desire to expand vocational offerings, the proposed jail near the Roane County campus, and the decline in enrollment due to the establishment of PSCC. One mentioned the attacks of September 11, 2001:

> I think the most serious issue probably was 9/11. I mean, that was just a complete obvious shocker to the whole country and to the world. And once again, I think the way we responded to that was we pulled our leadership team together and talked about you know what was going on, what we needed to do, how we needed to react to it, we should listen to the guidance from our Tennessee Board of Regents leadership and Dr. Manning, who was our Chancellor at the time, and were provided appropriate guidance on what we needed to do. And of course, the fact that we had a major facility in Oak Ridge which was thought perhaps to be an area of heightened interest to terrorists made it a little more challenging in terms of thinking about what we need to do. But ultimately we all our campuses really progressed. We did the same thing and that was that we opened on a normal schedule and continue to operate.

One reported that finances involving the Henry/Stafford East Tennessee Agricultural Exposition Center, often referred to as the Expo Center, as a great challenge. RSCC was losing money on it, but it was very important to the local economy. The participant elaborated

> I met with the motel owners, and I said, what if we raise the room tax from 2% to 4%. In other words, all those visitors would pay that extra money but not Roane

> County citizens. And so they thought about it for a while and said it was really good and then what I discovered was that Roane County was making about almost $300,000 a year in revenue from the 2% room tax at the motels. So I then went to the county commission, to the county mayor, and the county commission and said, look, I'm going to have to close the Expo Center down and that's going to impact you on getting about $300,000 into your K-12 budget. You got a plan to offset that $300,000? And I said, well, if you don't want me to close the [Henry/Stafford East Tennessee Agricultural Exposition Center] expo center, I got an idea for you. So I gave him the idea of raising the motel tax to 4%. I brought in the motel owners. They testified that yes, they would support that, same thing that the restaurant owners said their businesses would collapse and the revenue sales tax the county gets from them would also be declining. And so I said, Look, I need the county to give me $50,000 a year to keep the Expo Center operational and you get the extra money from the two to 4% room tax. And so, even today, the county still provides $50,000 to the Expo Center to keep it operational.

Another mentioned violence on campus as one of the issues that presidents lose sleep over. "[W]hat if we have an armed intruder? What if, heaven forbid, we have a hostage situation on campus? It's one of the reasons that we've tried to be very intentional about increasing the police presence on our campuses."

Of the issues they have faced as president, however, the Covid-19 Pandemic was the most challenging:

> I would say that the most challenging thing obviously that I've personally encountered has been the preparation, the response to Covid… We did have an

> emergency response plan that when this happened, we had to tweak it some, but we did have a plan in place and so thank heaven for those folks who came before me to make sure that we had that in place. But the transition in about a week's time from whatever it was, 230, 240 online classes then, to 5,200 and whatever online classes is just huge. And none of you asked to have to do it. That's the understatement of the century, but everybody understood that we were in a time that we'd never seen in our lifetimes before and golly, everybody just pulled together and just did a remarkable job…. So this is clearly the most challenging time that I've ever experienced in this role.

As of this writing, the Covid-19 pandemic is an ongoing challenge for institutions of higher education. Like most institutions of higher education, RSCC responded by moving nearly all in-person classes online, and has kept most of them online through the spring 2021 semester. Nationally, colleges and universities saw declines in enrollment for the fall 2020 semester, with community colleges being hit particularly hard (St. Amour, 2020a). Additionally, the populations community colleges serve may also have been affected the most (St. Amour, 2021). The long-term impact on RSCC, and on higher education generally, remains to be seen.

Research Question 6: How does each president describe RSCC's history and their role as president within the context of other educational institutions?

In discussing collaboration with other educational institutions, participants reported a variety of experiences. Two did not remember collaborating much with other community colleges, though nearly all stressed the importance of collaboration with four-year institutions. Two participants commented on competition between institutions, and three indicated working closely with Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology (TCATs).

Other Community Colleges

Participants saw described other community colleges as both partners and competitors, especially for state funding. One participant reported:

> When the state of Tennessee came up with the funding formula and had a bunch of benchmarks and the funding formula, that in order to get more money, you had to hit these benchmarks, I viewed that as being competition. And so I looked at what can we do to improve hitting those benchmarks, so we can receive more money. Now if you didn't hit the benchmark, you would lose money. So I didn't want us to lose money. I wanted us to be competitive, so let's examine what those benchmarks are and figure out what we need to do to ensure that we either meet or exceed those benchmarks, so we get a favorable funding out of the performance funding formula. So I was very competitive.

The Complete College Tennessee Act of 2010 changed the funding model for higher education in Tennessee, tying a portion of the state funding to student success and outcomes (including degree completion), and placing community colleges as the centerpiece of the state's strategy to increase college success rates for students ("Complete College Tennessee"), thus rewarding those colleges with the highest student success rates with more funds and motivating lower achieving institutions with fewer funds.

Healthcare collaboration was another key theme, with two participants mentioned healthcare related fields as areas of collaboration with other institutions. One president mentioned collaboration with PSCC on nursing education which ultimately led to the establishment of PSCC's nursing program. Another mentioned collaborating with Chattanooga

State Community College to offer occupational therapy assistant classes to students in their service area.

One participant noted that working at RSCC was a full-time job, and that they had little time for collaboration with other community colleges. This participant, however, did see RSCC as a potential model for other community colleges:

> I believe we provided a good example of fund raising because for six years while I was president we raised more private funds than any other Tennessee Board of Regents Community College. There was actually a period of time when we raised more than 18 million, which was more than 25% of the total dollars raised by all of the other two-year colleges in Tennessee during that time. So we really were an example of how to grow enrollment, how to add satellite campuses, and how to have a lot of online classes, plus to raise money.

Four-Year Institutions

More participants reported collaboration with four-year institutions, with four discussing the importance of such relationships. These relationships date back to the beginning of RSCC. One president commented on the students transferring to universities during the early years, and the importance of RSCC gaining legitimacy, which Ayers (2015) argued community colleges must continually pursue: "You have a brand new entity which has no history and you're being asked to accept the product at a certain level. So we had to fight that battle and we won most of them. Maybe all of them, I don't know." They stressed the importance of establishing credibility and of being on top of any curriculum changes. One way this participant did this was to put faculty who were alumni of a four-year university on committees dealing with articulation agreements with that four-year university.

The importance of close collaboration with universities was echoed by another participant, who stressed the importance of staying in touch with other presidents and chancellors, from "kind of a 30,000 foot level," and the need to have "boots on the ground" to closely work with other institutions.

Private Institutions

Collaboration with private institutions was commented on by two participants, who gave divergent responses. One stated that private institutions were "easy to work with in the sense that most of them needed students, and so when you have a student that wanted to transfer from Roane State to them, they were pretty eager to try to find a way to make it happen." The participant reported that transfer problems with private institutions were "minimal." In contrast, another participant commented on competition with private institutions, specifically mentioning South College, a private, for-profit institution in Knoxville, which offered similar programs as RSCC.

Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology (TCATs)

Four participants commented on RSCC's relationship with TCATs or their predecessors, with general agreement that the relationships were positive. One reported that, while they could not discuss RSCC's history with TCATs "very well because TCAT has come along since I left the state," but that "we had a great working relationship with the school in Harriman and with all of the others that were in our service area. We didn't have much transferring going on because the nature of two institutions does not lend to that much."

Another commented on providing administrative services for area TCATs, as well as competition:

> [W]e provided the accounting and the payroll and that sort of thing [for the TCATs in our service area]. But they were independent in terms of the provision of academic services and their student services and that sort of thing. We had four of those… [W]e did that for a number of years, providing accounting services. So we had several people in our business office to do all that stuff and did financial reports for them, assisted them in preparing their budget, that sort of thing. As far as competition, there were some areas where we butted heads. But at that point in time, the course level offerings that they had were not collegiate level type things. There were a few noncredit things where we bumped heads against them. But overall, I don't think that that was ever a major situation where we were competing with them in such a way that it was developed a negative relationship on our part with them. And I think by and large we work pretty well with them. And I think they work well with us.

With regards to recent history, another reported

> Of those four [TCATs in RSCC's service area], we have close relationships with all of them in some ways because both Roane State and those TCATs all do a lot of dual enrollment work in the local high schools. We are usually at the table with them… But when a business recruiter or someone from Tennessee Economic Development is bringing people in to talk to an industry prospect, Roane State is there, the TCATs are always there. And then not to make a difference, but when you talk about just the sort of things that are just kind of icing on cake there have been any number of times that TCAT Harriman has helped Roane State in technical areas, that we may not have employees who have a particular expertise

> in welding or in, you know, auto or diesel mechanic or something like that. And so if we have—I'm thinking of welding, in particular—when we have a project that we're trying to work on to possibly initiate a Fire Science program. And one of the things that you have to have is what they call a burn car so that are welded and there's schematics and metallurgy and things that's just, you know, we don't have anyone that I'm aware of, that's an expert. Every single time we call TCAT Harriman they are at the table. They provide expertise. A lot of times if it's a project that their students can work on, they actually work on the project for us.

There are 27 TCATs in the state, with four located in RSCC's service (five if Knox County is included). TCATs train workers to gain technical skills to help them advance in their careers. Though some areas overlap with programs offered by RSCC, most are separate, leading to limited competition ("Colleges of Applied Technology).

Pellissippi State Community College

RSCC's relationship with PSCC was a topic of considerable interest among participants, with all five discussing it in some detail. PSCC's history can be traced back to the State Technical Institute at Knoxville (STIK), which began sharing a campus in west Knox County with an RSCC satellite campus during the 1980s. Eventually, this institution would become a community college, absorbing the campus and some RSCC students, faculty, and staff (Byrne, 1989). Among the participants, the general consensus is that the relationship between RSCC and PSCC was difficult at first, but has improved over the years.

One of the participants described the relationship between RSCC and PSCC's predecessor, STIK, as difficult from the start, noting that from the beginning in Knox County, observers

could see that something was going to develop with it, but who knew what? The thing that developed from our standpoint, was that we had a strong presence in Knoxville in some areas. Nursing, as I said, working with the hospitals up that way on our side of town. Walters State was on the east side of Knoxville and we drew an imaginary line down Gay Street and we didn't go past that and they didn't come past it on our side. And I worked that with the president of Walters State, who was Jack Campbell at that time, at most of the time. And we worked cooperatively with that. When State Tech at Knoxville, as it was known at that time, was developing and they bought that land out on Pellissippi Parkway, the idea was that Roane State would have its own building out there and that State Tech… would have other buildings, and the two would coexist… [I]n the way that [it was] set it up, they had put Roane State sort of subservient to State Tech at Knoxville. And what you did then was, of course, have the tail wag the dog and that wasn't good. I was told it one time that whatever was decided about closing classes for bad weather would be decided by State Tech. Well, I immediately said that's not a good plan, but does that include what I do at Roane County? Oh, well we didn't think about that.

Another participant adds more history:

> Roane State was created and was actually initially was responsible for Knox County and in fact the Pellissippi campus that's there now in Hardin Valley was actually Roane State's campus… During Cuyler Dunbar's tenure the political leaders of Knoxville petitioned the legislature to create Pellissippi State because they wanted a community college, or actually technical college at the time, of

> their own. And so, Cuyler Dunbar was upset that they took that campus from Roane State and created Pellissippi State of it. He was more than willing to advance and move forward and provide additional education opportunities for the citizens of Blount and Knox Counties.

The possible implications of PSCC breaking away were dire for RSCC. One participant reported that TBR projected this would result in a 25% enrollment decline for RSCC. Additionally, 15 RSCC faculty members and 15 staff members were assigned to PSCC. As one participant put it, this could have "meant some very bad things for Roane State," and, though the enrollment decline was substantially less than projected, it did cause animosity between the institutions for many years. "[I]t was difficult for a while just to be affiliated with them at all because it had been predicted they were going to get so many of our students," one participant reported. Another added that the split "created some tension, which is probably not strong enough a word" on both sides of the divide, and that this lasted for "several years."

Controversy would remain between the two institutions for years following the split. The animosity would be exacerbated by competition. "Roane State and Pellissippi, again given the proximity of Hardin Valley's campus to our Oak Ridge campus, there's always been some competition for students," one participant stated, noting that there was conflict for a time about advertising on TV, newspapers and radio. Another noted competition for students, by noting that "we certainly are in each other's backyard all the time with the health sciences and engineering and things like that and we're even offering chemical engineering tech now."

Nonetheless, there is a general consensus that the relationship between the institutions has improved in recent years. One participant noted:

> [W]e had grown and there had continued to be kind of a competition between all the community colleges to some extent, but a real significant competition between Pellissippi State and Roane State because we bumped right up against each other. We had health sciences, and we were charged with the ability to do health sciences in Knox and Blount Counties and at some point we were basically told we couldn't do engineering and that Pellissippi would do engineering in our counties. So we were constantly butting heads in that regard… It was a pretty antagonistic relationship for a number of years... So I think that's the major influence and the major thing that drove us. And while I think that was somewhat… detrimental for a while, ultimately, I think it is ultimately developed into a very close cordial collegial working relationship with Pellissippi and with their leadership. I know a lot of folks at Pellissippi, financial folks I know well. So I think what would have been initially a kind of a difficult relationship gradually developed over the years as a mutual respect and collegial type relationship now where we cooperate together a lot.

Another participant noted that, while animosity had existed between the two colleges, it had little impact on their presidency:

> We worked hand in hand. I didn't bear the animosity that [my predecessors] had about losing the Hardin Valley campus, because it was what it was when I arrived. And so, you know, I wanted to make it as good as we could. And so we partnered on a lot of things. One thing we partnered on was a surgical technology program, Surg Tech, and actually we partnered with Walters State. Walters State, Pellissippi, and us partnered on creating the surgical tech program and so

> Pellissippi State students through Zoom or at that time IDEA room capabilities actually did joint classes between Walters, and Pellissippi and Roane State under Roane State's auspices of running the surgical tech program. We did a lot of things together. We were supporting and providing nursing training in their downtown Magnolia campus. We had four faculty assigned to the Magnolia campus of Pellissippi State providing registered nurse training for them. In the Knoxville campus, same thing. We cooperated with Pellissippi State to do EMT training and to meet all the EMT needs for Knox County and Blount County. I mean there's been a lot of cooperation between us. And I believe it probably still continues, because I think they all realize that we're all there to benefit students, not necessarily empire building by campus to campus.

Things would continue to improve with changes in policy toward service areas. One participant stated that they "would not characterize our relationship with them [PSCC] as contentious in any way now," adding that while "[n]othing's ever perfect, but I think we are in the best place that we've ever been right now" with regards to relations between the two colleges. They noted the working relationship with their counterpart at PSCC:

> [W]e talked before we became presidents and you said, look if we ever have an opportunity, there's always going to be some natural competition for enrollment and students. That's healthy, there's nothing wrong with that. But if we ever get a chance, let's make sure that if, in every way possible, our institutions try to find ways to work together on projects, rather than always seeming to kind of butt heads. And again that's not trying to make it all about us, because we've extended that desire and asked of other leaders in academics, particularly in workforce

> development… [RSCC's Vice President of Workforce would] go to meetings together when there's a prospect of a company coming in, they typically go, they work really well together to make sure that both of them are always in on conversations and so there is no Community College that that has a relationship that is so corollary, for lack of a better word, to Roane State than Pellissippi.

Research Question 7: Other than presidents, what administrators, faculty, staff, students or community leaders do you consider to have been most influential in the history of Roane State?

There was a great diversity of responses to this question, with a total of 32 individuals, two families, and two groups identified as being influential. Of these, only four individuals were mentioned by more than one participant. All five participants expressed difficulty in narrowing down the list of individuals, noting they were probably leaving some individuals out. Of the four individuals mentioned by more than one participant, no single individual was identified by more than two participants. These individuals mentioned by two participants were Harold Underwood, Judy Tyl, Paul Goldberg, and Pat Land.

Leaders Cited by Multiple Participants

Dr. Harold Underwood had a long career at RSCC. Underwood is listed as serving as Chairman of Division of Mathematics and Science, as well as Acting Chairman of the Division of Education beginning in 1972 (Catalog, 1972-1973), as Dean of Instruction as of 1973 (Catalog, 1973-1974), as Dean of Academic Affairs as of 1980 (Catalog, 1980-1981), as Dean of the College as of 1987 (Catalog, 1987-1988), as Vice President for Academic and Student Services as of 1995 (Catalog, 1995-1996), and as Professor of Mathematics as of 1997 (Catalog, 1997-1998), and is considered a member of the famed dirty dozen (Simpson, 2011). One

participant credited Underwood with helping to recruit excellent employees for the college. Another described him as having a "very low-key leadership style, led by as a building consistent consensus," adding "he was a great leader… and basically great individual and a fun person to work with. I think he left an indelible mark on the academic development of our organization."

Judy Tyl first appears at RSCC as a Counselor/Coordinator of Academic Assessment by 1987 (Catalog, 1987-1988), and was Acting Dean of Student Services by 1988 (Catalog, 1988-1989), Associate Dean of Student Services by 1990 (Catalog, 1990-1991), Dean of Student Services by 1994 (Catalog, 1994-1995), Dean of Enrollment Management by 1996 (Catalog, 1996-1997). Tyl was credited by one participant as "very steady very on target sort of person in terms of trying to make sure that we were providing for the needs of students, providing opportunities for students to have things outside the classroom culturally and athletically and that sort of thing." Another stated that Tyl provided tremendous ways to support students.

Dr. Paul Goldberg first appears at RSCC as a part-time faculty member by 1972 (Catalog, 1972-1973), and was Director of Community Services a year later (Catalog, 1973-1974). He is credited as a member of the dirty dozen ("The Dirty Dozen," 2003). By 1980, he was Director of Continuing Education (Catalog, 1980-1981), an area he remained in until the mid to late 2000s (Catalog, 2006-2008), working at RSCC for 36 years ("Tributes," 2009). One participant credited Goldberg with managing the main campus while presidents were away at meetings in Nashville or elsewhere. "[*T]here's no way to list all the ways that Dr. Goldberg was Roane State in Roane County*," the participant noted. Another credited Goldberg with having done an excellent job.

Dr. Pat Land first appeared at RSCC as a substance abuse counselor by 1991, and was director of the Roane State Foundation by 1992 (Catalog, 1992-1993), Dean of Institutional

Advancement by 1996 (Catalog, 1996-1997), and Vice President for Academic and Student Services by 1997 (Catalog, 1997-1998), departing RSCC around 2003 ("News Notes from the Headlines," 2003). Land was described as "one of our most important academic leaders" by one participant. Another stated that Land's "style was a little more proactive in terms of going out and seeking out different things that we ought to be doing, and then trying to develop within her staff, the excitement to go out and do that sort of thing."

Leaders Cited by One Participant

One participant praised the leadership of William Yates, a former Dean of Student Affairs and a longtime Speech and Theatre professor, who passed away in 2000 ("William B. Yates Obituary"). They recalled that "he always carried candy in his pockets and gave candy to the students and candy to anybody else who happened to want a piece." The participant further described him as "very enthusiastic. He was very student oriented and the students loved him, and his leadership style was basically 'come on out here and have some fun." Appealing to students in this way was contended to part of what Thelin (2011) described as a consumer model of education, which encouraged extracurricular activities and a campus lifestyle which emerged in colleges and universities during the nineteenth century.

Kinch York, the first director of the Physical Plant, was also identified. One participant noted that York "had just a tremendous amount to do with the development of our overall Roane County facility and the continued maintenance of them in such a way that they stayed in good shape over the years."

One participant noted their own mentors as influential leaders. "These are folks who were my teachers before they were my colleagues, so that's particularly important to me. But as I said before we started this, I had a whole lot of mentors." Professors Don Miller (Anthropology),

Scott Teeter (Criminal Justice), Bill Hoagland (Political Science and History), Patricia Brown (Math), Larry Works (Psychology), Becky and the late Benjamin Howard (both Math) were named, as was the first librarian at RSCC, John Needham, now all retired. The participant noted that there were many others. Also mentioned were second generation faculty, specifically Cody Miller (Education) and John Brown (Political Science), both current RSCC faculty. "I think about all the legacies, those of us that grew up at Roane State and are now back working, which to me, I think is a really special thing as well," the participant added.

A number of RSCC administrators were also identified for leadership, including former Vice President for Financial Services William S. Fuqua III (who also served as interim president), Vice President for Administrative Services Doris Evans, former Dean of the Oak Ridge Branch Campus Loretta Friend, former Administrative Assistant to the President and current Vice President of Institutional Effectiveness and Student Success Initiatives Karen Brunner, former Executive Director of the Foundation and Vice President of Advancement and Community Relations Melinda Hillman (who was noted for fundraising ability), Tommie West, who worked in Contract Management, former Cumberland County Site Director Muffin Liskovec, who was praised for providing leadership for that campus, Jan Buxton Wade, who was Vice President in charge of raising money both for scholarships and other needs (such as funds needed for satellite campuses), and former TBR Chancellor Thomas Garland.

Political and Local Leaders

Several political leaders were also identified. Former State Representative David Coffey and current State Senator (and Lt. Governor) Randy McNally were credited with helping secure funding for the Oak Ridge Branch Campus, with the participant noting that state funding for establishing branch campuses as being unusual. Former State Senator James "Buzz" Elkins of

Clinton was mentioned as "a big help to us," as was former State Senator Ray Baird of Rockwood.

Former State Reps. M.F. "Benny" Stafford and Jim Henry were also credited as being influential. One participant noted,

> Jim Henry and Benny Stafford were the ones that helped bring about the Agricultural Exposition Center to the Roane State campus as it developed. And so many things like that that they just had a big impact on doing for you and they would be able to hear of things in the legislature that were going to be coming down the road or might and tip you off to that.

Two participants identified local leaders as being influential in the history of Roane State. Among them was Barbara Ragland and her husband.

Another noted both individuals and families as being important in establishing satellite campuses, echoing the importance of industrial leaders as important sources of funding for colleges and universities, a trend dating back to the nineteenth century (Thelin, 2011):

> The Swains, Wheelers, Schuberts, Stones, and many others donors made our vast campus infrastructure happen. I can go on and on about all of those campuses. If it wasn't for their efforts and their vision to provide a campus for their citizens in the county. I mean, they're superstars in my eyes for moving forward and making it happen.

Groups

Two participants also listed groups as being influential. One identified the current President's Cabinet, which consists of President Chris Whaley, Vice President for Institutional Effectiveness and Student Success Initiatives Karen Brunner, Vice President of Workforce and

Community Development Teresa Duncan, Vice President for Business and Finance Marsha Mathews, CIO Keri Phillips, Vice President for Enrollment Management Jamie Stringer, and Vice President for Student Learning Diane Ward ("Roane State Community College Committee Assignments").

One participant named the college's earliest employees (often referred to as the "Dirty Dozen") as "certainly being influential." Determining the precise identities of the college's original twelve employees is challenging, as more than twelve individuals have been described as being members of the "dirty dozen." According to one source, a 1979 *Roane County News* report named the following as the dirty dozen: Phillip Allen (director of the Governor's Youth program), Dr. Cuyler Dunbar (president), Dr. Nancy Fisher (chairman of the humanities department), Dr. Paul Goldberg (geography instructor), Dr. C.P. Keim (director of field services), James Kring (biology instructor), W. Carroll Marsalis (chairman of the occupational careers and social science divisions), Dr. Anne Minter (chemistry and biology instructor), John Needham (librarian), Louise Roberts Greene (admissions and records officer), Linda Simmons (history instructor), and Dr. Harold Underwood (chairman of the math/science and education divisions) ("The Dirty Dozen"). In contrast, another source lists 15 individuals thought to be part of the original staff and faculty, but states the list is "not comprehensive." This list does not include Allen or Goldberg but adds the following: Faye Ray (secretary), Ronald McFaddin (Dean of Student Personnel Services), Donald Van Fleet (Dean of Student Personnel Services), Paul Ellis (business manager), Curtis Whalen (Director of Student Financial Aid), and William "Bill" Murray (math instructor) (Simpson, 2011). Helen Randolph (chemistry professor) is included by another source (Driskill, 2010). The college's first catalog names only four employees: Dunbar, McFaddin, Van Fleet, and Ellis, establishing them as among the first twelve

employees (Catalog, 1971-1972). The following year's catalog names 27 employees, including everyone listed above except Randolph and Ray, adding the following individuals: Ronald R. Brewer (research coordinator and electronics instructor), Mildred Dillon (counselor), Ronald P. Hartman (education), Robert Jennings (electronics), Ruth D. Richardson (business), Martha Sheldon (English instructor), G.A. Swanson (business), Lowell Whaley (accountant), Diane Goodgame (part-time counselor), and Faye Robinson (part-time psychology instructor) (Catalog, 1972-1973).

Some participants also chose to discuss community leadership more broadly, without identifying specific leaders. One noted

> I will never forget how many people in each of the counties supported what we were trying to do. So not only did we have excellent faculty and staff who supported my vision and helped turn it into reality, we had support in the communities we served. I could not have turned my vision into reality alone, there's no way. I had to have all those people helping me to make it possible.

Another added,

> I believe that the Roane State people, the employees, both faculty and staff, are the greatest bunch of folks I've ever worked with, and I spent 30 years as an Army Ranger and then I spent 10 years in higher education at community college level here in Florida.

Another president stated that "everybody says that they work in a special place. But I always kid them and tell them, yeah, but I can prove it."

Chapter Summary

Chapter 4 includes the main ideas in each president's response to the research questions. This chapter quotes the responses at length and provides brief analyses of the recurring themes from the interviews.

Chapter 5. Summary, Recommendations, and Conclusions

Through interviews with five of Roane State Community College's presidents, this study has explored the key events and factors which have shaped RSCC's history, as perceived by the presidents themselves. Using the interviews, I examined these events and factors and analyzed them within the context of the existing literature.

Five of RSCC's six presidents were interviewed with these questions guiding the process. Each participant was given the opportunity to explain in detail and clarify their statements. The interviews were recorded, transcribed, and examined for common themes and insights. This chapter summarizes the findings and presents conclusions drawn from them. It also offers recommendations for future research. Though several events were reported as being significant in RSCC's history, several were cited by multiple participants and in response to multiple questions.

Q1: What do Roane State Community College presidents perceive to be the key events shaping the institution's history and culture?

The founding of the college was seen as a key event by several participants. The early years of RSCC were seen as very important, with the time period during which the college operated at temporary sites, and the stories associated with this, having become almost legendary. The story of a scrappy little college operating out of trailers likely reinforced the egalitarian ideals behind the establishment of the college, and is well-remembered even today, fifty years later. One effect of this may have been that the college was born literally "out in the community," which may have broken down barriers for students. This may have also impacted the long-term ethos of the college to reach students in their own communities by establishing campuses within those communities. The first president received a great deal of praise for his

leadership during the early years of the college, with one participant noting that RSCC may not have succeeded without his leadership.

The establishment of Pellissippi State Community College (PSCC), partly at RSCC's expense, is also considered a major event in RSCC's history. Several participants considered the event traumatic for RSCC, and most reported that it resulted in hard feelings toward PSCC. These hard feelings dated back even to before PSCC, when the State Institute at Knoxville (STIK) (PSCC's predecessor) shared a campus with RSCC in west Knoxville; RSCC felt it was subservient to STIK. When the establishment of PSCC was announced, it led to a significant number of RSCC faculty and staff going to PSCC, as well as to predictions of a large enrollment decline for RSCC. The anger was probably exacerbated because the news was both a surprise and was broken to RSCC's president by a reporter and not by the leadership in Nashville, and was viewed as contradicting previous messages from Nashville (Byrne, 1989). The loss of both Knox and Blount Counties from RSCC's service area signaled that RSCC's growth, which until then had been significant, was likely to come to an abrupt halt. The tensions would last for many years, but are seen as having improved significantly in recent years.

The establishment of PSCC was also considered to have been a factor in two other events seen as important: the establishment of satellite campuses and the adoption of technology. Satellite campuses in some of RSCC's rural counties were established to offset enrollment losses resulting from the establishment of PSCC. Technology was also considered a means to reach students "where they are."

The Appalachian region and the city of Oak Ridge are both viewed as important factors for RSCC, and they may "pull" the college in different directions. While Oak Ridge is the largest city in RSCC's service area, and the Oak Ridge campus frequently is the largest campus in terms

of enrollment, most of RSCC's service area is rural and "more Appalachian" in terms of culture. Oak Ridge is the location of many scientific government institutions, including Y-12 and the Oak Ridge National Laboratory, and is home to a more formally educated and financially prosperous population than most of the rest of RSCC's service area. This creates challenges, but also opportunities. Community support in Oak Ridge is considered to be strong, as is financial support. The city also provides a pool of potential faculty and staff. Participants reported strong support in the more rural areas as well, noting that many of the students want to study and work in their own communities, and that local leaders were supportive of establishing campuses in their areas.

Q2: Why was Roane State Community College established by the state of Tennessee?

It was noted that the community college movement of the 1960s was a factor in the establishment of RSCC, as was the leadership of state education commissioner J. Howard Warf. Political and educational leaders desired to make college more accessible to underserved populations, including rural Appalachia, as a means of expanding economic development. Local political and community leaders were credited with ensuring that a community college would be established in Roane County, and political rivalries between cities were credited with helping leaders decide on the present site for RSCC's main campus, as it was chosen as a neutral site which did not favor any of the local cities.

The selection of a neutral site may have assuaged local political concerns, but it was not without complications. Construction problems plagued the college's early years, necessitating temporary housing in South Harriman. This also dictated that the college focus more on general education courses than on vocational offerings.

There was agreement that RSCC has fulfilled its mission by providing education to underserved student populations and by bringing economic development to the region. The college's mission has also changed over the years, from a transfer-oriented institution to greater emphasis on degree and certification programs, though transfer students remain a major part of the college's role. Toward this end, the college has seen great expansions in workforce development programs and has worked much more closely with business and industry in recent years. This shifting mission has also led to programs such as Middle College and other dual enrollment opportunities for high school students, allowing students to earn college credit or even associates degrees while still in high school. These changes are viewed as positive.

Q3: When you reflect on your time as Roane State president, what do you consider to have been the most important events?

A wide range of topics were reported by participants as having been important during their term as president. Among them was the establishment of the college, offering classes at temporary sites, and establishing legitimacy for RSCC. The establishment of satellite campuses (described by one participant as a "trademark" of RSCC) and the adoption of technology (seen as necessary to meet the needs of rural students) were also seen as important, and both were seen as partially the result of the establishment of PSCC.

A few other events were described as important to RSCC's history: the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, a proposed jail site near RSCC which was blocked partially as a result of RSCC community mobilizing in opposition, the rise of security concerns, particularly with regards to active shooters, and the worldwide Covid-19 pandemic of 2020-2021.

In terms of factors, several were cited as important, among them funding concerns, the evolving mission of RSCC, and leadership, both by presidents and other actors. Funding was

mentioned by nearly every participant, though specifically performance funding following the Complete College Tennessee Act of 2010 was seen as a major event by two participants. They viewed this as a paradigm shift: following its adoption, all actions taken by the college were done with the goal of maximizing student success in ways that were quantifiable. Funding was viewed as important in nearly every era of the college's history; participants commented on generous donations from community members, and one participant reported having to deal with a 25% cut in state funding.

Q4: What events before and/or after your time as president do you consider to have been the most important?

Similar themes were found as for Q3, with the establishment of PSCC, and its possible negative consequences for RSCC being seen as a major event, as well as the establishment of RSCC's various satellite campuses. The reconfiguration of RSCC's mission, necessitated by the Complete College Tennessee Act of 2010 and the resulting performance funding was also seen as important. Perhaps reflecting the college's shift toward workforce programs, RSCC's increased connections to business and industry was also reported as being important, as was the college's founding era.

Q5: How would you describe your leadership style?

In terms of their own leadership, participants emphasized the need for cooperation and delegation. Descriptions of their own leadership ranged from visionary to servant, to advocacy, to consensus builder, though all credited others with helping achieve their goals. Most saw collaboration with others as a key aspect of their own leadership. Some saw themselves as offering a vision for the college, which was supported by followers on campus or in the

community, while others were more collaborative, formulating a plan with campus and community leaders based on consensus and agreement.

In describing the leadership history of the college, a common view was that the pendulum which has swung back and forth between a more consensus-building model to a more aggressive, visionary model. The leadership was often described as being what was needed at a specific time in the college's history. Participants generally praised the leadership of other presidents; none offered any criticism of others' leadership.

Perhaps not surprisingly, finances were the most common problem reported by participants, with state budget cuts and funding changes based on student outcomes being seen as major challenges. These challenges led to some changes for RSCC, as the college was forced to reexamine its mission and discontinue some programs unrelated to it, as well as recommit to supporting student success. Funding sometimes had implications beyond campus: one participant reported devising a plan to ensure financial solvency of the Exposition Center, an institution whose events helped support several local businesses.

Violence on campus, a common concern in recent years, was also reported as a major concern, as was the Covid-19 pandemic of 2020-2021.

Q6: How does each president describe RSCC's history and their role as president within the context of other educational institutions?

With regards to leadership in collaboration with other institutions of higher education, the consensus was that other community colleges were a source of both competition and cooperation, while four-year institutions were characterized more by cooperation, though establishing legitimacy with them was vital during the college's early years. Private institutions were seen as both partners and competitors, particularly those offering programs similar to

RSCC's offerings. In contrast, relations with Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology were nearly universally seen as positive, as they were viewed as partners with whom there was only minimal competition.

Pellissippi State Community College (PSCC) can be considered a special case, given its shared history with RSCC. The establishment of PSCC came as a surprise to RSCC, and largely removed Knox and Blount Counties from RSCC's service area, resulting in decline in enrollment and the loss of faculty, staff, and a satellite campus. This, exacerbated by competition and service area disputes, created a hostility between the two institutions which lingered for many years. In addition to the messy split, the two colleges were located very close to one another (PSCC's main campus is located less than ten miles from RSCC's Oak Ridge campus, often RSCC's largest in terms of enrollment), ensuring the two colleges would compete for the same students. Disagreements over what programs could be offered by each college and who could advertise in different markets only made the animosity greater.

Nevertheless, the relationship between RSCC and PSCC has improved considerably in recent years. Several participants noted that relations between the two colleges is today characterized more by cooperation than competition (though some competition is inevitable and even healthy). The administrations of the two colleges work together closely today, and one participants even stated they would not consider the relationship "in any way contentious" as of 2020.

Q7: Other than presidents, what administrators, faculty, staff, students or community leaders do you consider to have been most influential in the history of Roane State?

There was little consensus on which specific non-presidents were important to RSCC's history, though all participants noted that there were many who played an important role. Only

four individuals, however, were named by more than one participant: Dr. Harold Underwood, Judy Tyl, Dr. Paul Goldberg, and Dr. Pat Land. A wide array of faculty, staff, community members, political leaders, and groups were also identified. The general consensus was that there were so many important figures in RSCC's history that it was difficult to name even a few.

Recommendations for Practice

Based on the findings of this study, I suggest the following practices for leaders of community colleges:

1) Leadership styles focused on collaboration and delegation are viewed favorably and are likely to succeed in achieving positive outcomes in a community college setting. Establishing and maintaining an environment of collegiality can support this. Community college leaders should act accordingly.
2) In leading a community college, leaders need to be focused almost exclusively on student success and construct an infrastructure in order to support it. This will mean looking at the entire budget and carefully examining all college activities to make sure they align with student success, and removing any which do not.
3) Economic growth should be seen as a major aspect of the community college agenda. Leaders need to focus on establishing connections to business and industry and producing students capable of finding work within them. This should complement traditional transfer options, not replace them.
4) Community college leaders must be willing and able to go out in the community and meet students where they are. This can be accomplished through establishing satellite campuses in remote areas, as well as harnessing technology to meet student needs.

5) Leaders must have a willingness to change and adapt. The economic climate is rapidly changing as are the challenges faced by community colleges. Leaders must stay informed of these changes and must respond to them quickly and effectively in order to succeed.
6) Vocational training colleges, or TCATs as they are called in Tennessee, can provide many opportunities for collaboration and mutually beneficial partnerships. Community college leaders should work closely with their counterparts at these institutions in order to maximize benefits.

Recommendations for Future Study

Based on the findings of this study I suggest that future researchers qualitative and historical researchers examine the following areas:

1. While the history of higher education has been studied extensively by scholars, there exists a dearth of research on the history of community colleges, as noted by Dorn (2017). It is therefore recommended that future researchers should examine this topic broadly, as well as within specific regions (Appalachia, urban areas, etc.) so as to gain a greater understanding of the historical forces shaping them as well as their place in contemporary higher education.
2. Revisit the general history of Roane State Community College. It has been over 30 years since a general history of RSCC has been written, and while this study contributes to the literature on the institution's history, it is not a general history. A general history would provide a starting place for scholars to examine specific aspects of RSCC.
3. Study the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on community colleges. As of this writing, the pandemic's long-term effects on higher education generally and community colleges

specifically are unclear. Future researchers will need to examine this in a historical context which does not yet exist.

4. Explore in more detail the impact of Appalachian culture on community college students. Though generally the literature suggests that Appalachian students have unique difficulties on community college campuses, some literature challenges this. More attention to this by scholars would be clarifying.
5. Explore the effectiveness of multiple satellite campuses, such as those employed by RSCC, on student success. While it would certainly seem that this strategy has been beneficial for students, an in-depth study would be useful.

Conclusion

Roane State Community College was founded in 1970 and began offering classes the following year in a collection of trailers on the grounds of an abandoned school site in Harriman, TN. From that humble beginning, it has grown to a thriving community college of around 5,000 students scattered over nine campuses throughout its service area. It has helped thousands of students achieve their goals and improve their lives and has played a vital role in the economy of East Tennessee.

These successes are partly attributable to the six individuals who have served as presidents, and who are in a unique position to comment on the college's history. In this study, I have attempted to combine five of their stories to provide a broad institutional history of RSCC from their point of view. The challenges the institution has faced and the successes it has achieved are presented here.

Like all institutions of higher education, RSCC faces challenges ahead. The Covid-19 pandemic's effects are only beginning to be understood, and the birthrate decline of the 2010s is

projected to impact enrollment at most colleges and universities by the mid-2020s (Fox, 2016). To continue to be successful, RSCC must understand its own history, and draw from the examples of innovation that past and current leaders of the college have utilized. It must also heed the advice of those who have led the institution. This advice is especially crucial if the potential leadership crisis, predicted by several scholars (López-Molina, 2008; Forthun & Freeman, 2017; Tanner, 2017; Wrighten, 2018) materializes. The college has overcome significant challenges in the past. With effective leadership and a continued commitment to student success, it can continue to do so.

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Appendix: Interview Protocol

ROANE STATE HISTORICAL LEADERSHIP STUDY

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

ROANE STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

PART I: FIRST CONTACT

INSTRUCTIONS

Contact will be made with each of the six current and past presidents of Roane State Community College: Dr. Cuyler Dunbar, Dr. Sherry Hoppe, Mr. William Fuqua, Dr. Wade McKamey, Dr. Gary Goff, and Dr. Chris Whaley. Each president will be first contacted through email, messaging on social media, or by phone. The initial contact will be as follows:

> *Dear (name): My name is John Brown, and I am working on a dissertation concerning the historical presidential leadership of Roane State Community College. I would be honored if you would agree to an interview concerning your time as president of the college. Particularly, I am interested in the important historical events and factors which have shaped the institutional history of Roane State, as well as the leadership methods you employed during your term as president. The interview may be conducted through and recorded through Zoom, over the phone, or through other methods that are convenient for you. Please let me know if you are interested in being interviewed.*

Upon agreement to take part in the interview, arrangements will be made to schedule the interview at a time and through a method convenient for the participant.

PART II: THE INTERVIEW MEETING

INSTRUCTIONS

Upon convening the interview meeting, each participant will be read the following statement: *Good morning (afternoon, etc.). Thank you for coming. This interview involves questions about the history and leadership of Roane State Community College, with the purpose being to get your perceptions and experiences. There are no right or wrong answers, and you may decline to answer any question or to take part in this interview. I want you to be comfortable and state what you really think and feel.*

RECORDING INSTRUCTIONS

If it is okay with you, I will tape record this interview. The purpose of recording this interview is so I can record the details while also carrying on an attentive conversation with you. Because of the small number of participants and the specific events discussed, I cannot guarantee your comments will remain confidential; however, you will have the opportunity to read over any statement or view attributed to you before the final dissertation is published.

CONSENT FORM

Before we get started, please take a few minutes to read this consent form, and sign it if you agree.

PART III: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Q1: When you reflect on the history of Roane State Community College, what do you perceive as being the most important events and factors?

Q1a: In what ways do you think they are important?

Q1b: What impact did they have on Roane State?

Q1c: In what ways has the Appalachian region impacted Roane State's development and culture?

Q1d: What role has the city of Oak Ridge played in Roane State's history?

Q2: Why was Roane State Community College established by the state of Tennessee?

Q2a: Why was there a desire to establish community colleges in Tennessee during the 1960s and 1970s?

Q2b: What role did broader educational and political trends play in the establishment of Roane State (i.e. the community college movement, the civil rights movement, etc.)?

Q2c: Why was the decision made to locate the college in Roane County?

Q2d: Why was the current site chosen, as opposed to another site?

Q2e: What role do you believe Roane State fulfilled in the community, both at the time of its founding, and today?

Q3: When you reflect on your time as Roane State president, what do you consider to have been the most important events?

Q3a: How did you, as president, respond to those events?

Q3b: In what ways did these events shape the history and culture of Roane State?

Q4: What events before and/or after your time as president do you consider to have been the most important?

Q4a: How did the institution respond to these events?

Q4b: In what ways did they impact Roane State?

Q5: How would you describe your leadership style?

Q5a: When you reflect on your term as president, can you describe the most serious issues you faced and how you responded?

Q5b: How would you describe the leadership styles of other Roane State presidents?

Q5c: How would you compare your leadership style to that of other presidents?

Q5d: Can you discuss a situation in which you collaborated with other Tennessee Board of Regents institutions?

Q6: How does each president describe RSCC's history and their role as president within the context of other educational institutions?

Q6a: How have other Tennessee Board of Regents institutions impacted Roane State?

Q6b: Public and private four-year universities?

Q6c: Tennessee Colleges of Applied Technology (TCATs)?

Q7d: Could you discuss in detail your views on the "special relationship" between Roane State and Pellissippi State Technical Community College (PSTCC)?

Q7: Other than presidents, what administrators, faculty, staff, students or community leaders do you consider to have been most influential in the history of Roane State?

Q6a: In what ways were they influential?

Q6b: How would you describe their leadership styles?

PART IV: DEBRIEFING

Statement to be read following interview:

Thank you for taking part in this interview. Your participation is greatly appreciated.

DQ1: Is there any other information you think it would be useful for me to know?

VITA

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	M.A. Political Science, Appalachian State University, Boone, North Carolina, 2007
	B.A. Political Science, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Tennessee, 2004
	A.S. General, Roane State Community College, Harriman, Tennessee, 2001
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Professional Experience:	Associate Professor of Political Science, Roane State Community College; Harriman, Tennessee, 2017-Present
	Assistant Professor of Political Science, Roane State Community College; Harriman, Tennessee, 2011-2017
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	English as a Second Language Teacher, E Bo Young Talking Club; Mokpo, South Korea, 2008-2009
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