Grounded Roots Applied to Women Presidents in the California Community Colleges System

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Grounded Roots Applied to Women Presidents in the California Community Colleges System

A Dissertation by

Penny Shreve

Brandman University
Irvine, California
School of Education

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership

June 2021

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June 2021
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A dissertation is a path

It may seem that the dissertation journey is a lonely path.

Only one person fits on the path, for the path is narrow—only allowing one to walk.

Only one can finish, but that path is not solitary to those lucky enough . . .

While only one can walk the path,

others hold the light so the path is visible,

others have helped cleared the path so it is easier to follow,

others still ensure provisions are packed for the journey,

and when the path becomes too steep,

still others stand together on the sides and behind to be sure,

we do not fall,

that we gather strength,

and continue on.

A dissertation is a village

To my village, each one of you helped me when the path seemed hardest:

The Ontario ETA cohort who helped me through my struggles with statistics and personal obstacles. Martha, Maris, and CMO, without you, it would have been easy to lay down, not stay on the path.

The grounded thematic team who I met with every Tuesday for a year. Even when we had no progress to share, we set goals and supported each other. Those Tuesday nights kept me focused and pushed me to have something to share.

My family and friends who let me ramble on about research and data on which you feigned an interest and never once told me to—just stop talking about grounded
health. My sister Robin who happened to have a laptop lying around when I needed a NVivo miracle.

My colleague Dr. Beverly Ranney, who seemed to know just when to ask, “How’s your dissertation going?” reminding me that others cared and wanted me to succeed when I felt beat down. Beverly who took more than one emergency text or call to help me remember why we choose to do the *hard thing*.

My dissertation chair and committee: Dr. Petersen who made me feel she had all time in the world for me as we dissected pages and pages in Zoom meetings, encouraged me when I was low, and knew my need for timelines so made sure I had dates and goals through the process. Dr. Bartels who spent a Sunday morning patiently helping with coherence on her day off. Dr. Larick who created the grounded thematic topic and team, made me excited to participate, and demanded more of my prospectus to prepare me for the harder next steps.

Most of my all, my husband, the magician who made dinner magically appear on my desk, knew exactly when I needed a break, and kept us both sane when I had to work from home for a year due to COVID. If I stumbled, he kept me upright, brushed me off, and held my hand in the darkest turns in the path.

Without each of you, this path would have been dark, terrifying, lonely, and I would still be far from the end of the journey. Thank you for being part of my village.
ABSTRACT

Grounded Roots Applied to Women Presidents in the California Community Colleges System

by Penny Shreve

Purpose: The purpose of this explanatory mixed methods study was to identify and describe what exemplary female presidents in California community colleges do to stay grounded and maintain physical, emotional, intellectual, social, vocational, and spiritual health.

Methodology: This mixed methods study identified and described the perceptions of 16 women presidents in the California Community Colleges system regarding strategies they use to remain grounded in their current positions. Respondents were purposively chosen based on specific criteria. Data were gathered through the Stay Grounded survey from 16 participants and interviews with 5 of the participants. Quantitative data were tabulated to determine mean scores, frequency distributions, and standard deviations. Qualitative data were organized into 19 themes.

Findings: Analysis of the data revealed 6 findings related to all areas of grounded health. Exemplary female presidents in the California community colleges stay grounded through strategies. They practice mind-body awareness, have high emotional intelligence and awareness, create collaboration through active listening and being open-minded, are authentic and transparent to build stronger relationships, value serving others, and above all stay grounded by their commitment to the community college mission.

Conclusions: Five conclusions were drawn from the data and findings. The conclusions are that exemplary female California community college presidents (a) use physical
activity to create workplace relationships and foster rewards beyond health, (b) practice mind-body awareness to manage stress and conflict, (c) model emotional awareness and self-control that builds a culture of trust, (d) use active listening and intentional inclusion to create a collaborative culture, and (e) intentionally support other leaders on their leadership journey.

**Recommendations:** Further research is recommended to compare this study by gender, different levels of administration, and different college systems; during a time of non-COVID-19 restrictions; on specific grounded areas of health that had notable results in this study; and in a meta-analysis on the thematic research team’s findings.

**Keywords:** women, college presidents, presidential turnover, California community colleges, higher education, women in academic leadership, barriers to women in leadership, grounded leaders, grounded health, wellness, leadership, stress, higher education, CEO retention.
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PREFACE

Following discussions and explorations regarding the opportunity to study Bob Rosen’s (2014) *Grounded: How Leaders Stay Rooted in an Uncertain World*, two faculty researchers and seven doctoral students discovered a common interest in determining the ways exemplary leaders stay grounded using the six dimensions of health (physical, emotional, intellectual, social, vocational, and spiritual). This resulted in a thematic study conducted by a research team of seven doctoral students. The thematic research team applied Rosen’s (2014) theory to exemplary leaders in various fields and organizations.

The thematic research team and two faculty researchers determined an explanatory mixed methods design was most appropriate for the study of exemplary leaders and how they stay grounded. Exemplary leaders were selected by each peer researcher from various public, government, for-profit, and nonprofit organizations to examine the grounded behaviors these leaders practiced. Each researcher surveyed a minimum of 15 exemplary leaders and interviewed five of the surveyed participants.

The team agreed for increased validity, data collection would involve mixed methods using both interviews and surveys. To ensure thematic consistency, the team cocreated the purpose statement, research questions, definitions, survey questions, interview questions, and the study procedures.

Throughout the study, the term *peer researcher* is used to refer to the other researchers who conducted this thematic study. The thematic team consisted of Cancy McArn, studied HR administrators who are women of color in K-12 urban school districts in California; Audrey Dangtwu, studied mental health leaders serving veterans in
Washington State; Greg Montanio, studied company grade officers in the California Army National Guard; Vicki Hou, studied midlevel leaders in California community colleges; Martha Godinez, studied victim specialists in California; Penny Shreve, studied female presidents of California community colleges; and Christopher Schoenwandt, studied field grade commanders in the California Army National Guard.
CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

The world is becoming increasingly complex. In less than 10 years, the speed of change has made knowledge and the technology become obsolete at a faster rate than ever before. The world economy has become an interconnected, fragile system with destabilizing factors, including growing economic disparity, daily concerns of global health epidemics, and terrorism—cyber and real world (Bililies, 2015). Constant concerns and changes impact work conditions; in addition, public expectations and social media have produced an increasing need for user awareness for leaders in the public and private sectors (Bililies, 2015; Venters, Green, & Lopez, 2012). Workplace leaders are impacted by these ever-increasing challenges, both professionally and personally.

Part of the ever-increasing challenges includes leaders being often held to different and higher standards particularly in regard to time demands, in part related to the changing work environment and ubiquitous technology. This has never been more apparent than in the recent COVID-19 protocols and guidelines requiring companies and institutions to change the way employees work. In modern industry and institutions, leaders may feel they need to work more hours, be more present, and be readily available (Cameron & Webster, 2005; Sindwani, 2019). Ever-expanding and changing expectations can cause stress, burnout, and physical and emotional exhaustion (Fontinha, Easton, & Van Laar, 2019; Harper, 2000; Munck, 2001; World Economic Forum [WEF], 2020). For employees and leaders, the changing work environment and ubiquitous technology tools have added additional work-related stress from information overload, chaos, and ambiguity (Bililies, 2015). The more uncertain and chaotic the situation or environment, the harder it is for people to successfully navigate. Complex
and ambiguous environments result in inaction or difficulty visualizing and articulating focused decisions (G. W. Casey, 2014).

The complexity of the world today is leaving leaders exhausted and disconcerted, leading to stress, physical and emotional burnout, and even illness (Brunet, n.d.; Fontinha et al., 2019; Harper, 2000). The impact goes beyond the individual leader because employee work performance, ability to innovate, and company culture are also influenced by leaders’ actions and behaviors. According to Groysberg, Lee, Price, and Cheng (2018), culture and leadership are linked, and the work environment is impacted by leaders’ actions, whether conscious or unconscious. The culture styles include areas of performance on results with focus on achievement and innovation through learning culture, encompassing exploration and creativity, and emphasizing innovation (Groysberg et al., 2018). Diebig, Poethke, and Rowold’s (2017) research showed that leader strain negatively impacts the quality of leadership and the ability for leaders to engage in transformational leadership. Their study added that leader strain both reduces leaders’ “cognitive resource capacity” and their ability to maintain perspective and have “cooperative interactions” (Diebig et al., 2017, p. 332). There are a growing number of studies related to balance in leadership or grounded leadership: the impact of imbalance, different balancing practices, and the way leaders can use their strengths to navigate and sustain leadership roles and responsibilities (Christy, 2009; Reid & Ramarajan, 2016). Managers who maintain their own health awareness reduce not only their own stress and exhaustion but also their employees’ stress and exhaustion, which positively impacts the health awareness of employees (Franke, Felfe, & Pundt, 2014; Gurt, Schwennen, & Elke, 2011; Kranabettter & Niessen, 2017).
In this complex world, there is an increasing recognition that women in leadership roles often experience more stress than their male counterparts (Wallace, 2015). According to Wallace (2015), at the 2015 Simmons Leadership Conference in Boston, a conference to promote women leaders, speakers noted that despite recent advances in equality in the workplace, women experience much more stress than men. The observation was largely anecdotal, yet the annual survey, Stress in America, from the American Psychological Association (APA) reinforced the conclusion (Wallace, 2015). However, the data on women leaders and stress are not extensive and sometimes contradicting.

A 2017 survey evaluating institutes of higher education in the United States showed less than 30% of the positions of president were held by women (Bartel, 2018). However, specifically in the California Community Colleges system, which is the largest community college system in America, women represented a higher number in the presidential role but still less than 40% (Yearout, Williams, & Brenner, 2017). With the need for more qualified leaders to lead in a time of uncertainty, Rosen’s (2014) grounded leader approach may help sustain California community college leadership as well as support more balanced, holistically healthy women leaders to flourish. Growing leader turnover creates instability for the institution, the region, and the larger state system (Community College League of California [CCLC], 2020b). The CCLC (2020b) reported that 42% of California community college CEOs are women, but interims are included in the data. The common term of CEO in higher education includes college presidents, superintendent presidents, and chancellors.
Background

APA research reveals some types of changes at work cause higher employee stress: organizational restructuring, budgetary process changes, information technology, human resources systems, and leadership changes (Brooks, 2017). Brooks (2017) stated that leadership and organizational changes cause employees higher stress, which also results in less trust in the organization and the leadership, and employees become much more likely to look for a different job causing even more organizational instability.

Communication technology is so ingrained into work and so impacts employees that researchers have coined new terms to describe it: technostress (Stich, Tarafdar, & Cooper, 2018) and always on culture (Barley, Meyerson, & Grodal, 2011; McGlynn, 2018). Changes in complex technologies and electronic communication and increased work expectations make employees feel the workweek is now 24/7, creating an always on work environment (Quinones, 2016). Work is now everywhere and anywhere, making work mobile, constant, and inescapable (Davis, 2014; Fairbank, 2000; Grossman, 2015; Hemp, 2009; Quinones, 2016; Stich et al., 2018; Tarafdar, Tu, & Ragu-Nathan, 2010). Researchers have suggested that additional stress comes from technology overload and interruptions (S. Casey, 2015; Stich et al., 2018), the intensity of workload (Brunet, n.d.; Wilkie, 2020), and cultural impact in values and standards (Brunet, n.d.).

Stress impacts all people of all ages, genders, and job categories. However, some people suffer more than others from the stress in the workplace. The level of impact depends on professional, psychosocial, and personal health background or the overall ability to remain grounded in the face of these stressors (Brunet, n.d.). In a work-related absenteeism, stress correlative study by Harper (2000), occupational stress and stress-
related illnesses have increased because of time pressure, rapidly changing technology, and increased competition. Harper added that stress-related absenteeism is reduced by more specific factors such as exercise, social support, and emotional health. However, the impact on stress in the workplace continues to be high as stress and anxiety cause burnout, depression, low performance, and work absenteeism (Brunet, n.d.). In fact, stress, depression, and anxiety are cited as the second most common reason for absenteeism (Harper, 2000) below musculoskeletal conditions. The far-reaching and pervasive nature of stress cannot be ignored.

Increasing workload, unrealistic expectations, and increased hours are in the top five work stressors (Wilkie, 2020). Research consistently shows that Americans are increasingly connecting to work outside of the office and outside of work hours. Americans deal with work-related communication after work, on the weekend, during holidays, and even on sick days (APA, 2021).

As technology makes employees more accessible and allows them to work from any location, the expectation of instantaneous responses increases. Constant work expectations and pressure impact all areas of life and result in employees with higher stress levels and burnout (Sindwani, 2019). This results in prioritizing work ahead of personal needs, including family and health (Cerullo, 2019; Reid & Ramarajan, 2016).

Technology has exacerbated many other challenges such as constant disruptions, an expected immediate response, and innovation demands of companies and leaders (Wajcman & Rose, 2011). As the face of the company or department, leaders contend with with expectations to be always on and under constant public scrutiny that can potentially lead to becoming targets from opinions and reactions inside and outside the
company, often in the form of social media (Gruber, Smerek, Thomas-Hunt, & James, 2015; Maslin-Ostrowski, Floyd, & Hrabak, 2010; Rosen, 2017). Rosen (2014) described workplace leadership challenges as the “winds of change” (p. 12), which come from all directions, both personally and professionally. Technology may require more immediate reactions and expectations in dealing with all changes, yet each organization has its own business-specific winds of change whipping through its company as well (Rosen, 2014).

Technology is not the only challenge for modern leaders. Other challenges leaders face include the need to respond to the unexpected, which can impact their field and workplace. At the start of 2020, the world was impacted with the COVID 19 virus. Global responses to COVID-19 began in March 2020, and quickly and unexpectedly impacted business and other institutions. In a survey for Harvard Business School, 600 leaders surveyed indicated that a major concern was how to “position their company to survive, or even thrive, during the pandemic and in the ‘new normal’ that follows” (Groysberg & Connelly-Baden, 2020, para. 1). The pervasive stay-at-home orders caused companies to instigate remote work environments for employees, which resulted in concerns for mental wellness and social isolation. Leadership themes that are a focus during and post COVID changes include valuing employees, being open-minded and adaptable, remembering the core mission, and acting as a role model (Quilici, 2020).

**Higher Education Institutions and California Community Colleges**

Businesses are not the only institutions experiencing winds of change and stressors impacting employees and leaders. The California Community Colleges system is the largest college system in the United States and faces a future “full of change and uncertainty” (Tarker, 2019, p. 673). In higher education institutions, the leadership
expectations have changed in some ways matching companies regarding areas such as higher degree of accountability (R. Jenkins, 2017), changing state funding models (Tarker, 2019), and additional legislation layers of expectation. Not only is the California Community Colleges the largest 2-year system in the United States (Gordon, 2016), but it also has experienced a blizzard of legislative and chancellor-based changes in the past decades that add to the already chaotic winds of change (R. Jenkins, 2017; LeBlanc, 2018; Smith, 2018; Tarker, 2019).

By 1960, junior college enrollment consisted of 58% of all higher education enrollments in California (Winter, 1964). Through the 1960 adoption of the Master Plan for education in California, junior colleges were combined into one system with a chancellor and board of governors. The core mission of California Community Colleges is to serve students in preparation for transfer or employment at skilled careers. As of 2019, over 2 million students were attending the 116 colleges in the California Community Colleges system (California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office [CCCCO], 2019). Of these students, 50% are minority students (Sengupta & Jepsen, 2006). According to a 2017 Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) report, California community colleges are a path for students of low income to complete lower-level college requirements at lower cost than 4-year institutions. California ranks fifth in the nation of high school students who enroll in community colleges. College access not only is an advantage to the individual student but also benefits the “the state as a whole” (PPIC, 2017, p. 1).

With so many students dependent upon the California Community Colleges’ core mission, the system has been scrutinized when success data such as retention, persistence,
degrees, certificates, and transfer dropped (Shaw, Rice, & Wada, 2018). In response, the system adopted numerous initiatives to improve student success, helping more students gain their goals and reach matriculation more efficiently. The most recent and far-reaching initiatives include requirements for funding such as the new outcomes-based funding formula, Guided Pathways, for students’ success and equity, and AB 705, eliminating mandated basic skills preparation (Buckley, 2018; California Department of Finance, 2019; D. Jenkins, Lahr, Fink, & Ganga, 2018; Shaw et al., 2018).

The number of legislative and funding changes in the past 20 years for community colleges include initiatives that increase accountability and operating requirements, often with little to no state or federal guidance. Some of the initiatives include Guided Pathways, California Promise, and more recently, new Outcomes-Based funding formula, which will impact all California community colleges funding and budget (Boggs & McPhail, 2016; CCCCO, 2018; California Department of Finance, 2019). Community college leaders are under more strain and oversight than ever before, not to mention the addition of social media and instantaneous communication, which can have a positive or a negative impact (Gruber et al., 2015; Smith, 2016). These factors contribute to decreasing tenure of community college presidents across the United States and specifically, in California (Boggs & McPhail, 2016; CCLC, 2020b; Navarette, 2018). In 2016, the Center for Community College Leadership and Research survey determined the average tenure was 3.5 years for California community colleges CEOs, which includes college presidents and district chancellors (Gordon, 2016). According to the American College President Study 2017, college presidents’ tenures average 7 years with community colleges slightly lower at 6.5 years; however, this study included interim
presidents (Gagliardi, Espinosa, Turk, & Taylor, 2017). In California community colleges, CEOs’ length of tenure is lower than the national average with a 5.1-year tenure over the last decade, excluding interims (CCLC, 2012, 2014, 2020b). Not only are the number of position transitions increasing each year but also the number of prepared leaders ready (or willing) to step in are fewer, creating a scarcity of presidential applicants for community college presidents nationwide (Aspen Institute, 2020; Chen, 2020).

**Theoretical Foundations**

In a changing global reality, as people and organizations struggle to adapt to a changing marketplace further impacted by COVID public health mandates and guidelines, anxiety, stress, and uncertainty will undoubtedly increase. Self-care and concerns over mental health have increased in the work environment as COVID concerns rise (World Health Organization [WHO], 2020). Prior to investigating Rosen’s (2014) framework, three foundational theories were explored: role theory, social cognitive theory, and wellness theory.

**Leadership**

Transformational leadership was first coined James MacGregor Burns in 1978. As a theory transformational leadership is a process in which “leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality” (Burns, 1978, p. 20). Since then, transformational leadership has become explored by researchers (Bass & Bass, 2009; Bass & Stogdill, 1990; Macit, 2003; McCleskey, 2014). Researchers have labelled transformational leadership into four parts: idealized influence, inspirational motivation,

**Role Theory**

Jacob Levy Moreno (1889–1974) and George Mead (1863–1931) were seminal theorists in role theory. Role theory was formed by Mead’s (1934) initial socialization and learning concepts of these roles as to how one becomes a social being. The theory was refined through Moreno and Moreno’s (1944) method of psychodrama of role-playing of other actors’ roles in a person’s life and the interaction of the person and the social environment. At its core, role theory explores people and the roles they take on in relationships and the environment in which they exist. Within each of their roles, people exhibit a combination of both the “individual and social components” (Jakovina & Jakovina, 2017, p. 151) as individual and roles are created by past experiences and cultural patterns. The roles are often compared to actual roles in plays to better understand the dynamics. Moreno and Moreno’s (1944) theory was described in part as actors who “memorized their parts in a play” (Jakovina & Jakovina, 2017, p. 156), yet roles are both the psychology of the individuals and their social experiences. By observing and taking on roles, people understand and determine expectations based on past experiences and observations. One cultural role people assign themselves is a gender role. Therefore, a gender role becomes a social and internal perspective (Jakovina & Jakovina, 2017).

**Social Cognitive Theory**

Albert Bandura was given credit for social cognitive theory (SCT) though he initially referred to it as social learning theory (Boston University School of Public
Health, 2019). SCT presents, at its foundation, that people learn behaviors by observing them. Bandura (1977) stated, “Learning would be exceedingly laborious, not to mention hazardous, if people had to rely solely on the effects of their own actions to inform them what to do” (p. 22). McLeod (2014) described Bandura’s 1961 study, which supported his understanding of learning as relying on more than intended actions. In the seminal study by Bandura (1977), a group of children observed different adults interacting with Bobo the clown doll. Some children observed adults playing nice and some observed the adults beating at the doll. The children were more likely to replicate the behavior they observed. In some cases, the results were higher if a male child observed a male adult. -

Later, Bandura (1977) explained in his book more details on the social learning theory, including the relevance of reward and avoidance as part of longer term observed learning “knowing that a given’s model behavior is effective in producing valued rewards or averting negative consequences” (p. 37). Bandura noted that these factors strengthen learning retention.

SCT aligns with Rosen’s (2014) grounded leader theory in the areas of desired actions and self-reward. If leaders observe effective practices in different areas, they are more likely to strive to repeat them. Using SCT with Rosen’s grounded leader theory and six areas would mean observing modeled effective practices in each of the areas, especially when reward or avoidance of negativity results in how one can become grounded. Although Bandura’s (1977) studies were with children, other studies have applied his theory to young adults and their impact from their environment interactions with smart fitness technology (Gowin et al., 2019). Studies of employees by Tu and Lu (2016) examined the work environment and employee reactions when leaders exhibited
ethical behavior. Tu and Lu saw employee intrinsic motivation because of observing the ethical actions by the leader. The intrinsic motivation created a role with behaviors and positive self-efficacy (Tu & Lu, 2016). So employees who repeatedly observed and connected positive responses in one area could replicate them possibly throughout their life.

**Wellness Theory**

Wellness theory is not simply the absence of disease but a holistic multidimensional wellness. Sixty years ago, Halbert L. Dunn (1959), in his article “High-Level Wellness for Man and Society,” discussed wellness theory as a holistic view of the whole human. H. Dunn described some obstacles to health as global problems disturbingly similar to current world concerns: a shrinking world, a crowded world, an aging population, and global tensions. Although different wellness definitions vary, there are six most common elements in wellness theory to reach holistic wellness: emotional, occupational, physical, social, intellectual, and spiritual (Hettler, 1976; Rosen 2014). Although some researchers include additional areas such as environmental and financial health, overall, the six elements are at the core of wellness theory. Rosen (2014) mirrored many of the same elements in his six areas of health, indicating the holistic view of a person cannot be limited to one area of health. Consequently, there is interconnectedness between the individual and other people and the individual’s work life and personal life, and this interconnectedness was examined in Rosen’s (2014) grounded leader approach.
**Theoretical Framework**

Rosen’s (2014) grounded approach to leadership includes six separate areas: physical, emotional, intellectual, social, vocational, and spiritual. Rosen’s theoretical framework has been applied to businesses and CEOs in corporate and nonprofit organizations. Presidents at higher education institutions are struggling with a world that is becoming increasingly volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA; G. W. Casey, 2014; LeBlanc, 2018; Sarkar, 2016). Applying Rosen’s (2014) six areas of health of how leaders stay grounded to college presidents will address a growing need in leadership, particularly for the development and advancement of women leaders in higher education.

**Physical**

Physical health is Rosen’s (2014) first root of being grounded. Rosen defined physical health and its importance to becoming a grounded effective leader as “paying attention to your body; it needs constant care and maintenance” (p. 38). Leaders with physical strength are in touch with their bodies. Rosen expounded further that a leader’s physical well-being provides the leader with more stamina and energy to deal with stress, work environment challenges, long hours, and the fast pace of change in the workplace.

Leaders often have heavy workloads, time pressures, and personal and professional role conflicts (Köppe & Schütz, 2019). Yet the health of the leaders impacts the organization and employees (Franke et al., 2014). Researchers termed health-oriented leadership as a leadership strategy that “focuses on leaders’ self-directed health-promoting behavior” (Köppe & Schütz, 2019, p. 1).
Emotional

According to Rosen (2014), emotional health enables leaders to see their own strengths and weaknesses. Emotional health and the term *emotional intelligence*, coined by Salovey and Mayer (1990), is a component of healthy leadership. Emotional health allows leaders to be comfortable asking difficult questions. According to Aguilar (2018), emotional intelligence (EI) includes strategies to respond to frustration or sense of failure. Emotional health creates confidence that Rosen (2014) cited as a “quality essential to coping with uncertainty in the impermanence of life” (p. 28). Leaders with EI are self-aware and able to recognize and manage their own emotions and the emotions of those around them (Aguilar, 2018; Goleman, 1995, 2011; Mukta, 2017). EI also relates to self-efficacy and active methods for dealing with stress (Wang, Xie, & Cui, 2016).

Intellectual

According to van Rensburg, Surujlal, and Dhurup (2011), intellectual wellness involves retaining knowledge, thinking critically about issues, making sound decisions, and finding solutions to problems. Intellectual wellness or health is a discovery of talents and “thought-provoking activities to enhance one’s mental capabilities and flourish one’s own personality” (Naz, Rehman, Katpar, & Hussain, 2014, p. 993). Individuals with intellectual wellness are more likely to adapt to changing conditions, use resources and skills better (van Rensburg et al., 2011), and explore critical and creative thinking and problem-solving (Naz et al., 2014). In addition, according to Rosen (2014), leaders with strong intellectual health can accept contradictory and paradoxical ideas and have a deep and wide curiosity. This gives them mental clarity to “innovate faster and meet the demands of complex marketplace and workplace” (Rosen, 2014, p. 29). Misztal (2019)
postulated that modern intellectualism and intellectual health include strategic curiosity, an “articulation of realistic utopian images, and visions of a common future” (p. 108).

Social

Social health gives confidence to leaders so they can be themselves in their relationships remaining authentic and true to themselves as they create meaningful relationships with others (Rosen, 2014). Social health engenders empathy and compassion for building mutually rewarding relationships and being part of teams and communities in the workplace (Goleman, 2006; Goleman & Boyatzis, 2008). Monnier (2015) and Van Oosten, McBride-Walker, and Taylor (2019) linked emotional and social competence together. Monnier (2015) cited these as “two prototypical concepts” (p. 59), which are critical to contributors’ successful interactions with others. Van Oosten et al. (2019) stated that through the lens of executive coaching, connections are made with EI of self and social awareness that “understand the resulting implications of their aspirations and actions on others that surround them” (p. 3). Parry (1998) noted in early research that leadership was a “process of social influence, especially in contexts of rapid organizational change” (p. 90).

Vocational

Hutchins (1969) hypothesized that a society focused on continual learning understands more, can better adapt to the world and the work, and be involved in the world evolving around them. Rosen (2014) described vocational health in leaders as the ability to harness their energy, motivation, skill, and drive toward their goals, which are related to finding and discovering one’s personal calling. Senge (2006) used the term “personal mastery” (p. 12), adding that leaders may wish to see personal mastery
applicable to all within an organization. As organizations require teams, “team learning” (Senge, 2006, p. 10) requires individual members in an organization not only to grow as well but also to group think beyond the individual perspective to healthy organizations. Senge saw a leader’s serious journey toward personal mastery as integral to incentivizing individuals in an organization to reach for their own personal mastery. Musson (2003) summarized that a person’s vocation selection and personality are often related: “Through a process involving initial vocational attraction, pre-requisite achievement, academic achievement, and selection, professional groups are characterized by a distinct profile of personality traits in comparison with other groups and the general population.” (p. 36). Leadership is a specific role in which vocational health and “achievement-related traits” (Musson, 2003, p. 36) are common to leaders who are well-grounded.

**Spiritual**

Leaders with spiritual health recognize that a higher purpose is more meaningful than their individual needs. Dehler and Welsh (1994) noted that the sense of spirituality is “internalized as a form of intrinsic motivation” (p. 21) and critical to creating shared meaning. Rosen (2014) described spiritual health as the characteristics that allow leaders to think beyond themselves and experience gratitude and generosity and “share with diverse groups of people from different cultures” (p. 30). According to Rosen, spiritual health is the way people connect to the world and others, desire to better other people’s lives and environment, and avoid selfish personal agendas. Covey (2013) referred to the result of spiritual peace or health in which people “think cooperatively, to promote the welfare and good of other people, and to be genuinely happy for other people’s successes” (p. 306). Spiritual well-being is the term used by Chirico (2016) who stated
that spirituality is not only the “core of a person” (p. 14), but spirituality is also “particularly helpful in times of chaos, struggle, and distress” (p. 14). Oates, Hall, and Anderson (2005) connected spirituality and coping with tension as spirituality in the context of the study: “Intrinsic faith or a personal, internalized, religious belief system has been repeatedly linked to psychological well-being through its problem-solving and integrative properties” (p. 211).

**Presidents and Their Challenges**

The American Council on Education (ACE, 2007) has conducted the *American College President Study* for over 30 years. According to the *American College President Study 2017*, the average American college or university president is age 61.7 years, has a doctoral degree, and is most likely a White male (Gagliardi et al., 2017). Although the report shows improvement in diversification, the tenure length is decreasing while the age of presidents is increasing. Ethnic diversification has improved but at a slower pace than gender diversification. In 2017, 83% of all college presidents were White while 30% of all college presidents were women (Gagliardi et al., 2017). Community college presidents tend to be more diverse but are still predominantly male and White. The CCLC (2020b) reported that 42% of California community college CEOs are women, including interims, and 58.5% of California community college presidents are White. However, in the California Community Colleges system, the length of tenure for a president is lower than the national average with a 5.1-year tenure over the last decade, excluding interims (CCLC, 2012, 2014, 2020b).

In addition to demographics, recognizing the changing role of the presidency helps one better understand concerns and some reasons for shorter president tenures.
New policies, accountability, and legislation result in more stress and challenges for college presidents (Boggs & McPhail, 2016). These changes in community colleges mean more expectations of a president’s role and skills. In addition to standard college competencies, college presidents need other less quantifiable skills: fundraising, emotional intelligence, systematic thinking, ability to gather support, and knowledge on technological changes and issues (ACE, 2007; Buckley, 2018; Gagliardi, 2017; McNaughtan, 2018). Technology issues for colleges include a growing need for cybersecurity (Boggs & McPhail, 2016), demand for data-driven decisions, and management and use of social media regarding communication and impact on reputation.

In addition, a college president also needs to be a good “fit” for the college vision and organization (Higher Ed Jobs, 2020). The most important relationship a superintendent president needs to build is with the college board. In addition, the president needs to navigate changing internal board politics. Buckley (2018) noted that superintendent presidents who directly report to a board felt that the board–president relationship could be a “source of stability” (p. 34), yet publicly elected boards such as California community college boards are “less likely to be supportive” (p. 34) of the president. According to Buckley, board turnover often results in presidential turnover. McNaughtan’s (2018) research found that the most common reason for leaving a presidential position was “conflict with institutional boards and other leaders” (p. 521).

**Gender Gap in Research on Female Leaders and Grounded Leadership**

Although there is significant research on the gender gap and much on the pipeline and college cultures, Rosen’s (2014) framework regarding the roots of healthy grounded leaders has neither been applied in higher education nor focused on women. As personal
barriers and expectations still cause tensions in the workplace, life imbalance and impediments for women (June, 2015; Yearout et al., 2017; Young, 2018) continue to be factors hindering women from searching out promotional opportunities. For working mothers, the workload at home does not decrease when the career workload increases (Fedrizzi-Williams, 2016; Mason, Goulden, & Wolfinger, 2013; Oates et al., 2005; Rhoads & Rhoads, 2012).

Therefore, being grounded is perhaps more relevant for women in higher education leadership. So how do women in higher level positions stay grounded? Because personal responsibilities often fall to women, remaining grounded is more central for women. The impact and concerns weigh more on women because balancing personal and professional life is one of the three top factors that influence an individual’s desire or willingness to take on more leadership (Nakitende, 2012; Barsh, Cranston, & Craske, 2008).

All six areas or roots of health from Rosen (2014) showed a wide awareness of personal and professional balance as well as managing ideas and people. The leaders who embody Rosen’s areas of health manage to keep solid footing in challenging times of leadership. Self-stability is essential in higher education, especially community colleges. In addition, women often navigate additional expectations and their own and others’ perceptions of family gender roles (Fedrizzi-Williams, 2016; Marshall, 2009; Oates et al., 2005; Rhoads & Rhoads, 2012). Therefore, female presidents of colleges often experience more diverse challenges than their male counterparts in remaining grounded.
Gender and Higher Education Leadership

The ranks of college presidents are still filled predominately with men, but the differences are decreasing. Of all U.S. higher education institutions, in 1986, only 9% had female presidents, and in 2002, 19% had female presidents (Parker, 2015). As of 2016, 30% of all higher education institution presidents were women (Oikelome, 2017). In the community colleges systems, women have historically represented a higher percentage of administration. In community colleges in 1985, 16% of presidents were women, and in 1994, 27% were women (Parker, 2015). In 2011, 56% of administrators and management were women (Janiak, 2018; Yearout et al., 2017), but only 36% of presidents at the community college were women (Yearout et al., 2017). Although the number of women in these roles has been growing, with the increasing demand for leaders, recognizing why leaders are not stepping up or feeling prepared to take on presidential roles is important to help improve the pipeline and succession for the presidency at community colleges.

Many researchers have explored why women are still lagging behind men in the role of college president, and the reasons vary. Some major reasons include lack of family support or personal or family demands (Behr & Schneider, 2015; Fedrizzi-Williams, 2016; Janiak, 2018; Venzant-Sampson, 2017), lack of mentoring or role models (Fedrizzi-Williams, 2016; Janiak, 2018; Venzant-Sampson, 2017; Ward & Eddy, 2013; Young, 2018), and difficulty in breaking through the glass ceiling or “boys” club (Fedrizzi-Williams, 2016; Venzant-Sampson, 2017; Yearout, 2015). Other research has concluded that the work of the president was not appealing, pathways to presidency were
more geared for men, or women did not see themselves in the role (Behr & Schneider, 2015; Ward & Eddy, 2013).

The traditional pipeline to higher education president positions start as a graduate, to tenured professors, to managers such as deans, to higher cabinet level, and then to president (Delabbio, 2006). According to Fedrizzi-Williams (2016), by 1990 women were graduating with bachelor’s degrees at a much higher rate than men, and this rate continued to climb until 2015 when more women earned degrees than men by over 200,000. However, women who are tenured with at least one child are at 49% while men are at 70% (Fedrizzi-Williams, 2016). According to Behr and Schneider (2015), women middle managers continue to have more family expectations that impact their career than their male counterparts because fewer women in midlevels of administration are married (78%) or have children under the age of 18 (71%) compared to married men (94%) with children under the age of 18 (88%). At the president level, 32% of women reported they had altered their career progress to care for family compared to men at 16% (Bartel, 2018).

Additional factors seem to be at play because another notable difference for middle managers in the pipeline was that 73% of women responded they had not sought out their first administrative position compared to 57% of male respondents (Behr & Schneider, 2015). In the next step of the pipeline, other studies have supported that visualization was an obstacle (Fedrizzi-Williams, 2016; Janiak, 2018; Parker, 2015; Yearout et al., 2017). Female deans were less likely to see a college president role in their future. Female deans were only 13% likely to visualize themselves as college presidents or superintendents compared to 30% of men in the same position (Behr &
Schneider, 2015), and only 35% of women in leadership roles at higher education institutions wanted or planned to seek a presidency (Yearout et al., 2017). According to Helgesen and Goldsmith (2018), men are more focused on higher positions and salary, but women focus more on the experience of work. Researchers have indicated several reasons for career and gender disparity. However, many researchers find that women are held back by cultural and family responsibilities, not receiving mentoring or role models, and they do not see themselves in higher positions without someone’s recommendation or input (Behr & Schneider, 2015; Fedrizzi-Williams, 2016; Janiak, 2018; Parker, 2015).

**Statement of the Research Problem**

Community colleges are the doorway to higher education and career options with over 70% of students who are in higher education having attended a community college at some point (Sengupta & Jepson, 2006). While community colleges are facing tremendous challenges and change, leadership of community colleges is facing increasing leadership instability. According to a recent report from the Aspen Institute and Achieving the Dream, of the current community college presidents, a large percentage are planning on retiring from their positions in the next 5 years (Chen, 2020). Another concern is that fewer qualified candidates are ready to take over and lead higher educational institutions (Aspen Institute, 2017, 2020; CCLC, 2002; McNair, 2009). The increasing demand for and decreasing supply of college presidents is causing concern and uncertainty of the future of the leadership within the community college system (Chen, 2020). In 2015, the turnover rate of U.S. community college presidents was 269 positions, which is almost 25% of all U.S. community colleges (Smith, 2016). In California, the tenure and turnover rate is worse as surveys indicated that the community
college CEO average tenure was 3.5, and 52% of respondents expected to leave the position in 3 years or less and 25% in less than a year (Gordon, 2016).

In the next 5 years, a significant number of community college presidents plan to transition out of their current roles by retirement or some other career move (Chen, 2020; Smith, 2016). Although this creates a problem of leadership consistency, another problem identified is the narrowing incoming pipeline of qualified candidates (Chen, 2020; Smith, 2016). Instability in the position of college president is increasing due to additional requirements of leaders and community colleges as well as conflict with trustees, which add additional difficulties in maintaining a sense of consistency for the institution (McGlynn, 2018; McNaughtan, 2018).

The American College President Study 2017 by ACE provides a comprehensive report and perspective on the state and demographics of the U.S. college presidency (Gagliardi et al., 2017). According to the study, the number of women in the role of college presidency has nearly tripled in the past 35 years; however, despite the continuing growth, women are still significantly underrepresented (Gagliardi et al., 2017). In addition, according to leadership surveys, concerns regarding work–life balance and lack of role models or mentorship to help women visualize themselves as a president are two reasons women choose to not pursue a higher leadership role in community colleges (Yearout et al., 2017). As women continue to struggle with role demands, expectations, and perceptions of role expectations, both internal and external, there will continue to be obstacles regarding opportunities for women in higher leadership roles.

Studies in the field of grounded systems of leadership include Rosen (2014), Rath and Harter (2010), and Barsh and Lavoie (2014). Rosen (2014) studied leaders in
business using his grounded leadership framework; Rath and Harter (2010) studied predominately business leaders; Barsh and Lavoie (2014) studied successful women, predominately in business. Research has found that leaders who are grounded in the different areas of physical, emotional, and spiritual health were more likely to avoid burnout and were more effective leaders (Barsh & Lavoie, 2014; Rath & Harter, 2010; Rosen, 2014). Yet applying systems of being grounded have not been applied to higher education presidents, specifically women presidents of California community colleges.

During the last decades, the roles and responsibilities of community college presidents have become more complex and more stressful, causing a shorter time in the position (McNaughtan, 2016). In Mattson’s (2012) study on stress in leaders of California community colleges, chancellors and presidents increasingly left their positions under fire because of more pressure and stress than in the past. The CEOs at California community colleges have unique stressors as one administrator stated, “Stress from boards and unions produce atypical stress that is not in any other position” (Mattson 2012, p. 55). However, grounded leaders are more likely to be resilient in the face of stress (Rosen, 2014). In Mattson’s (2012) findings, the top coping mechanisms for California community college CEOs to deal with stress included talking with others, purposeful relaxing, physical activity, and praying or mediating. These strategies align with four of Rosen’s (2014) six grounded health areas: emotional, social, physical, and spiritual. Also, Barsh et al. (2008) described how successful women leaders use centered leadership, which includes four of Rosen’s (2014) six grounded areas of health: physical, intellectual, emotional, and spiritual.
The stress and challenges discussed in the previous paragraphs are constraining the number of community college candidates, particularly women. The U.S. Department of Labor (2009) stated that the increased responsibilities and job stress have discouraged faculty from career advancement in administration. Prospective candidates in the higher education pipeline do not see that the position and pay increase of administration is worth the “additional work hours and level of responsibility required of someone in a leadership position” (Mattson, 2012, p. 3). Community colleges expected administrative vacancies are not being met by faculty or managers due to perceived stress in these roles (Mattson, 2012). In addition to the concerns of stress, women in leadership also tend to have more unique stressors than their male counterparts (Gagliardi et al., 2017; Wallace, 2015). Often women choose not to take on higher leadership roles because of gender role stress and conflicts (Maume, 2006; Rhoads & Rhoads, 2012; Yearout et al., 2017). Gender expectations and expectations in higher leadership roles, such as the college president, result in additional barriers (Oikelome, 2017).

Finding strategies to retain California community college presidents and providing sufficient access for more qualified candidates are important topics as leadership changes and demands continue to impact leadership turnover. Strategies such as those found in this study have the potential to encourage and support more women in becoming community college presidents. By studying exemplary female presidents at California community colleges, this study sought to show female leaders the path to a grounded, balanced healthy leadership as a female community college president.
Purpose Statement

The purpose of this explanatory mixed methods study was to identify and describe what exemplary female presidents in California community colleges do to stay grounded and maintain physical, emotional, intellectual, social, vocational, and spiritual health.

Research Questions

1. How do exemplary female presidents in California community colleges rate themselves on the Stay Grounded survey in the six areas of balance (physical, emotional, intellectual, social, vocational, and spiritual health)?

2. What strategies do exemplary female presidents in California community colleges use to develop and maintain grounded leadership in the six areas of balance (physical, emotional, intellectual, social, vocational, and spiritual health)?

Significance of the Problem

Many colleges are experiencing higher turnover of presidents, which causes institutional instability during presidential transitions. This transitional instability impacts the organization’s ability to make long-term plans, which results in less staff trust in the organization (Brooks, 2017) and disrupts operational and budgeting planning (Navarette, 2018). Reducing leadership turnover improves the stability of an institution (Freeland, 2001; Gordon, 2016; McGlynn, 2018).

In the recent CCLC (2020b) report, the average tenure of college CEOs (chancellor, superintendent president, and college president) excluding interims is 5.1 years. In the fall of 2020, 16 California community college presidents were interim, which is 13% of all college presidents (Appendix A). The report showed that chancellors have a longer tenure than presidents in a multicolinege district but shorter or the same as
superintendent presidents of single college districts (CCLC, 2020b). As the time in the presidential position decreases, retaining and filling community college presidential positions are requiring better recruitment, raised salaries, and better preparation (Ashburn, 2007; McNair, 2014). In 2005, the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) determined six competencies required of presidents: organizational strategy, resource management, communication, collaboration, community college advocacy, and professionalism (McNair, Duree, & Ebbers, 2011). In a study by R. Jenkins (2017), Lynn Gangone, ACE vice president for leadership programs, explained that the position of president at colleges and universities is becoming more multifaceted than in the past. More than 50% of community college presidents have indicated plans to retire in the next 5 years (Young, 2018).

The higher turnover is due in part to increased burnout rate and fewer applicants in the pipeline who are qualified and ready to take over as college presidents (Gordon, 2016; McDonald, 2012, Smith, 2016). In 1991, females represented 11% of community college presidents; in 1996, the percentage increased to 18%; in 2016, 30% of U.S. college presidents were women while 36% of California community college presidents were women (Seltzer, 2017). Opening the pathway to the presidency for more women with grounded healthy leadership may be one way to increase the pipeline to the presidency and to retain college presidents for longer tenure. Studies have shown that leaders who are more grounded and balanced are more likely to handle stress on the job better than others who are not (Barsh et al., 2008; Barsh & Lavoie, 2014; Rath & Harter, 2010; Rosen, 2014). Strong connection and strategies for physical, emotional, and social well-being as well as foundations in intellectual curiosity, vocational passion, and strong
sense of their own spirituality (Kim & Seidlitz, 2002) allow leaders to be more resilient than leaders without these areas of grounded health (Barsh et al., 2008; Barsh & Lavoie, 2014; Rath & Harter, 2010; Rosen, 2014).

Research on grounded leadership has shown that grounded leaders provide stability, resiliency, and insight during times of stress and uncertainty (Barsh & Lavoie, 2014). Resilient leaders can be a positive influence in the changing dynamics of the community college. Understanding the strategies and behaviors of successful grounded leaders allows other leaders to use them to remain grounded, healthy, and balanced. This is particularly relevant for female presidents as they are underrepresented as college presidents (Boggs & McPhail, 2016; CCLC, 2020a, 2020b; D. Jenkins et al., 2018). Women in leadership also tend to have more unique stressors than their male counterparts (Gagliardi et al., 2017; Wallace, 2015).

Leaders in community colleges and other institutions can use strategies to define and set boundaries in the workplace to help reduce burnout and turnover. Reducing turnover is important because a college president stabilizes an institution (Freeland, 2001; Gordon, 2016; McGlynn, 2018). The incorporation of grounded leadership strategies will also provide more effective leadership, impacting faculty, students, administrators, employers, the community, and the state as the community college provides innovative learning addressing 21st-century needs.
Definitions

Theoretical Definitions

**Chancellor.** Although titles vary, for this study, chancellor refers to the position above college president in a multicollege district who answers to the board of trustees. The California Community Colleges system has 23 multicollege districts (Appendix A).

**College president.** A college president is normally a president of a college in a multicollege system and answers directly to a chancellor. The California Community Colleges system has 65 colleges in multicollege districts (Appendix A).

**Superintendent president.** A president of a college from a single college district who answers directly to the board of trustees is usually referred to as superintendent president (S. Cooper, 2016). For this study, the term college president will include superintendent president. The California Community Colleges system has 50 single-college districts, not including Calbright, which does not have a listed district (Appendix A).

Operational Definitions

**Exemplary.** Exemplary is someone set apart from peers in a supreme manner, with suitable behavior, principles, or intentions that can be copied (Goodwin, Piazza, & Rozin, 2014).

**Grounded.** Grounded is a deep connection to the authentic self with “a sense of being fully embodied, whole, centered and balanced in ourselves and our relationships” (Daniels, 2005, p. 290). In this study, the roots of being grounded are in six dimensions of health: physical, emotional, intellectual, social, vocational, and spiritual (Rosen, 2014).
Physical. Physical health is an individual’s mind–body awareness to minimize fatigue, maximize energy management, build immunity, and maintain resilience to stress while sustaining a peak physical performance lifestyle (Donatelle & Ketcham, 2017; Rosen, 2014).

Emotional. Emotional health is the self-awareness and controlled response to life events that promotes resilience and self-assurance (Aguilar, 2018; Hattie, Myers, & Sweeney, 2004; Ulione, 1996; Wang et al., 2016).

Intellectual. Intellectual health is a deep curiosity to acquire new knowledge that stimulates learning, increases change adaptability, and builds mental agility to generate innovative solutions (Naz et al., 2014; Rosen, 2014; van Rensburg et al., 2011).

Social. Social health is the authentic relationships individuals have based on principles of fairness, trustworthiness, empathy, and communication that guide mutually rewarding interactions (Mcleroy, Gottlieb, & Heaney, 2002; Parry, 1998; Rosen, 2014).

Vocational. Vocational health is a leader’s career or calling, leading to personal satisfaction in work that is meaningful. It is the ambition that motivates a leader to search out more challenges and achievements in his or her field (Hutchins, 1969; Senge, 2006).

Spiritual. Spiritual health is the values of an individual’s innermost self that motivate action and inspires toward purposes that embody empathy and go beyond self. It is a commitment to one’s value system as a source of well-being, providing a profound sense of global connectedness (Chirico, 2016; Covey, 2013; Dehler & Welsh, 1994).
Delimitations

This study was delimited to a subject population of 16 exemplary female California community college presidents. Exemplary leaders for the study were defined as having at least four of the seven following criteria:

- evidence of successful development of grounded leadership skill (physical, emotional, intellectual, vocational, spiritual, and social);
- evidence of leading a successful organization or unit;
- a minimum of 5 years of experience in the field;
- articles, papers, or materials written, published, or presented at conferences or association meetings;
- recognition by their peers;
- membership in professional associations in their field; and
- participation in workshops and seminars in work/life balance.

Organization of the Study

This mixed methods study by peer researchers is organized into five chapters, references, and appendices. Chapter I provided a brief background about the changes in the workplace creating a volatile and uncertain environment and a focus on grounded leaders, specifically female community college presidents as exemplary grounded leaders using Rosen’s (2014) grounded framework and its six areas of health. Chapter II presents a comprehensive review of research and literature about theories of leadership, research on grounded leadership’s six areas of health, previous studies on community college struggles, women in higher education, strategies used by grounded leaders, and related theories through which to view this study. Chapter III describes the methodology and
research design used in this study to identify the sample population, to develop a valid process for collecting data, and to explain how gathered data were organized and analyzed. Chapter IV shares the results of the data collection process and analyzes data for trends in the research. Chapter V concludes with the study’s key findings, recommendations for further study, and implications for female presidents and grounded strategies.
CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Chapter II provides a literature review on research conducted in respect to grounded leadership. This literature review explores grounded leadership, its foundations, and the importance of staying grounded as a leader. It begins with the changes and impact of technology and the work environment. The chapter then discusses grounded leadership and the dimensions that make up the grounded leadership theoretical framework: physical, emotional, intellectual, social, vocational, and spiritual (Rosen, 2014). Additionally, the literature review explores the California Community Colleges system and the role of its leaders. Chapter II concludes with the history of community college presidents, their changing role and pressures of the position, and the role of females in leadership at the community colleges as well as the research gap and a short summary.

The Changing Work Environment

Leaders are often held to different standards and expectations regarding time demands. This stems from technology, changing work environment, and unexpected global and local events. Leaders may feel they need to work more hours, be more present, and be always available. These expectations often cause stress, burnout, and physical and emotional exhaustion (Fontinha et al., 2019; Harper, 2000; Munck, 2001). The standard 40-hour workweek is a thing of the past, even more so after the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 at the time of this writing. Technology has influenced the expectation of instantaneous communications for employees resulting in access to work 24/7 (Munck, 2001; Rubin, 2005). The COVID-19 pandemic protocols enforced on businesses and
institutions impacted operating and working hours and changed the work
environment and the way businesses perform and communicate.

Given the changing work scape, management and leaders have had to adapt.
APA research has indicated that certain changes at work cause higher employee stress
(Brooks, 2017). Workplace stress originates from a variety of sources and may be
difficult to isolate to simply one source. The stressors include organizational
restructuring and changes in budgetary process, information technology, human resources
systems, and leadership (Brooks, 2017). Brooks (2017) stated that the organizational
scale of the changes also causes higher stress, which results in employees having less
trust in the organization and leadership.

Communication technology is another stressor that impacts employees daily.
Researchers have coined a new term to describe the specific stress: technostress (Tarafdar
et al., 2010) and the always on culture (Barley et al., 2011; Davis, 2014; McGlynn, 2018).
Stress from technology expectations is pervasive across most work environments.
Additional researchers have supported that other work stress stems from technology
overload and interruptions in workflow (Stich et al., 2018), the intensity of workload
(Wilkie, 2020), and the cultural changes in values and standards and their impact (Brunet,
n.d.).

Stress impacts people of all ages, genders, and job categories. However, some
people suffer more from stress in the workplace than others. The level of impact depends
on professional, psychosocial, and personal health background as well as people’s overall
ability to remain grounded when faced with stressors (Brunet, n.d.).
According to Harper (2000), occupational stress and stress-related illnesses have increased because of “increased time pressure, rapidly changing technology, and increased market competition” (p. 18). Stress and anxiety cause burnout, depression, lower performance, and work absenteeism (Brunet, n.d.). Stress, depression, and anxiety are cited as the second most common reason for absenteeism, second only to musculoskeletal conditions (Harper, 2000). The far-reaching effects of stress cannot be ignored. Fortunately, grounded self-care can reduce the effects; as Harper (2000) noted, regular exercise, social support, emotional health, and adequate mental health treatment reduces stress-related absenteeism.

**Technology**

Technology is one inescapable factor affecting stress in the workplace. Technology is a component of almost every job, and the changes in technology and the rate of that change impact nearly all employees (Wilkie, 2018). Tarafdar et al. (2010) used the term technostress to explain the employees’ stress created by information and communication technologies (ICT). Technostress is caused by the inability to meet ICT organizational expectations, specifically the “users experience as a result of application multi-tasking, constant connectivity, information overload, frequent system upgrades, consequent uncertainty” (Tarafdar et al., 2010, p. 304). Wilkie (2018) addressed employee mental health and the impact on college students, even before entering the workforce, with anxiety and stress theoretically related to the use of devices such as smart phones and other computing devices.

Increased workload, unrealistic expectations, and added hours are in the top five workplace stressors (Wilkie, 2018). The workplace has been redefined and is no longer a
single, physical location. The always-on digital world enables employees to be available 24/7, and 24/7 response is the expectation (Cameron & Webster, 2005). ICT, such as smart phones, social media, and videoconferencing, allows employees and managers to work from anywhere. According to a survey in 2013 by APA (2021), over 50% of Americans are connecting to work outside of business hours, on weekends, holidays, and even sick days. In 2013, 44% of Americans said they worked while on vacation; in 2019, that number rose to 59% (APA 2021; Cerullo, 2019). In one survey, 61% of professionals felt pressured to respond to work communications 24/7 (Bolden-Barrett, 2020). Adding to these already existing pressures to be always on, COVID-19 added to remote working, and according to CNN Business, working remotely is adding an average of 2.5 more hours to employees’ workday than prior to COVID-19. In addition, they are working during traditional family time like holidays (Guy, 2021). The expectations driven by technology cause employees to prioritize work ahead of personal needs, including family and health (Reid & Ramarajan, 2016). The idea of separating work from personal time has been “turned on its head” by technology (Thomas, 2014, p. 283).

In an interview conducted by Patrick Donohoe (2018), Bob Rosen called technology the “uber disruptor” in people’s professional and personal lives. The availability of technology, according to Rosen, means that “everybody has access to knowledge and information and so authority, responsibility, accountability and power has been pushed down in the organization” (Donohoe, 2018, para. 8). Rosen and Digh (2001) noted that technology has made businesses more responsive and more global, and skills for jobs today are “fundamentally different” (p. 33) than even a decade ago. Rosen contended that tenure for top executives is decreasing, and they stay in the position for
less time as leaders (Donohoe, 2018). As a result, leadership and businesses need to adapt faster. Businesses and the economy require the human and technology aspects of the work to be integrated, so leaders need ongoing self-development and aim at transforming themselves, their teams, and the organization’s culture (Rosen, 2017). According to successful global leaders, “deep curiosity” (Rosen, 2017, p. 52) and “intellectual curiosity in the workplace” (Rosen, 2017, p. 8) are the engines to innovation and adapting to change.

The impact of technology on business is not just in changes in operations and speed of work and information flow, but it is also in digital dialogue and global perception. Brogan and Smith (2020) discussed how social media access outstrips all other use of the internet, and users want an “unscripted relationship” (p. 258) with businesses. Researchers have described the impact that social media can have on companies, institutions, and leaders (Balda & Mora, 2011; Brogan & Smith, 2020; Grant, Moon, & Busby Grant, 2010; Gruber et al., 2015; Rosen, 2017; Webber & Forster, 2017). At the Fourth Annual General Business Conference, Venters et al. (2012) shared research regarding how social media is seen differently by each generation in the workforce, but it is increasingly becoming “seen as a part of life,” and employees entering the workforce expect communication and an “environment of transparency” (Social Media: A Leadership Challenge section, p. 61).

Social media changes the workplace and impacts all aspects of the global communication and culture. Social media places leaders and businesses into a 24/7 world that is constantly in the community’s public eye (Rosen, 2017). Social media flattens communication allowing organization and mobilization of multiple voices over multiple
platforms in a short time. The reputation of a business or institution can be altered swiftly via social media as people from all over the world contribute to and accelerate a single conversation (Gruber et al., 2015). Predating social media and with clear foresight, Drucker (1963) recognized technology as a “cultural problem” (p. 281) because it uproots traditional ways of work, often without giving the traditional employee the tools to survive the technological changes.

**Winds of Change in the Work Environment**

The changing world often feels too fast and beyond people’s abilities to adapt, trying to keep up with the speed of work, new technology, and other disruptors that surround people in work and personal lives. Bob Rosen’s company, Healthy Companies (2019), lists some disruptors as speed, uncertainty, complexity, technology, competition, and globalization. In a 2018 Harris Poll and Healthy Companies survey on the changing environment, 52% of people surveyed felt that the world is changing faster than they could adapt, and 54% felt their managers were not adapting to changes well. Two years later, the COVID-19 quarantine added changes that were needed in using technology and staying adaptable as most businesses converted as much as possible to virtual communications and business models. COVID-19 forced many employees into a virtual world. Rosen (2014) described this as the winds of change coming from all directions personally and professionally, and they can come from social structures and impacts on personal lives.

As with technology and communication, the speed of change adds to the expectations and constant stress as ICT means that employees are expected to work “faster and longer” (Tarafdar et al., 2010, p. 310). It is not just the speed of e-mails and
messages that need responses; social media is a growing form of public oversight and an opinion forum that can quickly and unexpectedly impact businesses, institutions, leaders, and their reputations (Gruber et al., 2015; Venters et al., 2012). Three years ago, the top concerns for global business leaders were the speed of developing technology and fears of organizational resistance to change (Protiviti, 2017). Leaders and businesses need to be agile and adaptable for companies to stay relevant. The speed of change intensifies the needed agility to deal with technology, communication, and global awareness, which has become the global norm in recent decades. Agility and adaptability require anticipating change and preparing others for change while taking actions that are “focused, fast and flexible” (Horney, Pasmore, & O’Shea 2010, p. 33).

**Theoretical Foundations**

Leaders benefit from being rooted or grounded in their leadership (Rosen, 2014). The field of health, wellness, and self-care and the effects of workplace anxiety and stress have become widely studied in leadership (Barley et al., 2011; S. Casey, 2015; Rotella, 2018; Wilkie, 2020). In the current global reality as people and organizations seek to adapt to COVID-19 public health mandates and guidelines, anxiety, stress, and uncertainty will undoubtedly increase. Self-care and protecting mental health have increased in the work environment as COVID-19 concerns rise (WHO, 2020). Prior to delving into the healthy leader grounded theoretical framework, four key foundational theories will be addressed: transformational leadership, role theory, social cognitive theory, and wellness theory.

Leadership theories and strategies have been the subject of interest across the years and generations. Transformational leadership was first coined in 1978 by Burns.
Since then, transformational leadership has become a well-researched key theory (Bass & Bass, 2009; Bass & Stogdill, 1990; Macit, 2003; McCleskey, 2014). According to Burns (1978), transformational leadership is a process in which “leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality” (p. 20). Researchers have determined that there are four parts to transformational leadership: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Bacha, 2014; Bass, 1985; Bass & Bass, 2009; Bass & Stogdill, 1990; Diaz-Saenz, 2011; Macit, 2003; McCleskey, 2014). Each part is a key component to transformational leadership.

The four parts of transformational leadership also align closely with several of Rosen’s (2014) grounded leadership areas as leaders’ behaviors focus outward on the followers and the organization as well as inward, revealing the leaders’ own grounded roots. According to Rosen, grounded roots will keep a leader prepared when faced with the inevitable winds of change. The four parts of transformational leadership embody five of Rosen’s six grounded leadership areas, including emotional, social, vocational, intellectual, and spiritual, which are integrated into different transformational leadership elements.

Idealized Influence

Charisma is considered part of the idealized influence; it is the behavior and expectations of a leader that make others want to emulate that leader (Bacha, 2014). Bass and Stogdill (1990) used the term of charisma and postulated that charismatic leadership is correlated with transformational leadership. Bass and Stogdill stated that charisma can create a personal identification or relationship with leaders, and they will be a “preferred
role model” (p. 219). A leader’s idealized influence impacts follower’s self-esteem and energy leading to commitment and also to loyalty and cooperation (Epitropaki, Kark, Mainemelis, & Lord, 2017). Bacha (2014) described idealized influence as the highest level in transformational leadership. Idealized influence is the leaders’ behaviors or abilities that result in being viewed as a role model, displaying worthy traits and actions that followers wish to emulate. The emotions that these leaders engender include respect, admiration, and trust, which are often related to the other aspects of transformational leadership as in how they treat others and how they encourage them with inspirational motivation and individualized consideration (Bacha, 2014).

Idealized influence comprised aspects of Rosen’s (2014) social health because it engages people, and it is based on the follower and leader relationship. Researchers have found that followers have the desire to create personal identification or a relationship with the leader (Bass & Stogdill, 1990). Leaders demonstrate qualities that impress followers who then want to emulate the leader (Bacha, 2014). The followers’ desire to emulate a leader further builds the relationship as followers develop deeper commitment, loyalty, and cooperation with the leader (Epitropaki et al., 2017). Idealized influence also shares components of Rosen’s (2014) vocational health because it includes a desire for what Rosen (2014) and Covey (2013) referred to as personal mastery and as a learning and passion for one’s field work. A leader with vocational health is usually “positive and optimistic, self-driven” (Rosen, 2014, p. 197). Positive drive allows them to handle obstacles, and leaders with a high degree of idealized influence are viewed as more charismatic and received higher transformational ratings (Ashkanasy & Humphrey, 2011).
**Inspirational Motivation**

Earlier researchers used the term motivation for how leaders merge motivation of their own and their followers (Bass & Stogdill, 1990; Burns, 1978). This evolved into inspirational motivation, focusing on inspiration, not just motivation, as leaders demonstrate how they share a vision, which appeals and inspires followers to reach for higher standards and new goals (Bacha, 2014). Goethals, Sorenson, and Burns (2004) explained inspirational appeal as an attempt to influence by developing enthusiasm and commitment to a vision or goal by “linking it to a person’s needs, values, hopes, or ideals” (p. 712). Inspirational motivation occurs when leaders “paint a clear vision for their followers’ future state as well as provide momentum to reach that vision” (Diaz-Saenz, 2011, p. 300). According to Bass and Riggio (2006), leaders impress and inspire followers through their own behaviors, enthusiasm, and optimism. McCleskey (2014) added that inspirational motivation provides shared meaning and a challenge through demonstrated optimism and energetic messaging.

Inspirational motivation includes some alignment to aspects of Rosen’s (2014) spiritual dimension. Rosen described how leaders with a strong spiritual health dimension are leaders who remember their higher purpose rather than focusing on making money. Leading with a higher purpose requires leaders not only to regularly model their values and beliefs in words and actions to inspire others but also to show others their own behaviors can make the world a better place (Rosen, 2014). Rosen cited examples of leaders of companies who integrate inspirational motivation into their business models such as Tom’s Shoes, which donates a pair of shoes to a child in need for every purchased pair of shoes. Also, Tom’s of Maine uses 100% recycled packaging
and all-natural ingredients (Rosen, 2014). Many companies create a sense of social responsibility and “ethical consumerism” (Rosen, 2014, p. 8), which inspires and motivates leaders and employees to help others. Often the spiritual, inspirational motivation is strengthened by other behaviors. Bass and Bass (2009) discovered that “sociability contributed to inspirational motivation and individualized consideration” (p. 125).

**Intellectual Stimulation**

When a leader challenges the status quo and listens to ideas from others, the leader demonstrates intellectual stimulation (Rosen, 2014). Researchers describe it as when leaders encourage their followers to look at old problems in creative and new innovative ways, to “regularly examining old assumptions” (Diaz-Saenz, 2011, p. 300) and to reimagine how the work can be accomplished (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Moorman, & Fetter, 1990). In addition to challenging assumptions, a leader creates an atmosphere of intellectual stimulation and innovation by modeling and getting to know employees enough to figure out how to get employees to think differently. McCleskey (2014) added that intellectual stimulation requires leaders to be open and transparent and that engendering “openness without fear of criticism and increased levels of confidence in problem solving” (p. 120) creates increased self-confidence. However, Podsakoff et al. (1990) explained that the intellectual stimulation of transformational leadership can create negative impact if old assumptions may be a safe foundation for employees.

Intellectual stimulation includes aspects of Rosen’s (2014) grounded leadership areas, including intellectual and vocational. Maintaining intellectual curiosity and an openness to ideas is the foundation of Rosen’s intellectual health. A leader who models
and uses intellectual stimulation inspires others but must also retain an open mind to listen and encourage others to continue “regularly examining old assumptions” (Diaz-Saenz, 2011, p. 300). Rosen’s (2014) dimension of vocational health not only helps maintain and retain intellectual curiosity, open-mindedness, and listening to others but also points out that a leader must have the desire to meet personal mastery, which Senge (2006) stated will create “team learning” (p. 236) because a leader reaching toward personal mastery wants other members in an organization to grow as well.

**Individualized Consideration**

When leaders display individualized consideration, they treat the individuals in their organization, or followers, as individual people and show care and affirm value for each one’s skills, needs, and goals. Podsakoff et al. (1990) explained how a leader’s actions show respect and care for the needs and emotions of others. So individualized consideration is not simply demonstrating consideration for others but is an authentic act allowing leaders to get to know the people they lead—their desires, ambitions, and capabilities (Podsakoff et al., 1990). Additionally, individualized consideration allows a leader to better develop followers into leaders (Goethals et al., 2004). McCleskey (2014) described individualized consideration as “acting as a coach or mentor in order to assist followers with reaching their full potential” (p. 120). Successful leaders see strong mentorship and friendships as the ability to create positive energy and “take an active interest in a person” (David C. Novak, as quoted in Rosen, 2017, p. 11).

Individualized consideration includes characteristics of Rosen’s (2014) grounded leadership dimensions, including both emotional and social health. Leaders must be cognizant of the members in their organization to recognize each person’s skills, needs,
and goals that Podsakoff et al. (1990) described as respecting others and caring for their emotions and needs. Social and emotional intelligence or health includes recognizing emotional or social cues to include managing emotions (Salovey & Mayer, 1990) and having cognitive empathy and building social relationships (Gulliford, Morgan, Hemming, & Abbott, 2019; Rahim, Cvelek, & Liang, 2018). Sociability also contributes to individualized consideration (Bass & Bass, 2009). Emotional stability correlates with transformational leadership (Bass & Bass, 2009). Leaders who demonstrate high levels of emotional ability and expressiveness are more likely to be ranked as “charismatic and transformational, as well as higher in both relations and task leadership” (Ashkanasy & Humphrey, 2011, p. 372).

Role Theory

Jacob Levy Moreno (1889–1974) and George Mead (1863–1931) are seminal theorists in role theory. Role theory explores persons and the roles they take on in relationships and the environment in which they exist. Role theory includes Mead’s (1934) initial socialization and learning of roles, which takes place by taking on the role of the other and participating in the other’s role and actions as a social being. Mead (1964) explained the importance of taking roles of the other to create empathy through “feeling the other’s joys and sorrows” (p. 33). The theory was refined through Moreno and Moreno’s (1944) method of psychodrama in which people role-play in other peoples’ life roles and by doing so interact to better understand others and their social environment. The roles are often compared to actual roles in plays to better understand the dynamics. Moreno and Moreno noted that every individual has “a range of roles facing a range of counter-roles” (p. 126). Within each of their roles, people exhibit a
combination of both the “individual and social components” (Jakovina & Jakovina, 2017, p. 151) as individual and roles are created by past experiences and cultural patterns. Moreno and Moreno (1944) described the actor and roles in the language of theater as “the whole world into which the actor enters—the plots, the persons, the objects in it, in all its dimensions, and its time and space” (p. 95). Jakovina and Jakovina (2017) explained that Moreno and Moreno’s (1944) theory is in part as actors who “memorized their parts in a play” (p. 156), yet roles are both the psychology of the individuals and their social experiences.

In role theory, observing and taking on roles in the social arena allows people to understand and determine expectations based on individual experiences and observations of roles in their sphere (Mead, 1934; Moreno & Moreno, 1944). Part of role theory purports that people play a variety of roles from their social “interrelationship and interactions” (Mead, 1934, p. 139). Jakovina and Jakovina (2017) explained that a social role, such as friend, parent, child, students, spouse, and even gender, is just one cultural role people assign themselves in the social arena and group interactions. Gender roles are a result of social and internal perspective (Jakovina & Jakovina, 2017). The practical part of role theory is to reflect on the roles people take on as well as the roles of others; however, some researchers believe it can also help people “re-write the script and the roles that they choose” (Conrad, 2007, p. 85). Therefore, the roles people take on not only allow a set script but also allow the option of altering the script by adding variation to a perceived role. According to Blatner (1991), separating themselves from their roles allows people to recognize, reflect, and become more objective and self-aware. The act
of distancing allows reflection and awareness of the person, the role, and the opportunity to transcend the role (Blatner, 1991).

Though role theory allows a person to step into or explore an existing role with perceived rules and expectations, sometimes role conflict occurs when there is a disparity concerning internal or external expectations of a specific role (Miller, 2020). Role conflict exists when there is discord between two competing roles. Schneider and Bos (2014) expanded on role conflict and the socialization of gender roles and how, especially for women in leadership roles, there can be incongruence in roles.

**Social Cognitive Theory**

Albert Bandura is given credit for the social cognitive theory (SCT) though he initially referred to it as social learning theory (Boston University School of Public Health, 2019). SCT presents, at its foundation, that people learn behaviors by observing them. Bandura (1977) stated, “Learning would be exceedingly laborious, not to mention hazardous, if people had to rely solely on the effects of their own actions to inform them what to do” (p. 22). In Bandura’s seminal study, a group of children observed different adults interacting with Bobo, a clown doll. Some children observed adults playing nice and others observed adults expressing anger or violence toward Bobo. The children were more likely to replicate the behavior they observed. In some cases, results were higher if a male child observed a male adult, adding an association of gender learning. Later Bandura explained SCT in more detail, including relevance of reward and avoidance as part of long-term observed learning “knowing that a given’s model behavior is effective in producing valued rewards or averting negative consequence” (p. 37).
Studies in the area of cognitive theory are not only linked to childhood. In Walsh, Lee, Jensen, McGonagle, and Sammani’s (2018) study on positive leader behaviors, employees picked up on observed social cues and modeling from leaders to behave ethically, respectfully, or civilly. Researchers have studied adult employee reactions when leaders exhibited ethical behavior and noted an effect on employees was increased intrinsic motivation (Walsh et al., 2018). The intrinsic motivation created role behaviors and positive self-efficacy, and employees who repeatedly observed ethical behaviors in leaders replicated the positive motivation and behavior in the work environment, and researchers have hypothesized possibly throughout other areas in their lives. Yet the study showed a distinction in that the observed acts needed to be exemplary behaviors because to “establish positive norms for respect, leaders need to go beyond merely refraining from engaging in uncivil acts and should engage in behaviors exemplified in charismatic and ethical leadership” (Walsh et al., 2018, p. 504).

**Wellness Theory**

Sixty years ago, Halbert L. Dunn (1959) in his article “High-Level Wellness for Man and Society,” discussed wellness theory as a holistic view of the whole human. H. Dunn described some of the obstacles to health that still exist 60 years later: shrinking world, crowded world, aging population, and global tensions. Although wellness definitions vary, there are six most common elements in wellness theory to reach holistic wellness: emotional, occupational, physical, social, intellectual, and spiritual (Hettler, 1976). Although some researchers include additional areas such as environmental and financial health (Swarbrick, 2006), overall, the six elements are at the core of wellness theory. Rosen (2014) mirrored many of the same elements in his six areas of health,
indicating the holistic view of a person cannot be limited to one area of health.

Therefore, there is interconnectedness between the individual, other people, and the individual’s work and personal life.

H. Dunn (1959) recognized that wellness cannot be ascribed to only the physical: “We can no longer ignore the spirit of man as a factor in our medical and health disciplines” (p. 788). H. Dunn further explained that the spirit of man is internal, and experts need to help make individuals become more aware of their inner selves. Unity of the different areas is what creates harmony and “high-levels of wellness can never be achieved in fragments, ignoring the unity of the whole” (H. Dunn, 1959, p. 789).

According to H. Dunn, dividing man’s wellness into separate areas of physical, mental, and spiritual causes a fragmentation of the person and the person’s wellness. H. Dunn went on to explain that “high-level wellness” (p. 791) is when the different parts are unified in harmony, but he noted difficulty in objectively measuring different levels of wellness compared to measuring illness and death. Nevertheless, H. Dunn established steps to best utilize the different areas of wellness, which include

1. know thyself,
2. tap into “resources of wisdom and maturity,” and
3. find creative expression, described as “an expression of self, adventuring into the unknown in search for universal truth” (p. 791).

Within these steps, H. Dunn (1959) included traits such as balanced, better able to meet daily problems, part of a community, companionship, and altruism. Almost 20 years later, Hettler (1976) designed a grid of six dimensions of wellness, subdividing
H. Dunn’s (1959) areas further. Hettler’s (1976) six dimensions include occupational, physical, social, intellectual, spiritual, and emotional.

Hettler’s (1976) wellness theory model mirrors Rosen’s (2014) roots of grounded health with the same six dimensions. The most notable differences are in Rosen’s and Hettler’s (1976) descriptions on spiritual wellness and the occupational or vocational dimensions. Hettler described spiritual dimension as limited to being tolerant of others’ beliefs while striving to align actions with values and beliefs, but Rosen (2014) added a sense of connectedness and altruism more reminiscent of H. Dunn (1959). Also, Hettler’s (1976) occupational dimension is restricted to choosing a career that is personally rewarding; aligns with personal values, interests, and beliefs; and ensures the person has opportunities to be active and involved. Rosen’s (2014) vocational dimension also includes details such as defining personal calling and ambition in the field.

Swarbrick (2006) described wellness as “a conscious, deliberate process whereby a person makes choices for a healthier and more satisfying lifestyle” (p. 311). Swarbrick further detailed a wellness lifestyle in the eight dimensions, which include balanced physical health habits, social interactions, productivity, positive relationships, meaningful engagement and activity, and which allow people to manage problems and stress. Swarbrick’s model is used as the wellness framework within the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). Hettler’s (1976) and Rosen’s (2014) models have six dimensions, and Swarbrick’s model has the same six with two additional dimensions, which reflect the modern world and individual concerns. The Swarbrick wellness model lists eight dimensions of health: occupational, physical, social, intellectual, spiritual, emotional, environmental, and financial. Environment is described
as creating an environment that supports well-being and access to clean and safe resources, and financial wellness is described as being satisfied with one’s financial situation, current and future (Kobrin, 2017).

**Theoretical Framework**

Rosen (2014) used the term *grounded* to explain holistic wellness for leaders. This is a deep connection to the authentic self with “a sense of being fully embodied, whole, centered and balanced in ourselves and our relationships” (Daniels, 2005, p. 290). In this study, Rosen’s (2014) delineated aspects of grounded leadership are his six areas of health: physical, emotional, intellectual, social, vocational, and spiritual (see Figure 1). Rosen’s theoretical framework has been applied to businesses and CEOs in corporate and nonprofit organizations. However, presidents at higher education institutions have not had the benefit of this framework and are struggling with an increasingly volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous (VUCA) world. Applying Rosen’s six areas of grounded leadership to community college presidents can help address a growing need in leadership, particularly for the development and advancement of women leaders in higher education.

**Physical Health**

Physical health is Rosen’s (2014) first area of being grounded. Rosen defined physical health and its importance to becoming a grounded effective leader as “paying attention to your body; it needs constant care and maintenance” (p. 38). Leaders with physical wellness are in touch with their bodies. Rosen expounded further that a leader’s physical well-being provides the leader with more stamina and energy to deal with the stress, challenging work environment, long hours, and the fast pace of change in the workplace.
Leaders often have heavy workloads, time pressures, and personal and professional role conflicts (Köppe & Schütz, 2019). The health of the leaders impacts the organization and its employees. Researchers termed health-oriented leadership as a leadership strategy that “focuses on leaders’ self-directed health-promoting behavior” (Köppe & Schütz, 2019, p. 1). Researchers have found a positive correlation between health-specific leadership and improved employee health behaviors (Franke et al., 2014; Gurt et al., 2011, Kranabetter & Niessen, 2017; Payne, Cluff, Lang, Matson-Koffman, & Morgan-Lopez, 2018). Some research has shown that leaders who feel energetic and physically fit engage in more self-care activities, which are hypothesized to be a result of
leaders seeing their health as a resource to be protected and developed (Köppe & Schütz, 2019). However, the impact of a leader’s health view and health behaviors and those physical health behaviors have not been as extensively researched. Research investigating leaders’ health behaviors and the impact on their leadership and reduced workplace burn out is not as robust. Köppe and Schütz (2019) explored how healthy behaviors are often correlated to self-esteem and self-efficacy in leaders overall.

The first thing to establish is no matter how tightly defined health and healthy behaviors are, physical health is impacted by numerous other factors. In 1958, WHO clarified that health was not just physical as it stated in its constitution: “Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity” (p. 459). Sociologist Aaorn Antonovsky (1987) researched the social, psychological, and cultural factors that are part of what made, kept, or recovered a person’s health. At the core of Antonovsky’s theory of wellness is how individuals respond in the face of stressors based on their sense of coherence. Antonovsky’s sense of coherence includes three factors: comprehensibility, manageability, and meaningfulness. Comprehensibility is the degree to which an individual can comprehend the stimuli or stressors. Manageability is the ability to discern a degree of managing the stimuli with the resources available to them. Meaningfulness is the degree to which a person finds meaning so that the energy needed to make healthy decisions or cope is worthwhile in the big picture.

Mayer and Boness (2011) discovered that when focusing a study on physical well-being and health behaviors of South African managers, the participants viewed their behaviors and impact as not solely physical. Few leaders viewed their own physical
health as free of pain or physical aches or illnesses. Managers in the study defined well-being as feeling energetic and empowered or as being happy, yet many of the leaders connected these feelings to their choice of work, spiritual perspectives, or natural pleasure of working with others (Mayer & Boness, 2011). Some researchers have focused on physical behaviors and the impact of positive healthy behaviors and outcomes: eating well, sleeping, physical exercise, and being aware of their own energy reserves (Barsh, Cranston, & Lewis, 2011; Beisser & Peters, 2016; Bess, 2015; Kranabetter & Niessen, 2017; Mayer & Boness, 2011; Rath & Harter, 2010; Žižek & Čančer, 2017). However, the results of positive physical behaviors are more holistic to the whole human.

**Emotional Health**

Emotional health is Rosen’s (2014) second area of leadership. Rosen cited emotional health as a “quality essential to coping with uncertainty in the impermanence of life” (p. 28). Emotional health allows leaders to be comfortable asking difficult questions. According to Aguilar (2018), emotional health includes strategies to respond to frustration or sense of failure. Rosen (2014) used the term emotional health, but his description includes the same characteristics as the term of emotional intelligence (EI) used by most researchers. For this section, emotional health and EI are used interchangeably. Salovey and Mayer (1990) coined the phrase emotional intelligence (EI) in 1990. Both Salovey and Mayer and Rosen (2014) explained that EI and health are the ability to recognize, understand, manage, and regulate emotions. Rosen provided examples of how the emotional dimension is a critical factor of strong, balanced leadership. Leaders with EI are self-aware and able to recognize and manage their own
emotions and the emotions of those around them (Aguilar, 2018; Goleman, 1995, 2011; Muktak, 2017). EI also relates to self-efficacy and active methods for handling stress (Wang et al., 2016).

While Goleman (1995) is often attributed with making EI a commonly understood concept and recognizing its importance in business, Salovey and Mayer (1990) used the term emotional intelligence in their seminal work. They further explained the four branches of EI: (a) aware of and identify emotion, (b) facilitate cognitive reasoning using emotion to decide and prioritize, (c) understand and analyze emotions and recognize emotion relationships, and (d) manage positive and negative emotions (see Figure 2).

![Figure 2. MSCEIT model from the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso emotional intelligence test. From “Mayer-Salovey-Caruso emotional intelligence test (MSCEIT),” by High Performing Systems, Inc., n.d., Key Areas Measured section (https://www.hpsys.com/Assessments_MSCEIT.htm).](https://www.hpsys.com/Assessments_MSCEIT.htm)
Further research on EI in leadership continues. Higgs and Aitken (2003) researched the connection between EI and leadership potential, specifically how certain EI characteristics could indicate effective leadership potential: self-awareness, emotional resilience, influence, interpersonal sensitivity, motivation, intuitiveness, and conscientiousness and integrity. As leaders are expected to make effective decisions, George’s (2000) research indicated that emotions and IQ influence people’s cognitive abilities, so leaders’ emotional control and awareness are fundamental in decision-making.

Rosen (2014) provided examples of how leaders use their emotional health as a strength that encourages self-awareness, resilience, adaptability, motivation, ability to better motivate others, intuitive decision-making, and maintainability of their personal integrity. Like Higgs and Aitken (2003), Rosen (2014) noted the importance of leaders recognizing and making choices based on their emotional awareness. Rosen went further endorsing vulnerability and making conscious decisions to use positive emotions. Brene Brown (2018), in her book *Dare to Lead*, explained vulnerability as “the emotion that we experience during times of uncertainty, risk and emotional exposure” (p. 19). Brown proposed *wholeheartedness* engagement in life and leadership from a place of worthiness with a fully examined emotional life. A healthy leader recognizes positive and negative emotions as natural yet makes a conscious decision to use positive emotions when possible because a leader’s emotions can “infect a workplace or invigorate it” (Brown, 2018, p. 36).
Intellectual Health

The third area of Rosen’s (2014) grounded leadership is intellectual health. According to van Rensburg et al. (2011), intellectual wellness involves retaining knowledge, thinking critically, making sound decisions, and finding solutions to problems. Intellectual health is a discovery of talents and “thought-provoking activities to enhance one’s mental capabilities and flourish one’s own personality” (Naz et al., 2014, p. 993). Individuals with intellectual health are more likely to adapt to changing conditions and better use resources and skills (van Rensburg et al., 2011). In addition, according to Rosen (2014), leaders with strong intellectual health can accept contradictory and paradoxical ideas and have a deep and wide curiosity. This allows mental clarity to “innovate faster and meet the demands of complex marketplace and workplace” (Rosen, 2014, p. 29). Other researchers have noted this aptitude as integrative thinking (Martin, 2007). In his work The Opposable Mind, Martin (2007) suggested that integrative thinking is

the ability to face constructively the tension of opposing ideas and, instead of choosing one at the expense of the other, generate a creative resolution of the tension in the form of a new idea that contains elements of the opposing ideas but is superior to each. (p. 15)

The concept as a component of Rosen’s (2014) intellectual health allows leaders to keep an open mind, be receptive to new ideas, and consciously continue to expand personal knowledge. Intellectual health expands mental capacity, which allows leaders to break out of their mental comfort zones (Rosen, 2014).
Intellectual wellness emphasizes being open-minded, being receptive to new ideas, an ongoing need to challenge one’s mind, and expanding personal knowledge continually. Part of intellectual wellness is the ability to identify possible difficulties and choose the best possible courses of action based on available information (Rosen, 2014). A leader who is open to gathering new information and listening to ideas is more likely to recognize problems and remain open to innovations in the field (Rosen, 2014). Misztal (2019) argued that strategic curiosity is what the modern society needs to breakthrough in this world overfilled with information. Gunn and Gullickson (2003) described an innovative modern-leader characteristic as being open minded and not thinking one knows all the answers. Senge (2006) added the concept of team think and how a leader needs to promote teams and other voices. With an open mind and cultivated sense of curiosity, leaders ask questions and build enthusiasm, which lead to discovery and create changes.

Misztal (2019) and Horstmeyer (2018) argued that any intellectual strategy in a complex world should include intellectual curiosity. Desire to learn and question are more important than knowing the answers (Elliot, 2015; Gunn & Gullickson, 2003). Von Stumm (2018) noted that intellectual strength includes being open-minded rather than having intellectual knowledge. If leaders feel they need to know all the answers, they do not hear new ideas or explore new avenues whereas curiosity leads to experimentation and organizational agility (Horstmeyer, 2018).

**Social Health**

A fourth area of Rosen’s (2014) grounded leadership is social health. Rosen described social health as stemming from authenticity, leading to mutually rewarding
relationships and ending with creating teams and communities. Much earlier, John Dewey (1909) was the first to use the term social intelligence: “Ultimate moral motives and forces are nothing more or less than social intelligence—the power of observing and comprehending social situations” (p. 43). He saw that social intelligence related to morality, social power, and social interest. Thorndike (1920) described social intelligence as one of three intelligences: mechanical, social, and abstract. As an early theorist of social intelligence, Thorndike recognized the importance of social intelligence in leaders: “The best mechanic in a factory may fail as a foreman for lack of social intelligence” (p. 229).

Later researchers clarified Thorndike’s (1920) three elements. Part of social intelligence is recognizing social cues and miscues as part of being accepted in a community (Mintz-Binder, 2012). Researchers have concluded there are four parts of effective social intelligence:

1. situational awareness or understanding and the ability to assess social situations and contexts (Goleman, 1995; Rahim et al., 2018; Van Oosten et al., 2019);
2. situational responses or the ability to make appropriate social responses to the situations (Goleman, 2006; Rahim et al., 2018; Van Oosten et al., 2019);
3. cognitive empathy of understanding others’ emotions and being sensitive to others’ feelings and thoughts (Gulliford et al., 2019; Rahim et al., 2018) and also determining the use of social intelligence for prosocial purposes (Gulliford et al., 2019); and
4. social skills including building and maintaining positive relationships (Goleman, 2006; Gulliford et al., 2019; Rahim et al., 2018; Rath & Harter, 2010; Van Oosten et al., 2019).
Many researchers connect social intelligence and EI together, often referred to as social and emotional competencies (ESCs), and describe them as behaviors or skills leaders use to recognize their own and others’ emotions (Goleman, 2006; Monnier, 2015; Van Oosten et al., 2019). ESCs allow individuals to effectively manage themselves and their relationships with others. Social intelligence and competency not only ensure positive social interaction but also create a personal health dimension, which brings valuable personal and leadership strengths (Rosen, 2014). Covey (2013) described social intelligence as “connectedness” (p. 288), and Rath and Harter (2010) recognized the need for socialization and strengthening relationships. Goleman and Boyatzis (2008) described social skills and behaviors with biology and social mirroring and the necessity for leaders to be successful. The socially intelligent bosses engender employees to assimilate emotional health even during stressful, uncertain times (Goleman & Boyatzis, 2008).

Having strong social intelligence and competencies leads to stronger social health, which in turn gives leaders confidence to be themselves in their relationships. Leaders with social health remain authentic and true to themselves as they create meaningful relationships with others (Goleman & Boyatzis, 2008; Rahim et al., 2018; Rath & Hartner, 2010; Rosen, 2014). Social health engenders empathy and compassion, building mutually rewarding relationships, and being part of teams and communities in the workplace (Goleman, 2006; Goleman & Boyatzis, 2008).

Monnier (2015) and Van Oosten et al. (2019) also linked ESC together. Monnier (2015) cited these as “two prototypical concepts” (p. 59), which are critical to contributors’ successful interactions with others. Parry (1998) noted that leadership was
a “process of social influence, especially in contexts of rapid organizational change” (p. 92). Later, Van Oosten et al. (2019) noted that the lens of executive coaching created EI connections to being self-aware with the ability to “understand the resulting implications of their aspirations and actions on others that surround them” (p. 251).

**Vocational Health**

The fifth area of Rosen’s (2014) grounded leadership is vocational health. Leaders who have vocational health recognize and use their personal calling, which reflects on themselves and their personal self-vision (Rosen, 2014). Leaders harness their energy, motivation, skill, and drive toward their goals. Both Senge (2006) and Rosen (2014) used the term *personal mastery* to describe one’s highest potential. Rosen explained that individuals’ attitudes are the primary reason they do not reach their personal mastery, which is why vocational health and drive are critical in reaching one’s potential. Vocational health is critical to overall leader wellness because it provides the drive to learn, handle fierce of competition, and achieve long-term goals and results in the workplace (Rosen, 2014).

Vocational health is often referred to as occupational health or occupational wellness (Gatchel & Kishino, 2012; Hettler, 1976). Occupational or vocational health can rely on the desire to engage and succeed in one’s field. Hutchins (1969) hypothesized that people in a society focused on continual learning to understand more and can better adapt to the world, the work, and the involvement in the world around them. Senge (2006) used the term personal mastery indicating that effective leaders wish to see personal mastery applied to all within an organization.
Rosen (2014) described vocational health in leaders as the ability to harness their energy, motivation, skill, and drive toward their goals, which are related to finding and discovering one’s personal calling. Musson (2003) summarized that a person’s vocation selection and their personality are often related: “Through a process involving initial vocational attraction, pre-requisite achievement, academic achievement, and selection, professional groups are characterized by a distinct profile of personality traits in comparison with other groups and the general population” (p. 36). Leadership is a specific role to which vocational health and “achievement-related traits” (Musson, 2003, p. 35) are common and demonstrate leaders who are well-grounded.

Occupational health is defined by the absence of negatives that detract from personal mastery or wellness in work (Gatchel & Schultz, 2012). In Gatchel and Schultz’s (2012) Handbook of Occupational Health and Wellness, a broad definition for occupational health is work that does not add additional health risks, which can cause diseases and illnesses. Three characteristics that add the most risk are the psychological demands of the job, degree of autonomy on the job, and satisfaction at the job site. Specifically, low levels of autonomy and overload of “workload seems to be a particular important combination of heightening job-related stress” (Gatchel & Kishino, 2012, p. 11). Maslach and Leiter’s (1997) model lists major causes of burnout at work, which is a major occupational wellness issue. According to Rosen (2014), when neglecting one’s vocational health, a leader who fails to find meaningful work is focused on the short term and does not strive to “create conditions that enable others to excel and reach their full potential” (p. 215).
Mintz-Binder (2012) explored the Maslach and Leiter (1997) matrix, which aligns with Rosen’s (2014) vocational health in finding reward, relationships, and spirituality. Maslach and Leiter’s (1997) work model includes other researchers’ characteristics of workload, control, and community within the workplace (Gatchel & Kishino, 2012) and adds reward, fairness, and the job aligning with the employees’ values to avoid burnout.

Conditions such as burnout are examples of lack of vocational health. Mintz-Binder (2012) used the term mismatch of occupation and the person to explain a part of employee burnout. Rath and Harter (2010) cited career wellness as one of the five essential elements of wellness. Part of career wellness is that people enjoy their job and look forward to work, utilizing their interests and strengths. Using career strengths is specifically rewarding to those in the field of education. Occupational matches for academic administrators include fulfilling the intrinsic rewards of making a difference, leaving a legacy, and needing or having a willingness to serve others (Mintz-Binder, 2012).

**Spiritual Health**

The sixth and final area of Rosen’s (2014) grounded leadership is spiritual health. Leaders with spiritual health recognize that a higher purpose is more meaningful than their individual needs. Rosen described spiritual health as the characteristics that allow leaders to think beyond themselves, to experience gratitude and generosity, and to “share with diverse groups of people from different cultures” (p. 30). In their early research, Dehler and Welsh (1994) noted that a sense of spirituality is “internalized as a form of intrinsic motivation” (p. 21) and critical to creating shared meaning. According to Rosen (2014), spiritual health is the way people connect to the world and others with the desire
to better other people’s lives and the environment and to avoid selfish personal agendas. Covey (2013) referred to spiritual health as the place where people “think cooperatively, to promote the welfare and good of other people, and to be genuinely happy for other people’s successes” (p. 348). Spiritual well-being is the term used by Chirico (2016) who stated that spirituality not only is the “core of a person” but also is “particularly helpful in times of chaos, struggle, and distress” (p. 14).

Oates et al. (2005) connected spirituality and coping, defining spirituality as “intrinsic faith or a personal, internalized, religious belief system has been repeatedly linked to psychological well-being through its problem-solving and integrative properties” (p. 211). Further, Oates et al. found that spirituality allows people to feel they have additional resources when they have exhausted their available psychological resources. In this study, spirituality integrated all experiences into “a single meaningful system” (Oates et al., 2005, p. 211). Spirituality does not segregate work from home life.

Research has shown that lower levels of spiritual well-being or spiritual intelligence (SI) reduce a person’s ability to cope with physical illness or disease as well as other stressors (Bekelman et al., 2007; Granstrom, 1988; Safavi, Yahyavi, Fatehi Narab, & Yahyavi, 2015). The opposite situation of higher levels of spiritual well-being or intelligence correlates to a reduction in depression, loneliness, and burnout as well as increased job satisfaction (Fehring, Brennan, & Keller, 1987; Landis, 1996; Lee, Sirgy, Efraty, & Siegel, 2003; Paloutzian, Emmons, & Keortge, 2010; Robert, Young, & Kelly, 2006; Tabarsa & Jalaei, 2017; Walton, Shultz, Beck, & Walls, 1991).
Paloutzian et al. (2010) distinguished between spiritual well-being and SI. Spiritual well-being is the degree to which individuals have a sense of satisfaction in their relationship with a higher power when based in religious well-being or the sense of purpose and direction when more existential. Spiritual well-being is the core sense and perception that creates a sense of purpose or direction, but SI is how people use that sense of purpose and direction to connect their actions and self to a greater good or ideal (Paloutzian et al., 2010). SI is what helps one stay on track for the “overall guiding purpose” (Paloutzian et al., 2010, p. 75). Rosen’s (2014) spiritual health includes both spiritual well-being and SI and is critical in finding how to turn a sense of purpose into effective action. Rosen described spiritual health as having “a higher purpose, global connectedness, and generosity of spirit” (p. 28), and spiritual health reflects a leader’s global view and impacts the leader’s businesses.

Rosen’s (2014) six areas are a model for the healthy roots of leadership in business. His healthy leadership model includes being interconnected and, according to H. Dunn (1959), is unifying all the parts of healthy people to attain a high level of wellness. H. Dunn noted that there was no objective way to measure an individual’s level of wellness, but based on Rosen’s (2014) examples of successful leaders, there are visible effects of holistic wellness in one’s ability to face obstacles, remain purposeful despite the challenges, and be resilient under pressure. Exemplary corporate leaders build positive relationships, engender motivation in others, and respect others’ voices and ideas (Rosen, 2014). These all reflect the four transformational leadership characteristics. Higher education, and especially California community colleges, are experiencing
challenges that require college presidents and leaders to be grounded to provide leadership that meets the moment.

**Higher Education System**

The higher education system consists of a unique decentralized system of governance unlike most other countries (U.S. Department of State, 2020). The U.S. higher education institutions have different federal regulations and state requirements applied to each higher education institution. The institutions are categorized in three ways: the type of degree-grant, the type of funding, and the standard years to earn the institution’s common degree. The degree types are doctoral, master’s, bachelor’s, or associate’s (U.S. Department of Education, 2020). Institutional funding is either public or private, so institutions are referred to simply as public or private. The most common degrees are bachelor’s and associate’s, and standard full-time course work assumes an associate’s degree can be obtained in 2 years and a bachelor’s degree in 4 years. Therefore, higher education institutions are often referred to as 2-year or 4-year institutions. In 2018, there were over 4,300 degree-granting colleges in America.

While all institutions are experiencing the increasing speed of change, public institutions are also experiencing changes in funding that will have long-lasting effects in most states. The constant pressure on the role of leaders and the growing needs for accountability result in more stress and challenge in the position of college president with all the new policies, accountability, and legislation impacting institutions (Boggs & McPhail, 2016; R. Jenkins, 2017; LeBlanc, 2018; Shaw et al., 2018). Despite the goals of higher thinking, research, and preparing people for the workforce or next level of education, higher education institutions are also noted for moving more slowly than their
corporate business counterparts (Basken, 2009, 2013; Caruth & Caruth, 2013; K. J. Cooper, 1990). Freeland (2001) noted that critics see American higher education institutions as “resistant to change, preoccupied with internal issues, and largely unresponsive to evolving societal needs” (p. 227).

**Higher Education Leadership in America**

Businesses are not the only institutions experiencing winds of change and stressors. In higher education institutions, the leadership expectations have changed in a similar manner, including a higher degree of accountability (Boggs & McPhail, 2016; R. Jenkins, 2017), changing state funding models (Buckley, 2018; Tarker, 2019), and additional legislation layers of expectation. In higher education, the winds of change as well as changes in technology and always on culture result in leaders who are under more pressure than ever and qualified candidates choose not to take on higher leadership positions (Ward & Eddy, 2013).

**California Community Colleges System**

Although higher education in America has a 400-year history, the California Community Colleges system started only 100 years ago and has become the largest college system in the United States with 116 colleges and over 2 million students in attendance (CCCO, 2019). Community colleges in California unified into one system with a Master Plan in the 1960s and a wide-spanning mission (Winter, 1964). In the past 20 years, the community college system has faced numerous legislative and funding changes impacting its goals and operating structure (D. Jenkins et al., 2018; R. Jenkins, 2017; LeBlanc, 2018; Shaw et al., 2018; Smith, 2018; Tarker, 2019).
Overview of California Community Colleges structure history. In 1907, Stanford University President David Starr Jordan felt Stanford University should “eliminate the lower division courses” (Winter, 1964, p. 4), so students could take 60 units of collegiate work prior to attending the university. In 1910, the first post-high school courses were piloted at high schools in Los Angeles, Hollywood, and Santa Barbara (Winter, 1964). In 1915, Citrus Junior College was founded, and in 1917, Section 1750(b) of the Political Code was implemented providing funding to the high schools offering post-high school courses. In 1917, the enrollment was 1,259, and in 1921, legislature approved a school system including junior colleges to offer transfer courses to 4-year colleges and vocational courses (Winter, 1964).

California Community Colleges system’s enrollment growth and changes. In the 100 years since it began, the California Community Colleges system has continued to grow. The California Community Colleges system currently has the largest number of colleges and the highest student enrollment of any educational system in the United States.

By 1960, junior colleges had 58% of all higher education enrollments in California (Winter, 1964). In the 1960s, through the adoption of the Master Plan for Education in California, junior colleges were combined into one system with a chancellor and board of governors. In 2019, with 73 districts, 116 colleges, and 2.1 million students (CCCCO, 2019), the California Community Colleges’ purpose and processes were changing again.
California Community Colleges

Winds of Change

The California Community Colleges system is the largest college system in the United States and faces a future “full of change and uncertainty” (Tarker, 2019, p. 673). Community colleges in California originally fulfilled the need of lower-level coursework at a lower cost and added vocational training for community-based jobs. Recently, changes in the California Community Colleges system have included offering bachelor’s degrees (Smith, 2018) and adding colleges as now there are 116 colleges in the system including a new statewide online college, Calbright (CCCC, 2020a).

However, as the mission grew, retention, persistence, degrees, certificates, and transfers were declining (Shaw et al., 2018). Therefore, state and federal legislation added changes, including a new outcomes-based funding formula; students’ success and equity requirement; AB 705, which eliminated mandated basic skills; and Guided Pathways, which revised the whole college education structure and path (California Department of Finance, 2019; R. Jenkins, 2017; LeBlanc, 2018; Shaw et al., 2018; Smith, 2018; Tarker, 2019). In the 21st century, higher education, especially California community colleges, is undergoing more changes and pressures, including “expenses outpacing revenues, student-felt impacts of rising food and housing scarcity, stagnant incomes, a changing regulatory environment, and growing pressure to deliver more credentials of greater value to a more diverse population at a lower per-pupil cost” (Navarette, 2018, p. 13).
New Challenges With COVID-19

In March 2020, another unexpected change hit higher education and the world: COVID-19. In California, most community colleges suspended courses and within weeks resumed courses online to meet the California safety mandate (Burke, 2020). The governor called a state of emergency on March 4, 2020, and by April, most community colleges had transferred all courses to remote learning. On March 27, 2020, the California Community Colleges Chancellor Eloy Ortiz Oakley approved all courses be offered online for public safety reasons (Oakley, 2020). The quick conversion of courses tested the limits of technology, employees, and students. Existing technology such as Zoom became a remote teaching staple (Burke, 2020). The shift was quick but not painless (Burke, 2020; H. Johnson, Cuellar Mejia, & Cook, 2020; S. Johnson, 2020).

As educators become more familiar with the technology, community colleges are determining whether they can meet the safety requirements to hold live classes in Spring 2021. The Report of the Safe Campus Reopening Workgroup by California Community Colleges (CCCCO, 2020b) provides some mandates and guidelines, such as having instructors teach in two classrooms using “glass/plexi-glass partitions in workspaces, including labs” (p. 4) for accommodating social distancing. The speedy shift to additional technology included video conferencing Zoom meetings as well as alternative technology and wraparound technical services, online clearinghouses, and “Microsoft Teams, Cranium Café, Jabber, Zoom, and a host of other technology tools” (CCCCO, 2020b, p. 13), to stay engaged with staff and students. Although technology is usually aimed at meeting and creating new opportunities, for many, the technologies during the
emergency were more about holding steady and reducing declines (H. Johnson et al., 2020).

What Is the Job of a College President?

In addition to overseeing complex departments, presidents answer to the college board of trustees. All the changes occurring in an institution mean more expectations of a president’s role, as is apparent in job descriptions for the college president of a California community college (Higher Ed Jobs, 2020). The job description for district president at the San Mateo County Community College District was four pages with 23 bulleted duties and responsibilities. Most of the requirements for the position can be summed up in seven overarching areas:

- collaborate with shared governance and all stakeholders;
- maintain budget and fiscal responsibility;
- promote safety and security of the people and facilities;
- oversee organizational planning and college direction and partnerships;
- represent the college image and communicate inward and outward;
- ensure internal collaboration, development, and maintenance of academic direction; and
- recommend staff, lead and oversee hiring, retention, and terminations. (Higher Ed Jobs, 2020)

In the same job description, under knowledge, skills, and abilities, of the 25 bulleted items, some were straightforward skills and experience such as knowledge of and/or experience with the collective bargaining process, relevant labor laws and regulations, and the critical and historic role of labor unions in
education; a demonstrated respect for employees right to organize; and a commitment to collaborative, inclusive resolution of conflicts. (Higher Ed Jobs, 2020, Knowledge, Skills and Abilities section)

The San Mateo job description (Higher Ed Jobs, 2020) includes American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) core competencies. The six AACC core competencies are organizational strategy, resource management, communication, collaboration, community college advocacy, and professionalism. Some researchers have organized presidential core effectiveness skills and abilities using the six AACC competencies (Buckley, 2018; McDonald, 2012; McNair, 2009; McNair et al., 2011). In addition to the AACC competencies, the other skills college presidents consistently require include fundraising and collective bargaining (Boggs & McPhail, 2016; McDonald, 2012; McNair, 2009; Ross & Green, 2000).

The role of president also requires other less-codified skills and demands including fundraising, budgeting, planning, accountability, funding models, EI, and understanding the uses and dangers of communication technology such as social media (Buckley, 2018; Delabbio, 2006; Evelyn, 2004; Gagliardi, 2017; Gagliardi et al., 2017; Greenblatt, 2016; Maslin-Ostrowski et al., 2010; McNaughtan, 2016; Ross & Green, 2000; Smith, 2016). Fundraising, in particular, is becoming a major part of the job for a community college president (McNaughtan, 2016). Boggs and McPhail (2016) stated that “fundraising—a long-established activity at four-year institutions—is becoming a necessity, rather than an option for community colleges” (p. 74). In Gagliardi’s (2017) study, college presidents cited fundraising as the activity ranked second highest in taking up most of their time.
In addition, the San Mateo college president job description (Higher Ed Jobs, 2020) listed characteristics that were not easily codified but related to style of leadership and attitude such as

- a future-oriented, systematic thinker who has proven experience in setting institutional priorities, making good decisions, articulating the rationales that inform decisions, assessing the efficacy of decisions, garnering support of others, and following through with initiatives to enhance the performance, image and appeal of the college. (Knowledge, Skills and Abilities section)

Colleges also search for a president who is a good “fit.” The College of San Mateo “prioritized” (Higher Ed Jobs, 2020, Who We Want section) candidates demonstrating an equity and diversity mindset and who value mentorship as characteristics that fit the college’s vision and its diverse student population. As important as job expectations and training are, fit is also considered a major factor in successful tenure (Aspen Institute, 2017; Buckley; 2018; McNaughtan, 2018; Monahan, 2004).

**Challenges in the Position of College President**

College presidents face more pressure from accountability, legislative changes, and funding changes. In 2001, Richard Freeland noted the modern university is larger, covers more intellectual territory, serves more varied constituents, has complex financing, and interacts with state and federal entities more extensively than in the past. Despite or because of these evolving responsibilities, the college president has a “valuable, even indispensable, role to play” (Freeland, 2001, p. 239). Understanding the multifaceted work of a college president requires examining the job description, the tasks needing prioritization, and the competency skills expected. ACE regularly surveys
college presidents on the perceived challenges presidents will face in the future. In 2017, the top three challenges were (a) not having enough money (61%), (b) faculty resistance to change (45%), and (c) lack of time to think (44%; Gagliardi, 2017; Gagliardi et al., 2017). Also, presidents face four related challenges: budget and financial management (68%), fundraising (58%), enrollment management (38%), and diversity and equity concerns (30%). Many of the other challenges that require extensive time and energy align with the AACC competencies, specifically organizational strategy, resource management, communication, and collaboration (Buckley, 2018; McDonald, 2012; McNair, 2009; McNair et al., 2011). The increased pressure to raise money and manage funds and the changing funding formulas impact the day-to-day workings of a college and the president’s job.

**Challenges of the Board**

Also navigating the politics of a new or changing board can add to additional challenges for college presidents. Superintendent presidents, despite their qualifications, often lack “training and understanding of how to navigate the politics of the school board” (Tooker, 2019, p. 1). Buckley (2018) noted that presidents who directly reported to the board were more satisfied overall because a solid board–president relationship “can be a source of stability” (p. 34), yet publicly elected boards, like California community college boards, are “less likely to be supportive” (p. 34) of the president. First, elected boards campaign on change, and a changing board adds “volatility” (Buckley, 2018, p. 66). Elected board members may change more quickly, and Buckley noted that board turnover often results in presidential turnover. McNaughtan’s (2018) research found that the most common reason for a college president’s leaving was “conflict with institutional
boards and other leaders” (p. 521). Board and faculty relations are seen “as significant factors that contributed to presidential turnover” (McNaughtan, 2016, p. 27). This corresponds to Buckley’s (2018) findings that “the two most important relationships for community college presidents are the relationships with the Board and with the faculty” (p. 34).

**Challenges With Technology**

In addition, the speed of change with technology (Bichsel, 2012; Boggs & McPhail, 2016) and added influence of social media are challenges to the college president (Bartel, 2018; Greenblatt, 2016; Gruber et al., 2015; Hughes, 2018; Maslin-Ostrowski et al., 2010; Venters et al., 2012). Technology concerns including the growing need for cyber-security (Boggs & McPhail, 2016) and demands for data-driven decisions and new software to accumulate and manage data have “not yet matured to the point where they are using data for prediction or decision-making” (Bichsel, 2012, p. 25).

Boggs and McPhail (2016) stated,

Much has been written about social media in business field, and many community colleges have developed social media policies, there is a scarcity of information on how those policies are governed and the leader’s role in the media governance process. (p. 122)

Social media accelerates the speed of information and allows users to share and express opinions in real time and unite for a cause (Gruber et al., 2015). In addition, in the position of leadership as a college president, Bartels (2017) noted that a search team should investigate presidential candidates through social media as one way to confirm a candidate “exemplifies character in decision making” (p. 187).
Presidential Tenure Crisis in the California Community Colleges


College presidents are leaving the position sooner because of increasingly complicated demands, including economic declines, regulations, and oversight (CCLC, 2020b, Maslin-Ostrowski et al., 2010; Navarette, 2018). Added to these stressful demands, technology and social media ensure college presidents are in the public eye 24/7, and too often, social media and internet complaints have an impact more quickly than traditional news (Gruber et al., 2015; Maslin-Ostrowski et al., 2010).

Another concern is a perceived limited pool of qualified candidates (Aspen Institute, 2017, 2020; CCLC, 2002; McNair, 2009). Many organizations help train future presidents such as the Aspen Institute (2020) or help newly hired presidents like the CCLC year-long training. Yet many sitting presidents indicate key skills can only be learned and demonstrated through hands-on job experience, including fundraising, organizational strategy, fiscal management, strategic planning, and collective bargaining (Boggs & McPhail, 2016; McNair, 2009; Ross & Green, 2000).
McNaughtan (2016) described the cost of the president turnover crisis as direct and indirect. The direct cost is the search and hiring process. Recruiting candidates is costly due to paying a search firm and the college employees’ time and energy for screening and interviews (Aspen Institute, 2017; McNaughtan, 2016). The indirect cost is the disruption to the college environment (Aspen Institute, 2017; McNaughtan, 2016; Navarette, 2018). New ideas and energy may be needed, but the presidential transition time disrupts operational and budget planning (Navarette, 2018). Also, uncertainty regarding a new president impacts the college culture, organizational structure, and overall effectiveness (McGlynn, 2018; Navarette, 2018). Faculty, staff, trustees, students, and community are impacted by college leadership burnout and retention (Aspen Institute, 2017; Gordon, 2016; McGlynn, 2018; McNaughtan, 2016). Navarette (2018) pointed out that leadership transition can impact a college’s critical mission: student success.

Who Are the College Presidents?

Many researchers and reports have explored who is doing the challenging job of college president (Aspen Institute, 2017, 2020; CCLC, 2002, 2012, 2014, 2020a, 2020b; Cook, 2012; Gagliardi et al., 2017; Navarette, 2018; Ross & Green, 2000). ACE and CCLC have conducted studies of presidents and CEOs for over 30 years. The change in age, tenure, gender, and diversity over time provides insights into diversification and the aging out of presidents. According to the American College President Study 2017, the average American college or university president is 61.7 years of age, has a doctorate, and is most likely a White male (Gagliardi et al., 2017). Although a doctorate is not always needed or stated in job descriptions (Higher Ed Jobs, 2020), Delabbio (2006)
indicated that most presidential search committees see not having a doctorate as a serious limitation. Krull (2011) found that female presidents saw a doctorate as one of the four steps to preparing for presidency.

Only 30% of college presidents are women, an increase of 7% from 2006 (Seltzer, 2017) and a 20% increase from 1986 (Gagliardi, 2017). Eighty-three percent of college presidents are White and only 16.8% are minorities, an increase of 3% from 2006 and an 8.8% increase from 1986 (Gagliardi et al., 2017). The average age of the president has been rising over the last 30 years; by 2016, almost 60% of all college presidents were 60 years or older. In 2011, the ACE report included a 71 or older category to track the distinction (Gagliardi et al., 2017). ACE specifically noted 54% of presidents surveyed plan to leave their position in 5 years or less (Gagliardi et al., 2017).

**California Community Colleges Presidents: Age, Gender, and Diversity**

California community college presidents are more diverse than U.S. college and university presidents (CCLC, 2012; Gagliardi et al., 2017; Navarette, 2018). A comparison of U.S. college and university presidents and those of community colleges, referred to as 2-year colleges or associate degree-granting colleges, reveals demographic differences (Bartels, 2017). For instance, compare the age differences of the two groups in the *American College President Study 2017* (Gagliardi et al., 2017). In addition, the presidents of 2-year associate degree-granting colleges tend to be younger with 49% of community college presidents at 60 years or younger compared to all U.S. colleges in which the number is 41%.

The gender differences over the past 40 years also indicate the discrepancies in the community college presidents. According to the *American College President Study*
2017 (Gagliardi et al., 2017), women who are college presidents are more likely to be serving at 2-year institutions, such as community colleges, rather than institutions offering higher degrees (see Table 1).

The position of college president is becoming increasingly diversified, and California community colleges have continued to be more diversified than national colleges and universities in recent years. According to the CCLC (2020b), California community college presidents are more diverse than national college presidents. However, the average president in the California Community Colleges system is still White (58.5%), male (69.9%), and 60 years of age or older (CCLC, 2020b; Gagliardi et al., 2017; Howard & Gagliardi, 2018; Navarette, 2018).

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Doctorate</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
<td>13.8%</td>
<td>22.3%</td>
<td>21.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td>18.7%</td>
<td>20.3%</td>
<td>21.5%</td>
<td>22.8%</td>
<td>29.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s</td>
<td>16.1%</td>
<td>20.4%</td>
<td>18.7%</td>
<td>23.2%</td>
<td>22.9%</td>
<td>27.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate’s</td>
<td>7.9%</td>
<td>22.4%</td>
<td>26.8%</td>
<td>28.8%</td>
<td>33.0%</td>
<td>35.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special focus</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
<td>14.8%</td>
<td>14.8%</td>
<td>16.6%</td>
<td>20.5%</td>
<td>30.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All institutions</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
<td>19.3%</td>
<td>21.1%</td>
<td>23.0%</td>
<td>26.4%</td>
<td>30.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


**Women as College Presidents in California Community Colleges**

Although women in the California community colleges are more numerous than in the U.S. colleges nationally, women leaders in California community colleges have still been underrepresented historically (Alex-Assenoh, 2012; CCLC, 2002, 2012, 2014;
Fedrizzi-Williams, 2016; Gagliardi et al., 2017; Monahan, 2004; Parker, 2015; Yearout et al., 2017). In a 1953 survey, only two women were in the position of academic dean, second in command to the president, and the same study found 86% of presidents determined “men as preferred” (Frye, 1995, p. 10) for this high-level leadership position. A 1960 profile of 2-year colleges does not mention gender (Frye, 1995), and earlier CCLC (1998, 1999, 2002, 2006, 2010) reports only mentioned women as increasing but no specific numbers or percentages were shown until 2010. Using the CCLC (2020a) dashboard and CCLC (2020b) report, the historical data are more visible and can be confirmed for the California Community Colleges’ timeline since 1913 (see Table 2).

Table 2

*Community College League of California CEOs by Gender, 1920–2020*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total CEOs</th>
<th>No. of women</th>
<th>% of women</th>
<th>No. of men</th>
<th>% of men</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1920s</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>90.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930s</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>96.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1940s</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>96.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1950s</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>98.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960s</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1970s</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>97.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980s</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>96.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990s</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>15.2%</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>84.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000s</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>32.4%</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>67.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>41.3%</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>58.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>45.4%</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>54.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Community college CEOs include chancellors, superintendent presidents, and college presidents. Although this study only researched superintendent presidents and college presidents, CCLC compiles all these positions in its data. In 2020, of the 139
CEOs in the California community colleges, 16.5% were chancellors and 83.5% were presidents (this study’s population).

In administration in U.S. higher education institutions, men continue to dominate in professorships and administration at all levels (Parker, 2015; Yearout et al., 2017). ACE has data from over 30 years of the percentage of women as college president, showing the percentage is increasing. However, the pipeline to the president is just as important as 27% of academic deans are women (Fedrizzi-Williams, 2016).

Although there is still evidence that gender discrimination remains a factor (June, 2015; Krause, 2017; Mason et al., 2013), another reason more women do not take on higher leadership is related to expectation conflicts of different roles and personal and professional concerns (Maume, 2006; Rhoads & Rhoads, 2012; Yearout et al., 2017). The complexity of gender expectations and the high expectations of taking on higher leadership roles, such as college president, result in women viewing “identity structures” (Oikelome, 2017, p. 28) as a barrier. Women are not taking on more roles in higher leadership for many reasons including that they are less likely to visualize themselves in the position of president and because of work-life balance concerns.

**Pipeline for women as presidents in higher education.** In 2011, 56% of administrators in higher education were women but only 36% of community college presidents were women, and only 35% of women in administrative leadership roles at higher education institutions wanted or planned to seek a presidency (Yearout et al., 2017). Yet since 1979, women have earned over 50% of bachelor’s and master’s degrees and 30% of doctorates (Parker, 2015). Despite their educational qualifications, women are less likely than men to be in leadership or in the leadership pipeline as tenured
In 2012, 85% of college presidents and chancellors were men, and 75% of full professors were men (Parker, 2015). Yet women earned 57% of bachelor’s degrees in 2018 (American Physical Society, 2018) and 53% of all U.S. doctoral degrees in 2019 (Perry, 2020). In the past 11 years, women have earned more doctorates than men (Perry, 2020). With more women completing higher degrees and thus being qualified for higher education leadership positions, why are women still in the minority for college leadership? Although the cultural view of men as leaders and the glass ceiling are still issues, internal obstacles and expectations on personal lives are part of the reason women do not seek higher leadership positions (Krull, 2011; Marshall, 2009; Oikelome, 2017).

**Barriers.** According to Oikelome (2017), challenges for women presidents fall into two barriers: organizational and identity. Organizational barriers include traditional pathways as “more beneficial to men” (Oikelome, 2017, p. 31). Identity barriers are numerous, but two are in the position and work–life conflict. In McNair’s (2014) study of new presidents, 80% of the women applied for presidency after a “tap on the shoulder” suggestion (p. 188). With fewer role models and mentors, women may not see themselves as leaders (Krull, 2011; Marshall, 2009; Oikelome, 2017; Ward & Eddy, 2013).


**Research Gap**

There is significant research on each of the separate dimensions of wellness under Rosen’s (2014) model: physical (Bess, 2015; Franke et al., 2014; van Rensburg et al., 2011), emotional (Aguilar, 2018; Muktak, 2017), social (Goleman & Boyatzis, 2008; Van Oosten et al., 2019), intellectual (Chirico, 2016; Dames, 2019; de Klerk, 2005; Elliot, 2015; Horstmeyer, 2018), spiritual (Bekelman et al., 2007), and vocational (Gatchel & Kishino, 2012). Research on particular stressors has focused on specific populations such as older adults (Walton et al., 1991), college students (Fehring et al., 1987), or cancer patients (Granstrom, 1988). The research is less prolific on holistic wellness or grounded models of healthy leaders. Rosen’s (2014) holistic research focused on leadership in the corporate world. There are some holistic wellness models similar to Rosen’s model (Barsch & Lavoie, 2014; Rath & Harter, 2010). However, only a few are solely focused on women (Barsh et al., 2008, 2011; Barsch & Lavoie, 2014).

The research into women in the role of college presidents has been well covered (Marshall, 2009; McNair, 2014; Parker, 2015; Reis & Grady, 2018; Yearout et al., 2017). However, there is little research on higher education leaders, specifically college presidents using a holistic model, and even less on the strategies exemplary female community college presidents take to remain grounded. Additionally, there is significant research on the gender gap and on the pipeline and college cultures. Nevertheless, examining the strategies of successful female college presidents may create a pathway for others to use grounded strategies in their leadership and thus open up the pipeline for
more women to follow into leadership. This study attempted to fill the gaps between the studies of individual wellness factors to a more holistic view using Rosen’s (2014) six areas of health. Also, by exploring the strategies successful female leaders have developed and practiced, these strategies will help other female leaders remain grounded.

**Summary**

Changes in the work environment have led to studies on leadership and technology and the impact technology has on leadership (Barley et al., 2011; S. Casey, 2015; Davis, 2014; Drucker, 1963; McGlynn, 2018; Stich et al., 2018; Tarafdar et al., 2010; Thomas, 2014). Transformational leadership uses the four skills that align with a leader’s actions of staying grounded. The areas of Rosen’s (2014) grounded wellness have been studied individually (physical, emotional, social, intellectual, vocational, and spiritual). Higher education challenges and current leadership situations show community colleges are at the forefront of including diversity and younger people in the role of president. However, problems faced by presidents, specifically in California community colleges, add to concerns of retaining presidents and attracting candidates for the position.

The barriers to women leaning into a presidency are internal as well as external. However, like many other institutions, California community colleges are in a leadership crisis because the position of president has become more stressful. To avoid burnout, leaders need to be well-grounded. The history of community college presidents, their changing role and pressures of the position, and women in leadership roles in community colleges show women are underrepresented but continue to increase in number. Exploring the grounded strategies used by women college presidents will add to the
leadership health of women leaders and will encourage more gender diversity in the role of president when the position is most in crisis and in need of an infusion of leaders. Exploring how women in the presidency successfully manage to stay grounded using Rosen’s (2014) six areas of health can assist others in the way these strategies can be applied to help women remain grounded while taking on higher level responsibilities and roles. As changes continue in higher education, leaders must be grounded to handle the winds of change, and more women must be willing to take the helm. As the number of qualified candidates for president dwindles, the need is higher than ever.
CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

Overview

Chapter III describes the methodology for this thematic research study on grounded leadership and exemplary female college presidents. The selection of participants, including the population, target population, and sample, are delineated. The chapter presents a detailed description of the mixed methods quantitative survey instrument and the qualitative interview protocols. The data collection and analysis processes are provided. Information on validity and reliability and the study limitations are included.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this explanatory mixed methods study was to identify and describe what exemplary female presidents in California community colleges do to stay grounded and maintain physical, emotional, intellectual, social, vocational, and spiritual health.

Research Questions

1. How do exemplary female presidents in California community colleges rate themselves on the Stay Grounded survey in the six areas of balance (physical, emotional, intellectual, social, vocational, and spiritual health)?

2. What strategies do exemplary female presidents in California community colleges use to develop and maintain grounded leadership in the six areas of balance (physical, emotional, intellectual, social, vocational, and spiritual health)?

Research Design

The purpose of this study was to explore and understand the various strategies female presidents at California community colleges use to remain grounded in the
changing college environment. The topic lends itself to an explanatory mixed methods approach as quantitative research is conducted and analyzed, followed by qualitative research to allow for a deep understanding of the topic (Patton, 2015). While a qualitative method allows for exploration to provide insight and context and uses the subjects’ own words in a narrative, quantitative research design can “extend the generalizability of information that was discovered through exploratory research” (Patten & Newhart, 2018, p. 22). The mixed methods approach was chosen collaboratively by the grounded leadership thematic team because it allows objective data and themes as well as the rich, lived experiences of college presidents.

The explanatory mixed methods research design was selected for this study because it uses both quantitative and qualitative methods, so it provided comprehensive information to meet and achieve the study’s purpose and address both the purpose and research questions. In a mixed methods research design, the researcher collects and analyzes data then makes inferences from both methods to gain more insight into the research questions. In explanatory mixed methods research, the quantitative method is followed by qualitative data collection to further expand on the quantitative results.

An additional benefit of an explanatory mixed methods approach, according to McMillan and Schumacher (2014), is that it includes surveys that can gather data and establish relationships between variables while remaining detached and context-free. The survey’s quantitative data were used to identify the presidents’ self-perception ranking on the six grounded areas of health: physical, emotional, intellectual, social, vocational, and spiritual health. The survey quantitative data are enhanced with more depth and detail by the qualitative interviews. By using both methods, qualitative and quantitative, the data
identified the self-perception of female presidents of California community colleges in the six areas of grounded leadership as well as offering rich contextual explanations of their strategies through lived experiences and explained results (Patten & Newhart, 2018).

**Quantitative Research Methods**

In the quantitative component of the research, female presidents of California community colleges responded based on their self-perception ranking on the six grounded areas in their position. A survey was conducted using the instrument developed collaboratively by the seven-member peer research team (Appendix B). The survey used a Likert scale on the six dimensions established on grounded leadership (Rosen, 2014). The purpose of the quantitative survey was to gather initial data on grounded strategies and self-perceptions of exemplary female college presidents on their own quality of being grounded in the six areas of the study.

**Qualitative Research Methods**

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2014), qualitative research allows an understanding of the contextual situations from the participant’s perspective. The qualitative approach was included in the study methodology because it synthesized the presidents’ unique experiences and strategies in staying grounded. Qualitative researchers are not trying to generalize to a known population but still may be interested in exploring a topic that adds knowledge about a process or a concept (Patten & Newhart, 2018).

For this study, the team of peer researchers ultimately decided that the mixed methods approach combining both quantitative and qualitative data would provide the
depth and breadth required to sufficiently address the research questions. Creswell and Creswell (2018) stated that the mixed methods approach “yields additional insight beyond the information provided by quantitative and qualitative data alone” (p. 4). In this study, the quantitative instrument gathered data of exemplary female presidents who rated themselves on the six areas of health: physical, emotional, intellectual, social, vocational, and spiritual. In addition, a qualitative approach provided more depth and details to support the quantitative survey exploring participants’ grounded strategies and processes. The surveys, individual interviews, and artifacts provided by the interviewees, or readily available in public online forums such as LinkedIn, were used for triangulation (see Figure 3).

![Sequential explanatory mixed methods design](https://example.com/figure3.png)


**Population**

The population is a large group that meets a distinct criterion, which allows the researcher to generalize findings from the study (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014). The study population was female community college presidents. In 2020, there were 941 public community colleges in the United States (Duffin, 2020). According to the ACE study (Gagliardi et al., 2017), 30% of women were presidents in U.S. colleges while to a
higher degree 36% of women were presidents in 2-year associate degree institutions. The population of U.S. public community college women presidents was based on the number of public community colleges and the percentage of women presidents and was estimated at approximately 338. For this study, the population of U.S. public community college women presidents was 338.

The job of a college president includes partnering with the community and being the public face of the college. In reviewing different job descriptions, one can see that the role of the president is varied but includes an overarching perspective to develop and implement short-term and long-term strategies, vision, and mission of the institution. A college president oversees financial, academic, and operational functions and develops participatory relationships and plans to include college leaders. The president maintains communication with the state and regional governing groups to stay informed of changes in the budget, vision, or initiatives to best prepare the institution. Finally, a college president also answers to the governing board of the institution (Browne, 2017; Gagliardi et al., 2017; Higher Ed Jobs, 2020; Indeed.com, 2020).

**Target Population**

According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), the target population is a group of subjects with characteristics in common, which allow the researcher to both study and make inferences regarding the findings. The target population is a smaller group within the population to be studied. The target population is often delimited by elements such as cost, time, and other logistics, which can impact the ability to study all the members in the population group (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014). According to CCCCCO (2020a), as of September 2020, 116 community colleges were within the system. The target
population for the study was female community college presidents in the California Community Colleges system (see Figure 4). The number of female California community colleges presidents at the time of the study was 42 (excluding interims). The specific numbers were based on the full list of all community colleges on the chancellor’s website and an individual review of each college’s website for college president information (Appendix A).

Sample

Patten and Newhart (2018) and Patton (2015) defined a sample as a subset of the target population representing the whole population. Purposeful and convenience sampling was used for this study. Purposeful sampling in research expects a judgment to be used in selecting the subjects for the study sample with the needed characteristics for the topic or study (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014). The subjects selected were exemplary community college presidents based on the exemplary leader definition cocreated with the peer research team. Patton (2015) described purposeful sampling as intentionally recruiting participants who exhibit the desired characteristics detailed in the study. Convenience sampling accounts for availability and accessibility of the subjects and may include schedules, cost, and available time (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014).

To understand the grounded strategies practiced by female presidents of California community colleges, the first step was to determine which presidents met the grounded criteria. Research was conducted to determine which female presidents met the criteria for exemplary. Data were determined from sources, including presidents’ available biographic material on websites, chancellor’s office, LinkedIn, peer recommendations, conference papers, and other available web-based resources. It was
not feasible to study all members in the population group of female presidents of community colleges; therefore, the target population of female presidents of California community colleges was selected.

When conducting mixed methods studies, the researcher should use guidelines for quantitative and qualitative methods. According to Creswell and Poth (2018), there is no set number for a qualitative study. McMillan and Schumacher (2014) determined that a sample size for quantitative data using “only a small percentage of the population can approximate the characteristics of the population satisfactorily” (p. 155). Patton (2015) described the lack of specific suggested sample sizes for qualitative research: “The validity, meaningfulness, and insights generated from qualitative inquiry have more to do with the information richness of the cases selected” (p. 313).

When conducting mixed methods studies, researchers should use guidelines for quantitative and qualitative methods. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2014), for determining a sample size for quantitative data, using “only a small percentage of the population can approximate the characteristics of the population satisfactorily” (p. 155). For this study, the sample size was 16 for the quantitative survey. Determining a qualitative sample varies based on the study, but the goal of purposeful sampling is selecting “information-rich” (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014, p. 349) cases for in-depth study. The purposeful sampling approach fits the study of California community college presidents who met the criteria for demonstrating exemplary ground practices and insight.
From the 16 surveyed, five were interviewed based on volunteering for the interview within the survey document. The participants exhibited at least four of the following characteristics:

- evidence of successful development of grounded leadership skill (physical, emotional, intellectual, vocational, spiritual, and social);
- evidence of leading a successful organization or unit;
- a minimum of 5 years of experience in the field;
- articles, papers, or materials written, published, or presented at conferences or association meetings;
- recognition by her peers;
- membership in professional associations in her field; and
- participation in workshops and seminars in work–life balance.

Figure 4. Funnel infographic of population for study.
Sample Selection Process

The selection of participants for the mixed methods research study required multiple steps to determine a sample that met at least four of the following listed criteria, was accessible, and would render useful data for the study:

1. A list of all presidents of California community colleges was created (Appendix A).
2. Female presidents were determined (Appendix A).
3. Interim presidents were excluded (Appendix A).
4. From the list of female California community college presidents, research was conducted to determine which female presidents met the criteria for exemplary. Data were determined from sources, including presidents’ biographic websites, chancellor’s office, LinkedIn, peer recommendations, conference papers, and other available web-based resources.
5. Each president of confirmed exemplary status was contacted via e-mail, LinkedIn, and/or telephone.
6. Those female community college presidents who met the criteria were sent an e-mail explaining the research and asking for their participation.
7. The first 16 female presidents who responded as willing to participate were included in the study sample. According to Patton (2015), this number is viable for a quantitative study, allowing for depth and detail.
8. The identified sample of participants were then sent an e-mail, which included the link to the survey instrument (Appendix B) and a timeline for participation.
9. To complete the survey, participants had to confirm receipt of the Brandman Bill of Rights (Appendix C) and survey informed consent (Appendix D), which were included as part of the survey.

10. Within the survey instrument, participants were queried as to their willingness to volunteer to be part of the subsequent interviews and for their contact information.

11. Five of the participants who volunteered and subsequently responded were contacted and scheduled for an interview at a day and time at their convenience.

12. Interviews, using Zoom, were then scheduled based on availability of participants and the researcher as well as meeting and gathering artifacts within the study timeframe.

**Instrumentation**

This study used an explanatory mixed methods design. The team of seven peer researchers used both quantitative and qualitative instrumentation and data analysis to answer the research questions. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2014), a mixed methods approach combines the benefits of both quantitative and qualitative methods. It involves the intentional collection of both quantitative and qualitative data and the combination of the strengths of each method to answer the research questions. The team of seven peer researchers, in collaboration with committee faculty, developed both the quantitative survey and the qualitative interview protocol in a reiterative process.

The quantitative survey instrument used structured questions in the form of scaled items explicitly based on the theoretical framework of Rosen’s (2014) six areas of grounded leaders (physical, emotional, intellectual, social, vocational, and spiritual health). The Likert-scale survey was designed for subjects to determine where on the scale best reflected their beliefs or perceptions in response to the statement. The
questions were designed to provide a numeric rating of 6 (agree strongly), 5 (agree moderately), 4 (agree slightly), 3 (disagree slightly), 2 (disagree moderately), and 1 (disagree strongly) of exemplary female community college presidents’ self-ranking on the six areas of remaining grounded. Survey data collection was conducted through SurveyMonkey and was e-mailed to the participants who met the criteria.

The qualitative method for this study included a semistructured interview, which was conducted using Zoom. The interviews built on the information gathered in the quantitative portion to further explain and explore the data regarding the strategies exemplary female community college presidents utilize to stay grounded. The use of a mixed methods study design neutralizes the weakness inherent in both qualitative and quantitative research methods by providing a more in-depth understanding of the data collected (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

**Quantitative Instrument—Survey**

A quantitative instrument is used to gather numerical data that can be analyzed to identify themes within the findings. Quantitative instruments are usually in the form of surveys, tests, and questionnaires (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014). If developed and implemented correctly, quantitative instruments produce reliable data to help answer the research questions of the study (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014). For this study, the quantitative instrument used was a survey.

The quantitative survey instrument was created by a team of seven peer researchers and experienced faculty. The survey was developed utilizing Rosen’s (2014) *Grounded: How Leaders Stay Rooted in an Uncertain World* six areas of health
(physical, emotional, intellectual, social, vocational, and spiritual) using the following steps:

1. Each member of the team was assigned a variable to thoroughly research and develop a definition with references associated with each variable.

2. Each member’s assigned definition was reviewed, refined, and approved by the team and experienced faculty.

3. Each member drafted a set of survey statements for their assigned variable and created an item bank of questions aligned with the variable and subvariables within the definition.

4. Each member’s proposed item bank of questions was reviewed, refined, and approved by the team and experienced faculty for validation.

5. The team decided to use the Likert scale to best fit the survey instrument for validity of the study.

6. The thematic team analyzed the survey and agreed on a total of 40 statements and an additional five demographic questions prior to the instrument.

7. An attribute chart was created to confirm the survey statements associated with each variable for the six areas of grounded health (Appendix E).

8. The team then created an introduction to the research with a consent acknowledgment.

9. To ensure the survey statements were appropriately objective and answered the research questions, a team of expert faculty researchers was consulted to assess the validity of the survey instrument.
10. The survey instrument was created in SurveyMonkey, which included the introduction of the research, consent acknowledgement, demographic questions, and survey statements with Likert-scale responses.

The seven peer researchers conducted a field test of the survey instrument then discussed the results and feedback from the participants. No adjustments were needed based on participants’ feedback in the study and team observations. After the items were reviewed, the quantitative survey instrument was finalized (Appendix B).

**Quantitative Survey Field Test**

Following the creation of the survey questions for quantitative data by seven peer researchers and faculty, a field test was administered. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2014), a field test aims to ensure an instrument is developed that can be used to precisely measure the research goals, which in this study was how exemplary college presidents rate themselves as grounded based on six variables (Rosen, 2014). Participants chosen for the field test met the sample criteria but were not included in the study. A sample size for the field test was three female community college presidents. Each participant was sent via e-mail the survey instrument link and a request to complete the field-test survey critique form (Appendix F). The participant feedback on the survey was to determine whether the length of the survey was adequate and whether the instructions and questions were clear. Participants completed the survey and returned the field-test survey critique form via e-mail. Upon completion of the survey field study, the seven peer researchers reviewed the feedback from participants and received the research expert report. No changes were made to the survey questions because the participants
and the research team felt the questions were appropriate and gathered the type of responses for the study.

**Qualitative Instrument–Interview**

According to Patten and Newhart (2018), there are a variety of different methods for gathering data in a qualitative study, and the most popular approaches include interviews, focus groups, direct observation, and participant observation. The interview instrument was selected for this study and provided the opportunity to perform an interview in a natural environment, depending on the preference of the interviewee. Questions and determined prompts were used as needed to allow for in-depth answers. The seven peer researchers and experienced faculty developed interview questions based on *Grounded: How Leaders Stay Rooted in an Uncertain World*, Rosen’s (2014) six areas of health (physical, emotional, intellectual, social, vocational, and spiritual). The questions were structured to understand the strategies community college presidents use to stay grounded in the changing work environment and shifting education expectations. The study used semistructured, face-to-face interviews to facilitate a more focused exploration of the specific topics. The questions and embedded probing questions (Patten & Newhart, 2018) were designed to delve deeper to understand the strategies used by exemplary leaders to stay grounded and elicit valuable data for the research. Along with Rosen’s (2014) book, information gathered during additional research was used in developing the interview questions (Appendix G). The team of seven peer researchers used the following steps to design the interview process, script, and questions:
1. Each member of the team was assigned a variable as one of Rosen’s six areas of health to research thoroughly and provide a definition with research for their assigned definition.

2. Each member’s definition was reviewed as a team and by faculty experts then approved for the study.

3. Each member developed two interview questions for the member’s assigned variable using key concepts and terms from the agreed upon definitions.

4. Each proposed member’s interview questions were reviewed by the team and expert faculty for additional validation.

5. The interview questions were approved and placed in a table illustrating alignment with the attributes for the dimensions.

6. The team compiled the interview questions into a single script with a description of the study as well as other structural research requirements.

7. Interview questions were analyzed by the team chairs and a research expert to determine whether the questions were appropriately objective and would result in the desired type of responses.

8. Interview questions were then used in a field-test interview of one participant for each team member’s target population.

9. The informed consent was sent to the field-test interview participants via e-mail.

10. The peer research team agreed the questions would be sent prior to the interview for participants to review.

11. Interviewee and observer responses were analyzed to be sure the questions gathered data aligned with the study’s purpose.
12. The responses and interviewer observations were used to refine the interview questions that were then finalized in collaboration with expert faculty. The 12-step process outlined culminated with the finalized interview instrument. The interview was conducted with the first five volunteers per their stated interest on the survey instrument and availability. Prior to the interview, an e-mail invitation was sent, which included (a) a formal invitation letter, (b) interview informed consent (Appendix H), and (c) Bill of Rights of the participants (Appendix C). Interview participants were informed via e-mail that the interview would be recorded and transcribed, and the researcher would take measures to protect confidentiality and privacy. The interview was completed via Zoom using semistructured questions specific in the intent to provide rich data for the research (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014). The 60-minute interviews were completed after the community college presidents completed the quantitative online survey on each presidents’ self-ranking on grounded strategies. Participants were presented with the interview questions and definitions without the prompts before the interview to allow ease during the interview. The interviewer used additional prompt questions when participant responses were unclear or more information was needed. There was no deviation from the written interview script to ensure the collection of factual data.

After interviews were completed, gathered data were transcribed into a written transcript. Participants were provided the opportunity to review the transcript for accuracy. After the participants had reviewed the transcripts, the data were analyzed and encoded by the researcher using a qualitative analysis system known as NVivo.
Researcher as an Instrument

Patton (2015) stated that the researcher is known as the instrument in the collection of qualitative data, and the data may be influenced unintentionally by the researcher’s unique background, experience, personality, and other influencing factors. At the time of this study, the background of the researcher included 20 years of experience working in California community colleges. The researcher also had extensive experience communicating with college presidents. Throughout the duration of this study, the researcher held the role of English professor at a California community college. To control for possible bias, the researcher employed a field or pilot-test process with an observer for feedback. Feedback from the expert observer as well as the pilot participant provided the opportunity for the researcher to ensure potential bias was mitigated. The actual interviews were conducted over Zoom in a neutral environment acceptable to participants. The interview was recorded and transcribed into a written format, which was checked for accuracy by the participant.

Qualitative Interview Field Test

In addition, a field-test interview was conducted to test the qualitative instrument elicited the needed type of research responses on individual strategies exemplary college presidents use to stay grounded based on the six variables (Rosen, 2014). According to Patten and Newhart (2018), qualitative interviews should be “pilot-tested with at least a few individuals who will not be participants in the study” (p. 161). Interviewing participants can be costly, time-consuming, and challenging to find willing participants (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014). As a result, only one of the three participants’ survey
field test was selected for the field-test interview. The field-test interview was conducted over Zoom at a physical site chosen for ease of the participant.

A research-experienced observer was selected to observe the interview. After a field test, questions were reviewed and revised as needed (Patten & Newhart, 2018). Therefore, after the field-test interview, the participant provided feedback via the Interview Feedback Reflection form (Appendix I), and the experienced research observer who was chosen based on the observer’s familiarity with the qualitative interview method provided feedback using the observer feedback form (Appendix J).

The feedback from both participant and observer was to identify the strengths and weaknesses, including whether the interview length of time was appropriate, whether any questions required clarification, and whether any adjustments to the researcher’s performance needed to be made in conducting the interviews. The feedback and the team of researchers’ own observations of the process and results indicated revisions were needed. The seven peer researchers made the necessary adjustments to the interview script based on feedback, observations, and resulting answers. A revised version of the interview questions was reviewed, refined, and approved by the expert faculty.

**Triangulation**

According to Patten and Newhart (2018), data triangulation “is the use of multiple sources or multiple methods for obtaining data on the research topic” (p. 156). By using triangulation, the “limitation based on a single way of measuring variables” is avoided (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014, p. 214). A research methodology using triangulation collects qualitative and quantitative data simultaneously to yield more widespread data from the study (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014). The quantitative survey instrument,
qualitative interviews, collection of artifacts found in public domain, and self-reporting from interview participants created triangulation in this study.

**Validity and Reliability**

**Validity**

According to Salkind (2016), “Validity is to the degree to which an assessment tool measures what it says it does” (p. 42). The survey instrument for this study had construct validity, which was indirect (Patten & Newhart, 2018). The peer researchers used Rosen’s (2014) six different areas to create a construct validity for a “collection of related behaviors that are associated in a meaningful way” (Patten & Newhart, 2018, p. 133). McMillan and Schumacher (2014) stated that test validity “is to the extent to which inferences made on the basis of numerical scores are appropriate, meaningful, and useful” (p. 189). In addition, interviews were mechanically recorded, and participant reviewed for accuracy. Also, the instruments underwent external review by expert faculty. Both the quantitative and qualitative instruments were field-tested. The researchers addressed the potential concerns of validity through the following steps:

1. The peer research team administered field testing for the quantitative survey and qualitative interview. McMillan and Schumacher (2014) stated that field testing is an additional method to confirm an instruments validity.

2. Also, feedback from survey participants, interview participants, and observers was gathered and reviewed with the peer research team to improve study validity.

3. In addition, when conducting mixed methods research that analyzes qualitative data, the peer researchers noted there were few rules beyond using “information rich” (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014, p. 349) smaller samples than quantitative data.
However, five to 25 participants can suffice (Creswell, 1998). Often a smaller sample size yields more valuable information (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014).

4. Validity in quantitative research was used to determine whether the scores measured the material they intended to measure (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The researchers also analyzed the scores and potential inferences derived from the scores. To ensure the stronger validity of the data, these methods were included: the computer program, NVivo; member verification; and triangulation of the data.

5. Because internal validity is the effect that the dependent variable may have on the independent variable (Patton, 2015), participant selection can potentially result in a threat to validity. Therefore, participants were selected through purposeful sampling to meet the exemplary leader criteria and from their responses on the quantitative survey instrument.

Reliability

According to Salkind (2016), “Reliability relates to the degree to which a test measures something consistently” (p. 41). For a test to be reliable, it needs to remain consistent with its results (Patton 2017). Qualitative surveys were field-tested, and a variety of information was used to finalize the survey instrument. The thematic team considered participant feedback critique forms (Appendix F) and reviewed statistical results using Cronbach’s alpha, the team experiences, and consultation with expert faculty to finalize the survey instrument. The team added five demographic questions before final approval of the quantitative survey. The study used standardized processes and protocols across the peer research team for instrument use, triangulation, and intercoder reliability.
Qualitative interviews were semistructured and included embedded prompts to increase reliability and consistency (Patten & Newhart, 2018). Qualitative interviews were field-tested, garnering participant, peer observer, and peer researcher feedback on the process. In addition, the results were reviewed to ensure responses were appropriate to the study’s research goal. Participants were given the transcripts to confirm accuracy of the interviews, which help ensure the quality of the data (Patten & Newhart, 2018).

Patton (2015) stated that a “test is reliable if it yields consistent results” (p. 83). Cronbach’s alpha (or coefficient alpha), developed by Lee Cronbach in 1951, measures reliability or internal consistency. Reliability is how well a test measures what it should. Cronbach’s alpha is a measure of internal reliability. It measures (on a scale of 0 to 1) how consistently a set of items measures a particular construct. A commonly accepted rule is that an alpha of 0.7 (some say 0.6) indicates acceptable reliability. The composite score of the Cronbach’s alpha for the Grounded Leadership survey was 0.732, indicating it was a reliable instrument.

Other researchers have confirmed that “reliability reveals that the researcher approach is consistent across different projects” (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 201). It was therefore important for this study that the instrument used by the researcher was considered reliable regarding data collection, data interpretation, and accuracy of results. According to Roberts (2010), reliability can be inferred to the extent to which the survey consistently measures the data from one time to another. Reliability is continually maintaining the same result over different forms of data collection. Therefore, to increase reliability, the peer research team utilized the same qualitative instrument of the
interview script and interview questions. The interview script ensured each interview participant was asked the same questions, and the following steps were taken:

1. The researcher for this study used the same techniques used by the seven-member, peer research team to demonstrate reliability. These techniques included providing participants a written detailed account of the focus of the study.

2. The interviews were all conducted and recorded using the Zoom platform, and the researcher increased reliability by providing the participants with a transcript to verify accuracy.

3. The NVivo computer program was used for coding and identifying themes.

4. The use of intercoder is another method the peer researchers used to ensure reliability. Intercoder is when a third-party evaluator analyzes and codes the researcher’s data and reaches the same conclusions (Patton, 2015). By utilizing the method of intercoder, a consistency in the coding for at least 80% of the time demonstrates strong qualitative reliability (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

5. The seven peer researchers conducted field tests of the interview procedures and questions as well as the online survey administered using SurveyMonkey.

6. Multiple methods of data, including quantitative surveys, qualitative interviews, observations, and artifacts, were analyzed and triangulated to improve the reliability of the study.

External reliability is evident in a study when another researcher replicates the study and produces the same findings and conclusions (Patton, 2015). For this study, it was difficult to attest to generalizability, especially when the qualitative study was in the form of an interview. External reliability is difficult to replicate when humans are
interviewed because the human behaviors and interactions of both parties, participants and researchers, are different during each interview.

Data Collection

Brandman University Institutional Review Board (BUIRB) approved this study before data collection began. The study researchers successfully completed the CITI coursework and received certificates on research study ethics (Appendix K). In addition, the study process ensured participants were assured of privacy and confidentiality and participants’ rights were protected throughout the study process. In this mixed methods study, both qualitative and quantitative data were collected concurrently with “questions that integrate the two methods” (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014, p. 428).

Quantitative Data Collection

Quantitative data were gathered through the web-based software SurveyMonkey. Using an existing instrument is preferred for validity (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014). However, while a survey for grounded leadership exists and was used in the Rosen (2014) study, it was unavailable for this study. The survey instrument was created through the collaboration of the seven-member peer research team and university faculty committee members. The survey participants were determined using the exemplary criteria through review of the female presidents’ experiences and their listed awards and presentations at a variety of areas. In addition, college presidents and other experts who work with college presidents offered an exemplary list of presidents who met the criteria. Once the exemplary list was compiled, the presidents who met the exemplary criteria were e-mailed an invitation to participate (Appendix L). Those who agreed to participate were e-mailed the survey link, the Participant’s Bill of Rights, and privacy protocols,
which informed participants they could at any time choose to not answer any question or halt the survey.

**Qualitative Data Collection**

Qualitative data were collected by use of interviews using the video internet software Zoom. Using the online platform allowed more flexibility to meet schedules of participants and allowed the researcher to observe many nonverbal cues and better create a comfortable environment. Participants were provided an informed consent form letting them know that the interviews would be recorded to ensure all details of the interview were correctly reported in the study. Participants were also informed of their rights, the privacy protocols, and the fact they could at any time choose to not answer any question or halt the entire interview. All interview questions were scripted, semistructured questions with specifically embedded follow-up prompts or “probing questions” (Patten & Newhart, 2018, p. 161) next to the scripted questions with an additional list of prompts that the research team agreed to use if needed. The semistructured interviews included open-ended questions designed to gather individual responses and were “fairly specific in [their] intent” (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014, p. 222). Participants were provided with a transcript of the interview to ensure accuracy to offset validity concerns (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014; Patten & Newhart, 2018).

**Data Analysis**

Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected and analyzed in this mixed methods study. The quantitative surveys and qualitative interview questions were created by the research team. Both instruments relied on technology because the survey was sent, administered, and received online using e-mail and the online tool SurveyMonkey.
The qualitative interview requests were sent via e-mail and conducted using Zoom, an online video-conferencing tool.

**Quantitative Data Analysis**

The survey created by the seven-member research team was given to 16 female California community college presidents. The study was created to elicit responses on the participants’ grounded behaviors. The questions used a Likert-type scale. Each of the six areas of grounded health became a variable in the survey instrument with five questions on each variable and 10 questions on the overall concept of grounded health behaviors. Including several statements on the grounded components creates the ability for the resulting answers to allow an analysis that will “assure that the contents of the attitude scale are comprehensive, which will contribute to its content validity” (Patten & Newhart, 2018, p. 154). Data from the quantitative survey instrument were analyzed using descriptive data.

Quantitative data were placed in tables that showed frequency, means, and standard deviations as a whole group, so comparative analysis could occur. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2014), descriptive statistics “transform a set of numbers or observations into indices that describe and characterize the data” (p. 163). Descriptive statistics is a fundamental and indispensable way to summarize quantitative data (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014). Central tendency is a descriptive statistic, which estimates the center, of which there are three types: mean, mode, and median (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014). For this study, the most common central tendency, the mean, was used. When using mean, standard deviation reduces the impact of outliers by determining the “average variability of scores” (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014, p. 175).
Qualitative Data Analysis

Qualitative data analysis primarily entails classifying things, persons, and events and the properties that categorize them (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). For this study, five exemplary female presidents of California community colleges were interviewed using Zoom. The interview used the seven-member peer research team’s qualitative instrument. Each interview was transcribed and, as part of indirect construct validity, shared with the participants to review for accuracy (Patten & Newhart, 2018). After participants confirmed accuracy, the interview responses were coded using NVivo, a qualitative data analysis computer software.

The coding used Rosen’s (2014) six variables, the areas of grounded health: physical, emotional, intellectual, social, vocational, and spiritual. NVivo offers a digital format and made sorting, organizing, and categorizing faster. Software such as NVivo helps to speed up the processes such as looking for key words and themes as well as easy retrieval within interview passages. NVivo allowed the researcher to effectively visualize and determine themes and frequencies in the participants’ responses. The themes and frequencies were recorded in a table with annotations and labels (Appendix M).

Although software can help organize qualitative data, Patton (2015) noted that the analysis comes from the researcher, the “human being, not the software, must decide how to frame” (p. 529) the study and recognize the import of story patterns. A frequency table allows researchers to recognize key themes, use detailed descriptions and patterns, and interpret data (Patton 2015).
Intercoder Protocol

According to Lombard, Snyder-Dutch, and Campanella Bracken (2005), when an intercoder protocol is not established, it is widely acknowledged that “the data and interpretations of the data can never be considered valid” (p. 589). Intercoder reliability or interrater are terms to describe when independent, external researchers evaluate a “characteristic of a message or artifact and reach the same conclusions” (Lombard et al., 2005, p. 589). Therefore, by having a fellow peer researcher from the grounded research team review and code a sample of the study’s results, the reliability of the study and results were increased. The intercoder evaluated original qualitative interview responses for patterns or themes. The researcher’s and intercoder’s themes and coding were analyzed to meet the threshold of 80% agreement and ensure reliability of the codes and themes.

Limitations

Researchers strive to create a valid and reliable study with trustworthy results. However, according to Roberts (2010), “All studies have some limitations” (p. 162). Limitations are possible weaknesses of a study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The limitations of this study included sample size, time constraints, geography, and the unique 2020 situation of the COVID-19 worldwide pandemic.

Sample Size

This study had size limitations because it was limited to female California community college presidents who met the exemplary criteria. In addition, the sample was reliant on a president’s willingness to participate in the study. The smaller sample
size was a limitation because the small sample size can potentially limit the generalizing of the study.

Time

Time was a limiting factor in the requirements to work with the participants’ schedules, especially regarding the interviews. Although using the online software, Zoom, mitigated some of the limitations, the demands of the participants’ work environment also meant they may have had limited time available for interviews, even in a digital setting such as Zoom. Also, concurrent collection of data resulted in coordinating two aspects of the study at the same time. Having the same quantitative participants volunteer and selected as qualitative participants did reduce some of the limitation.

Geography

Included in the limitations of the study was the geography of the study’s population. The study was delimited to female community college presidents in California. By utilizing Zoom, some geography issues were mitigated, and some nonverbal cues could be observed. Because this study was limited to the geographical area of California, a possible limitation was there may have been additional input if the study was not restricted.

Worldwide Pandemic

The COVID-19 shelter in place and restrictions on businesses added to the participants’ mental and physical stresses and available time. The pandemic created an environment that made face-to-face interviews difficult and dangerous. The emphasis of using Zoom in education during the pandemic meant any possible level of discomfort
with technology was most likely reduced due to required Zoom uses in the workplace.
The pandemic also placed additional stresses on the participants and may also have impacted the usual behaviors and strategies they use to remain grounded. These could include being more isolated, being in close quarters for longer periods of time, and fewer opportunities to act on the possible grounded strategies. The study timing may also have allowed a unique opportunity to explore grounded behaviors during uniquely stressful events that may be useful for future exploration in grounded studies.

**Summary**

This chapter presented the research methodology of this study, including the rationale for mixed methods design, creation, and field testing of quantitative and qualitative instruments. The research purpose and research questions were restated in this chapter, and it included an explanation and description of population, target population, study sample, and the exemplary criteria for the sample. The limitations of the study were also addressed.
CHAPTER IV: RESEARCH, DATA COLLECTION, AND FINDINGS

Overview

This chapter summarizes the purpose statement, research questions, population, sample, and methodology used in the study. It also includes a review and an analysis of the data gathered in surveys and interviews to respond to the research questions. The first research question is addressed though quantitative data gathered in the survey instrument. The second research question was addressed though qualitative data gathered in the interview instrument. Artifacts were integrated as appropriate with the interview data. Data are presented in table format to describe survey responses. Interview data are presented in a table format, which are mainly in narrative description to show the major themes.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this explanatory mixed method study was to identify and describe what exemplary female presidents in California community colleges do to stay grounded and maintain physical, emotional, intellectual, social, vocational, and spiritual health.

Research Questions

1. How do exemplary female presidents in California community colleges rate themselves on the Stay Grounded survey in the six areas of balance (physical, emotional, intellectual, social, vocational, and spiritual health)?

2. What strategies do exemplary female presidents in California community colleges use to develop and maintain grounded leadership in the six areas of balance (physical, emotional, intellectual, social, vocational, and spiritual health)?
Research Methods and Data Collection Procedures

Qualitative Data

This is an explanatory mixed methods study used to identify grounded self-perceptions and strategies of exemplary female California community college presidents using Bob Rosen’s (2014) six areas of health (physical, emotional, intellectual, social, vocational, and spiritual health)? The quantitative and qualitative portions were completed sequentially as the survey instrument was used to allow participants to self-identify their willingness to participate in the interviews and add meaning to their numerical quantified self-perceptions, but the instrument also allowed participants to rate themselves. The quantitative survey used the Likert scale and was created by the seven-member thematic team. It was administered virtually using SurveyMonkey. Sixteen female California community college presidents completed the survey. The 40-question survey was developed to determine how California community colleges rated themselves on specific grounded health behaviors on a Likert scale. The data on California community college presidents’ self-perceptions of the six specific areas and on general grounded statements were gathered and analyzed. The survey used a Likert scale to determine mean and frequency of use. Mean was determined as 6 (agree strongly), 5 (agree moderately), 4 (agree slightly), 3 (disagree slightly), 2 (disagree moderately), and 1 (disagree strongly). The researcher organized data to identify commonalities or anomalies in the survey responses using Excel.

Quantitative Data

On the survey, presidents indicated their willingness to be interviewed. Interview participants were selected from their self-identifying responses. Nine survey participants
were willing to be interviewed. All were contacted, but only five were selected due to scheduling conflicts. All five interviews were scheduled for 60 minutes and were conducted via Zoom, the online video-conferencing software. Interviews were transcribed and sent to interviewees for their review and confirmation of accuracy. After confirmation, the researcher coded the interviews for patterns and themes using NVivo. Interrater reliability was created by having a peer researcher on the thematic team check and verify the researcher’s coding.

**Population**

The population is a large group that meets a distinct criterion, which allows the researcher to generalize findings from the study (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014). The study population was female community college presidents. In the United States in 2020, there were 941 public community colleges (Duffin, 2020). According to the American Council on Education’s *American College President Study 2017* study, 30% of women are presidents in U.S. colleges, while in 2-year associate degree institutions in the United States, women are presidents to a higher degree of 36% (Gagliardi et al., 2017). The target population for the study was female community college presidents in the California Community Colleges system (see Figure 4). There are 116 the California community college presidents. The number of female California community college presidents at the time of the study was 42.

The job of a college president includes partnering with the community and being the public face of the college. When reviewing different job descriptions, one can see that the role of the president is varied but includes an overarching perspective to develop and implement short-term and long-term strategies, the vision, and mission of the
A college president oversees financial, academic, and operational functions, and develops participatory relationships and plans to include the college leaders. The president maintains communication with the state and regional governing groups to stay informed about changes in the budget, vision, or initiatives to best prepare the institution. Finally, a college president answers to the governing board of the institution (Browne, 2017; Gagliardi et al., 2017; Higher Ed Jobs, 2020, Indeed.com, 2020).

**Sample**

A sample is a subset of the target population representing the whole population (Patten & Newhart, 2018; Patton, 2015). This study used both purposeful and convenience sampling. Purposeful sampling uses a judgment in subject selection to determine a study sample with needed characteristics for the study (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014) or intentional recruitment of participants who exhibit the desired characteristics or criteria for the study (Patton, 2015). For this study, subjects were selected using the exemplary leader criteria cocreated with the thematic peer research team. Convenience sampling accounted for practical obstacles such as scheduling, cost, and availability (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014). COVID and the use of Zoom mitigated the cost, but scheduling and availability remained a factor.

Even though this study’s target population was relatively small, it was still not feasible to study all members in the population group of female presidents of California community colleges; therefore, the target group of participants was selected. The first step was to determine which female presidents of California community colleges met the exemplary grounded criteria. Data were used from sources including presidents’
available biographic material on websites, LinkedIn, peer recommendations, conference presentations, and other accessible web-based resources.

For this study, participants exhibited at least four of the following exemplary criteria:

- evidence of successful development of grounded leadership skills (physical, emotional, intellectual, vocational, spiritual, and social);
- evidence of leading a successful organization or unit;
- a minimum of 5 years of experience in the field;
- articles, papers, or materials written, published, or presented at conferences or association meetings;
- recognition by her peers;
- membership in professional associations in her field; and
- participation in workshops and seminars in work-life balance.

The sample selection process used for this study met the exemplary criteria in several distinct ways such as their years of experience in the field, presenting at conferences, leading successful organizations, recognition of peers, and being members of professional organizations. Nine survey respondents indicated their willingness to participate in the interview in their survey responses. Five of those were interviewed (see Figure 4, repeated here for ease of reference).

**Demographic Data**

Demographic data of the 16 participants were collected through the electronic SurveyMonkey quantitative survey. Because of the small target population for this study, delineated demographic data by respondent may have provided information to
compromise the anonymity of the study participants. Therefore, the data were discussed as a whole with the survey respondents, not presented as individual responses. All participants were female, as per the study population, so gender was not listed. Two respondents declined to respond, and two respondents selected more than one ethnicity option. The responses included the two participants who declined to respond as a choice. Therefore, the calculations were based on the number of responses, not the respondents. The total number of responses was 18. Table 3 shows the ethnicity data of the 18 responses.

Although two of the respondents did not answer the ethnicity question, the participants who did reflected a diversity similar to the ethnic diversity of the population of California community college presidents. According to CCLC (2020), as of 2019, California community college CEOs self-identified as follows: Caucasian/White 54.6%, African American 12.8%, Asian American or Pacific Islander 7.8%, and Hispanic/LatinX
13.3% (CCLC, 2020). Demographics from this study reflect the near 50% diversity at the state level ethnic diversity as 54% identified as Caucasian/White.

Table 3

**Survey Demographics: Ethnicity**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th># of responses</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>African Am./Black</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/Asian Am.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filipino</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/LatinX</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White/Caucasian</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decline to respond</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total responses</strong></td>
<td><strong>18</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Survey participants could choose one, more than one, or decline to respond.

Additionally, data for years in the field and in the current position were gathered on the survey to verify the criteria for the study. The sample included a wide range of years of experience in both the field and the position. Table 4 shows data for years in the field and in the current position of the 16 participants.

Table 4

**Survey Demographics: Years in the Field and Years in the Current Position**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Median</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of years of experience in field</td>
<td>15-43</td>
<td>29.0</td>
<td>25-30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of years in current position</td>
<td>2.7-11</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Colleges were classified as large, medium, and small based on student population. Participants were from all three sized colleges. Table 5 shows data on school size of the 16 survey and five interview participants.
Table 5

*Survey and Interview Demographics: School Size*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School size</th>
<th>Survey participants</th>
<th>Interview participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Large schools (15,000+ students)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium schools (5,000-14,999 students)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small schools (0-4,999 students)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Presentation and Analysis of the Data**

Data were gathered through the two instruments: grounded survey and grounded interviews. This section describes the data gathered from the survey instrument and corresponding interview questions. Data are aligned to the research questions. First, Research Question 1 is addressed with the quantitative data from the grounded survey. Each area of grounded health was first compiled by area, then each area of health, then the general grounded section is presented. Next, Research Question 2 is addressed with the qualitative data from the grounded interviews presented, followed by themes found during coding in NVivo.

**Quantitative Data for Research Question 1**

Research Question 1 states, “How do exemplary female presidents in California community colleges rate themselves on the Stay Grounded survey in the six areas of balance (physical, emotional, intellectual, social, vocational, and spiritual health)?”

Research Question 1 is addressed by survey responses as participants “rate themselves on the Stay Grounded survey” in the six areas of balance (physical, emotional, intellectual, social, vocational, and spiritual health). The first phase of this explanatory sequential mixed methods study is quantitative data collection. In this study, an electronic survey was used and study participants were asked to rate themselves on the
Stay Grounded survey. The Stay Grounded survey included five statements for each of the six areas of health and 10 statements for the general grounded area. Therefore, the total number of survey statements was 40, which when multiplied by the 16 respondents, totaled 640 responses. For Research Question 1, the quantitative survey results are first compiled overall for each grounded health area and then are presented by each grounded health area separately by individual questions and in more detail.

**Grounded health areas compiled data.** In this study, grounded health is defined as a deep connection to the authentic self with “a sense of being fully embodied, whole, centered and balanced in ourselves and our relationships” (Daniels, 2005, p. 290). In this study, the roots of being grounded are in six dimensions of health: physical, emotional, intellectual, social, vocational, and spiritual (Daniels, 2005; Rosen, 2014). For each of the six health areas, five survey statements were created to align with the definition of each health area. There were 16 participants and each health section had five statements resulting in 80 responses for each health. The general grounded section had 10 statements resulting in 160 responses. Therefore, a total of 40 questions with 16 respondents resulted in 640 responses. Each area’s statements were compiled into an overview of the area’s statements. The mean and standard deviation are of all responses of all statements within the category. For the discussion of survey responses, when the results of disagreement numbers are discussed, the three levels of disagreement, 3 (disagree slightly), 2 (disagree moderately), and 1 (disagree strongly) have been added into a total number of disagreement responses for each statement and each grounded health area. Table 6 compiles data by each grounded health area.
Table 6

Survey Results on the Compiled Grounded Areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Agree strongly</th>
<th>Agree moderately</th>
<th>Agree slightly</th>
<th>Disagree slightly</th>
<th>Disagree moderately</th>
<th>Disagree strongly</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical</td>
<td>28 35%</td>
<td>30 38%</td>
<td>12 15%</td>
<td>4 5%</td>
<td>5 6%</td>
<td>1 1%</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional</td>
<td>48 60%</td>
<td>17 21%</td>
<td>9 11%</td>
<td>3 4%</td>
<td>2 3%</td>
<td>1 1%</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intellectual</td>
<td>67 84%</td>
<td>13 16%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational</td>
<td>48 60%</td>
<td>25 31%</td>
<td>5 6%</td>
<td>1 1%</td>
<td>1 1%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual</td>
<td>61 76%</td>
<td>15 19%</td>
<td>3 4%</td>
<td>1 1%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>57 71%</td>
<td>21 26%</td>
<td>2 3%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grounded</td>
<td>114 71%</td>
<td>42 26%</td>
<td>2 1%</td>
<td>2 1%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total responses</td>
<td>423 163</td>
<td>33 11 8 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Total responses of the survey from 16 participants and 40 questions = 640.
The data show the mean and standard deviation for each of the six grounded health areas and the general grounded section. The overall results show that most participants rated themselves high on most of the six dimensions with means of between 4.9 and 5.8 out of the highest possible score of 6.0. The grounded health with the highest mean was intellectual health with 5.8. The second highest mean was 5.7 for three sections: spiritual, social, and grounded. One minor anomaly was the significantly lower mean for the area of physical health, which also had the highest standard deviation in the survey. Though the mean was still high, it was the furthest outlier from the other areas with a 4.9, with a difference from the other areas of health being 0.4 to 0.9.

Standard deviation is the measure of dispersion, and according to MacMillan and Schumacher (2014), is the second most important data point besides the mean. The quantitative survey results of the compiled areas showed distinct differences in the discernment pattern of the responses. The grounded health areas with the higher standard deviation are physical and emotional, which were both higher than 1.0 with a standard deviation of 1.1 and 1.2, indicating the responses were more varied in these survey areas. The areas with the lowest standard deviation, intellectual (0.4) and social (0.5), show the responses are much more similar among respondents. The variation in standard deviation in physical and emotional are based on these sections having more disagreement responses than the other sections and with statements with the highest numbers of disagree. The physical health area had the highest number of a total disagree responses with 10, emotional had the second highest number of total disagree responses of six, vocational and grounded each had a total disagree response of two, and spiritual had one.
disagree response. Intellectual and social, with the two highest means, had no
disagreement responses.

**Physical health data.** In this study, physical health was defined as an individual’s
mind–body awareness to minimize fatigue, maximize energy management, build
immunity, and maintain resilience to stress while sustaining a peak physical performance
lifestyle (Donatelle & Ketcham, 2017; Rosen, 2014). The thematic team collaboratively
defined the area of physical health and created five survey statements encompassing the
breadth of the health definition upon which respondents would rate themselves. Table 7
shows data for the statements in the physical health area.

Participants rated themselves lowest in the area of physical health with an overall
mean of 4.9. The difference between the statements in mean, which ranged lowest to
highest from 4.5 to 5.4, was 0.9. The survey statement, “Maintain a nutritious diet,” had
the highest mean at 5.4. The survey statement, “Take time to relax,” had the second
highest mean at 5.0. Two survey statements, “Sleep 7-9 hours daily” and “Think
consciously about mind-body connectedness,” had the lowest mean at 4.5. The physical
health section is the only section with three survey statements with a mean below 5.0.

The standard deviation ranged from 0.6 to 1.3 between survey statements in this
area with a difference of 0.7. The physical health section had highest number of disagree
responses in the survey with 10 disagree responses. The survey statement, “Sleep 7-9
hours daily,” had the highest number of disagree responses at five. The survey statement,
“Exercise daily,” had the second highest number of disagree responses at three. The
survey statement, “Think consciously about mind-body connectedness,” had the third
Table 7

Survey Results for Physical Health Statements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Agree strongly n</th>
<th>Agree moderately n</th>
<th>Agree slightly n</th>
<th>Disagree slightly n</th>
<th>Disagree moderately n</th>
<th>Disagree strongly n</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exercise daily</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sleep 7-9 hours daily</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintain a nutritious diet</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take time to relax</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Think consciously about mind-body connectedness</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total responses</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
highest number of disagree responses at two. Physical health is also only one of two health areas to receive a disagree strongly response from a participant.

**Emotional health data.** In this study, emotional health was defined as a self-awareness and controlled response to life events that promotes resilience and self-assurance (Aguilar, 2018; Hattie et al., 2004; Ulione, 1996; Wang et al., 2016). The thematic team collaboratively defined the area of emotional health and created five survey statements encompassing the breadth of the health definition upon which respondents would rate themselves. Table 8 shows data for the statements in the emotional health area.

Participants rated themselves second lowest in the area of emotional health with an overall mean of 5.3. The difference between the statements in mean, which ranged lowest to highest from 4.3 to 6.0, was 1.7. This was the largest mean difference in the survey sections. The survey statement, “Treat others with compassion,” had the highest possible mean at 6.0, which indicated that all respondents agreed strongly with the statement. This occurred with only one other statement in the survey. The survey statement, “Feel comfortable around others,” had the second highest mean at 5.9. The survey statement, “Talk openly about my emotions,” had the lowest mean at 4.3 in the emotional health area. This was also the lowest mean statement in the survey.

The standard deviation ranged from 0.0 to 1.3 between survey statements in this area with a difference of 1.3. The emotional health area had the second highest number of disagree responses in the survey with six. Two survey statements, “My colleagues at work offer supportive feedback” and “Talk openly about my emotions,” had three disagree responses, which was the second highest number of disagrees given to
Table 8

Survey Results on Emotional Health Statements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Agree strongly</th>
<th>Agree moderately</th>
<th>Agree slightly</th>
<th>Disagree slightly</th>
<th>Disagree moderately</th>
<th>Disagree strongly</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Talk openly about my emotions</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My colleagues at work offers supportive feedback</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remain calm when interacting with others who display strong emotions</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treat others with compassion</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feel comfortable around others</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total responses</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

129
statements. In addition, emotional health was only one of two health areas in the survey to receive a disagree strongly response from a participant.

**Intellectual health data.** In this study, intellectual health was defined as a deep curiosity to acquire new knowledge that stimulates learning, increases change adaptability, and builds mental agility to generate innovative solutions (Naz et al., 2014; Rosen, 2014; van Rensburg et al., 2011). The thematic team collaboratively defined the area of intellectual health and created five survey statements encompassing the breadth of the health definition upon which respondents would rate themselves. Table 9 shows data for the statements in the intellectual health area.

Participants rated themselves highest in area of intellectual health with an overall mean of 5.8. The difference between the statements in mean, which ranged lowest to highest from 5.7 to 5.9, was 0.2. Four of the five intellectual health survey statements had the highest mean in the section with 5.9. The survey statement, “Logical in my approach to problem solving,” had the lowest mean in this section with 5.7.

The standard deviation ranged from 0.3 and 0.5 between survey statements in this area with a difference of 0.2. This intellectual health section had the lowest standard deviation of all the health areas in the survey at 0.4 in the section. There were no disagree responses in this section.

**Social health data.** In this study, social health was defined as the authentic relationships individuals have based on principles of fairness, trustworthiness, empathy, and communication that guide mutually rewarding interactions (Mcleroy et al., 2002; Parry, 1998; Rosen, 2014). The thematic team collaboratively defined the area of social health and created five survey statements encompassing the breadth of the health
Table 9

Survey Results on Intellectual Health Statements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Agree strongly</th>
<th></th>
<th>Agree moderately</th>
<th></th>
<th>Agree slightly</th>
<th></th>
<th>Disagree slightly</th>
<th></th>
<th>Disagree moderately</th>
<th></th>
<th>Disagree strongly</th>
<th></th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ability to challenge yourself to see all sides of an issue</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop your own ideas</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expose yourself to new ideas different from your own</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ask questions to explore new learning</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logical in my approach to problem solving</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total responses</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
definition upon which respondents would rate themselves. Table 10 shows data for the statements in the social health area.

Participants rated themselves in the social health area with an overall mean of 5.7. The difference between the statements in mean, which ranged lowest to highest from 5.5 to 5.8, was 0.3. Two survey statements, “Practice active listening” and “Demonstrate interest in other people,” had the highest mean at 5.8. Two survey statements, “Have mutually rewarding relationships” and “Make decisions without bias,” had the second highest mean at 5.7. The survey statement, “Show forgiveness that creates humility,” had the lowest mean at 5.5.

The standard deviation ranged from 0.5 to 0.6 between survey statements in this area with a difference of 0.1. The social health area had the lowest difference between standard deviation with a difference of 0.1 between any of the statements. There were no disagree responses in this section.

**Vocational health data.** In this study, vocational health was defined as a leader’s career or calling, leading to personal satisfaction in work that is meaningful. It is the ambition that motivates leaders to search out more challenges and achievements in their field (Hutchins, 1969; Senge, 2006). The thematic team collaboratively defined the area of vocational health and created five survey statements encompassing the breadth of the health definition upon which respondents would rate themselves. Table 11 shows data for the statements in the vocational health area.

Participants rated themselves in this area of vocational health with an overall mean of 5.5. The difference between the statements in mean, which ranged lowest to highest from 5.2 to 5.9, was 0.7. The survey statement, “Accomplishment of important
Table 10

Survey Results on Social Health Statements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Agree strongly</th>
<th>Agree moderately</th>
<th>Agree slightly</th>
<th>Disagree slightly</th>
<th>Disagree moderately</th>
<th>Disagree strongly</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Have mutually rewarding relationships</td>
<td>11 69%</td>
<td>5 31%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice active listening</td>
<td>14 88%</td>
<td>1 6%</td>
<td>1 6%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Show forgiveness that creates humility</td>
<td>8 50%</td>
<td>8 50%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make decisions without bias</td>
<td>11 69%</td>
<td>5 31%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrate interest in other people</td>
<td>13 81%</td>
<td>2 13%</td>
<td>1 6%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total responses</td>
<td>57 21%</td>
<td>2 13%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 11

**Survey Results on Vocational Health Statements**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Agree strongly</th>
<th>Agree moderately</th>
<th>Agree slightly</th>
<th>Disagree slightly</th>
<th>Disagree moderately</th>
<th>Disagree strongly</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Work ignites passion for my chosen vocation</td>
<td>12 75%</td>
<td>4 25%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accomplishment of important goals is satisfying</td>
<td>12 75%</td>
<td>4 25%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenge provides opportunity for contributing in meaningful way</td>
<td>14 88%</td>
<td>2 13%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintain an ambitious attitude that leads to achievement</td>
<td>8 50%</td>
<td>5 31%</td>
<td>2 13%</td>
<td>1 6%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keep confidence in middle of setbacks</td>
<td>6 38%</td>
<td>7 44%</td>
<td>3 19%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total responses</td>
<td>48 25%</td>
<td>5 10%</td>
<td>1 2%</td>
<td>1 2%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
goals is satisfying,” had the highest mean at 5.9. The survey statement, “Work ignites passion for my chosen vocation,” had the second highest mean at 5.8. The survey statement, “Maintain an ambitious attitude that leads to achievement,” had the lowest mean at 5.2.

The standard deviation ranged from 0.3 to 1.0 between survey statements in this area with a difference of 0.7. There were two disagree responses in this section. The survey statements, “Challenge provides opportunity for contributing in a meaningful way” and “Keep confidence in middle of setbacks,” both had one disagree response.

**Spiritual health data.** In this study, spiritual health was defined as the values of individuals’ innermost self that motivate action and inspire them toward purposes that embody empathy and go beyond the self. It is a commitment to one’s value system as a source of well-being, providing a profound sense of global connectedness (Chirico, 2016; Covey, 2013; Dehler & Welsh, 1994). The thematic team collaboratively defined the area of spiritual health and created five survey statements encompassing the breadth of the health definition upon which respondents would rate themselves. Table 12 shows data of the statements in the spiritual health area.

Participants rated themselves highest in the area of spiritual health with an overall mean of 5.7. The difference between the statements in mean, which ranged lowest to highest from 5.4 to 5.9, was 0.6. Two survey statements, “Respect others regardless of differences” and “Make others feel appreciated,” had the highest mean at 5.9. The survey statement, “Aware of the feelings of others,” had the second highest mean at 5.7. The survey statement, “Follow values that create balance in life,” had the lowest mean at 5.4.
Table 12

Survey Results on Spiritual Health Statements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Agree strongly n (%)</th>
<th>Agree moderately n (%)</th>
<th>Agree slightly n (%)</th>
<th>Disagree slightly n (%)</th>
<th>Disagree moderately n (%)</th>
<th>Disagree strongly n (%)</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Follow values that create balance in life</td>
<td>10 63%</td>
<td>4 25%</td>
<td>1 6%</td>
<td>1 6%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respect others regardless of differences</td>
<td>14 88%</td>
<td>2 13%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make others feel appreciated</td>
<td>15 94%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>1 6%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintain a world view that is service focused</td>
<td>10 63%</td>
<td>6 38%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aware of the feelings of others</td>
<td>12 75%</td>
<td>3 19%</td>
<td>1 6%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total responses</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The standard deviation ranged from 0.3 to 0.9 between survey statements in this area with a difference of 0.6. There was only one disagree response in this section. The survey statement, “Follow values that create balance in life,” had one disagree response.

**General grounded data.** In this study, grounded health is defined as a deep connection to the authentic self with “a sense of being fully embodied, whole, centered and balanced in ourselves and our relationships” (Daniels, 2005, p. 290). The roots of being grounded are in six dimensions of health: physical, emotional, intellectual, social, vocational, and spiritual (Daniels, 2005; Rosen, 2014). The thematic team collaboratively defined grounded and created 10 survey statements that encompassed the definition on which respondents would rate themselves. Table 13 shows data for the statements in the general grounded section.

Participants rated themselves in this general grounded section of the survey with an overall mean of 5.7. The difference between the statements in mean, which ranged lowest to highest from 5.4 to 6.0, was 0.6. The survey statement, “Stay true to values,” had the highest mean at 6.0, indicating that all participants responded with *agree strongly*. Two survey statements, “Adaptable to sudden change” and “Stay focused on what really matters,” had the second highest mean at 5.8. The survey statement, “Take time to reflect,” had the lowest mean at 5.4.

The standard deviation ranged from 0.0 to 0.9 between survey statements in this area with a difference of 0.6. There were only two disagreement responses in this section. Two survey statements, “Adaptable to sudden change” and “Stay focused on what really matters,” had one disagree response each.
### Table 13

**Survey Results on General Grounded Statements**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Agree strongly</th>
<th>Agree moderately</th>
<th>Agree slightly</th>
<th>Disagree slightly</th>
<th>Disagree moderately</th>
<th>Disagree strongly</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conscious of what’s going on with other people</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintain a strong support system</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stay focused on what really matters</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stay true to values</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courage to take action</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adaptable to sudden change</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to control emotions to channel in productive ways</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contribute to others without expecting something in return</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take time to reflect</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Build positive relationships by accepting people</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total responses</strong></td>
<td>114</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Qualitative Data for Research Question 2

Research Question 2 states, “What strategies do exemplary female presidents in California community colleges use to develop and maintain grounded leadership in the six areas of balance (physical, emotional, intellectual, social, vocational, and spiritual health)?”

Research Question 2 is addressed from the interviews, as exemplary female presidents in California community colleges described the strategies they use to develop and maintain grounded leadership in the six areas of balance (physical, emotional, intellectual, social, vocational, and spiritual health). The second phase of this explanatory sequential mixed methods study is qualitative data collection. In this study, a team created an interview protocol and script of questions, and additional prompts were used (Appendix G) to ask participants to describe their own strategies on the six grounded areas of health (physical, emotional, intellectual, social, vocational, and spiritual health). The interview consisted of 12 questions with two questions for each of the six areas of health. The interviews were conducted via Zoom, an internet-based program and lasted for 45-60 minutes. For Research Question 2, the qualitative interview transcripts were compiled and coded to determine major themes and patterns.

The data are organized by health areas indicating number of themes, the artifacts and interviews coded, and the frequency of references for each theme. These are categorized by Rosen’s (2014) areas of grounded health (physical, emotional, intellectual, social, vocational, and spiritual health). These are identified in Table 14.
Table 14

All Areas, Themes, and Codes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Interviews coded</th>
<th>Artifacts coded</th>
<th>Interview frequency</th>
<th>Artifact frequency</th>
<th>Total frequency</th>
<th>% of frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>222</td>
<td>11.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>554</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>555</td>
<td>27.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intellectual</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>10.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>493</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>525</td>
<td>26.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>10.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>267</td>
<td>13.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>1,895</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>1,991</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Total frequency of for the grounded survey area = 1,991. The number of interviews coded and artifacts coded are not totaled but were determined by counting which artifacts or surveys were coded in any particular health area.

In each of the six areas of grounded health, themes were identified. There were two themes in spiritual; three themes in physical, emotional, intellectual, and vocational; and five themes in social. These are indicated in Figure 5.

Figure 5. Bar chart of qualitative themes by health areas.
For each of the six areas of grounded health, the number of responses were coded and calculated. These varied from 110 to 309 in any specific health area. These are indicated in Figure 6.

![Pie chart of qualitative responses and percentages by health areas.](image)

*Figure 6.* Pie chart of qualitative responses and percentages by health areas.

Themes were discovered in each of the health areas: physical, emotional, intellectual, social, vocational, and spiritual, and the number of responses were identified and coded into each health area. The coded references were than organized into specific themes. The following sections present the themes categorized into each of the health areas.

**Physical health data.** For this study, physical health is an individual’s mind-body awareness of how to minimize fatigue, maximize energy management, build immunity,
and maintain resilience to stress, while sustaining a peak physical performance lifestyle.

The two interview questions created by the thematic peer researchers were as follows:

1. **What do you do to maximize your energy and enhance your resilience to stress to sustain your physical performance?**

2. **How do you sustain your mind body awareness and physical performance during times of stress and uncertainty?**

The majority of the coded questions were elicited through these questions, but other parts of the interview tied back to the physical areas of health as well. Three themes were determined in the area of physical health. These are identified in Table 15.

### Table 15

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physical Themes</th>
<th>Interviews coded</th>
<th>Artifacts coded</th>
<th>Interview frequency</th>
<th>Artifact frequency</th>
<th>Total frequency</th>
<th>% of frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical activity/exercise</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>23.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take time to relax through meditation, breathing or centering activities</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>26.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Think consciously about mind-body connectedness</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>49.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td><strong>5</strong></td>
<td><strong>1</strong></td>
<td><strong>221</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
<td><strong>222</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Total frequency of physical grounded area = 222.

**Physical activity/exercise.** After examining interview responses and artifacts, the theme physical activity/exercise was identified. This theme was coded within all five participants’ interviews and one artifact. This included a frequency of 52 coded
references in interviews and a frequency of one artifact reference. The theme had a total of 53 of the 222 references in the health area, therefore, this theme had 24% of the frequency total in the physical health area.

There was only one artifact for this theme, which was a video of Participant 2 playing a social sports game with her students and employees. In her interview, she mentioned the video, which allowed the researcher to reference a physical health artifact.

Responses for this theme included general exercise habits and preferences of type of exercise or activity. Participants discussed specific planned exercise regimes like elliptical, treadmill, swimming, workout classes, and weight-lifting. Other references included exercise activities like golf, walking, hiking, golf, or a job-related activity of walking the campus. Planned exercise regimes were referenced by four of the five participants. Exercise activity was noted by all five participants. Four of the participants referenced walking on the campus, and one referenced walking during meetings when possible. While conflicts with new jobs or deadlines, COVID, and the weather were noted, all five participants made exercise part of their routine though not daily. Three times a week was referenced twice. Participant 2 tries to get out and exercise regularly. Try to find breaks where I can take walks. In this environment, in particular, it’s very hard because you’re in front of the computer all day long. So, if there’s a meeting that I can walk and talk at the same time, I often do that. I have a couple of employees that work for me that we’ll often say to each other, is it OK if we walk and talk instead. Yes, of course. I’ll put earbuds in and we’ll conduct our meetings while we’re walking.
According to Participant 3,

I recently purchased an Apple Watch. Because I realized with my little Fitbit—I wasn’t moving enough, so I’ve tried to incorporate more physical exercise. It’s been a struggle. I’m a swimmer, so during the winter, I have an outdoor pool now at the house that we moved into which I’m very excited it will be in the 80s, on Sunday, so we can get back in the pool.

Participant 4 stated,

I’m a golfer, I like to golf and when I’m golfing, we walk the course, my husband and I, together, and pull our bags. That’s about a six-mile walk on a Saturday. That is a way to rejuvenate and refresh me. Because when you’re golfing, you really can’t think about much else.

Participant 5 discussed her mode of exercise:

Usually I do the elliptical for like 45 minutes and listen to my playlist. I am trying to get better at doing a little weight training once or twice a week.

**Take time to relax through meditation, breathing, or centering activities.** After examining interview responses and artifacts, the theme take time to relax through meditation, breathing, or centering activities was identified. This theme was coded within all five participants’ interviews and no artifacts. This included a frequency of 59 coded references in interviews. The theme had total of 59 of the 222 references in the health area; therefore, this theme had 27% of the frequency total in the physical health area.

Responses included two participants actually doing meditation and using that as part of their physical health routine, but three respondents, not from the above meditation
group, all shared other less firm centering activities that were usually described as breathing, centering, or stepping back physically and emotionally from the moment or the stress. Most of these activities were private, but a few comments included another person who was perceived as a safe space. Four participants referenced using technology like music and the Calm app to help in centering or dealing with their emotions. Three participants indicated that they had created a personal space to take time or breath. These included a space in their office with a special thinking or comfy chair, or an outdoor sanctuary. Participant 1 stated,

I recently, in the last 2 years, started to meditate, and that’s been really helpful. I’m not one—I’m very high strung—it’s very difficult for me to sit still. It’s just very difficult to meditate. I never thought I would be able to but I’ve actually really enjoyed it. I got the Calm app. and it’s really helped me to center myself.

Participant 2 added,

I think part of it is reflection, self-reflection. Meditation does help. I know when I get at my highest anxiety, it’s hard for me to meditate because I try to get to a place of stillness, and it just doesn’t happen. With this brrrr (busy sounds and hand motions), my mind keeps going. . . . sometimes I just go out into my backyard, and I have a little meditation area that I created out there. I have a little Buddha, and I have some angels. It’s just things that make me happy and make me feel good, and I’ll go sit out there sometime and just do some deep breaths. That’s a technique that I find is very helpful.
Participant 3 used a mindfulness app:

The other thing that I’ve adopted is using mindfulness app, so right now I’m using Calm. I like using that. I do it to ground myself before—a presentation I’d be, might be making when I’m starting to feel anxious or nervous. I’d be better off if I had a regular routine of it.

*Think consciously about mind-body connectedness.* After examining interview responses and artifacts, the theme think consciously about mind-body connectedness was identified. This theme was coded within all five participants’ interviews and no artifacts. This included a frequency of 110 coded references in interviews. The theme had a total of 110 of the 222 references in the health area; therefore, this theme had 50% of the frequency total in the physical health area.

Responses were highest in this theme in the physical health area with 110 frequencies of responses. The references were often linked to other themes such as recognizing stress, physical activity, and meditation and breathing. Participants referenced the need and strategies of paying attention to one’s body and also the need to practice energy management. All five respondents indicated that it was a conscious effort and decision to pay attention to one’s body and needs, and all said they needed to improve in this area. An additional three stated that they had not always paid attention to their body in the past, which sometimes resulted in larger or long-term negative effects. Participants referenced techniques and specific strategies in their own mind-body awareness. Participant 1 stated,

I think perspective and having the mental strength and the mental awareness to realize how you’re feeling—easier said than done. It does take practice and
awareness, but I do think it goes back to prioritizing yourself and your mental
and physical health. . . . Even if it’s a few minutes to re-center.

Participant 2 said,

I’m trying to stop myself, I am checking myself, when I remember, how’s my
body feeling. Do I have a lump in my stomach, is my body tense and tight, and
I’m trying to use it a little small activities and exercises to relieve some of that
stress.

Participant 3 added,

But sometimes to your emotions can be down and you need something to pick up
your emotions, and music does that, for me, for sure. I hype myself, if you will.

Participant 4 agreed,

I do that in in a couple of ways, one is just paying attention to my body. The
other way is family members help me too. I kind of have this support network
that recognize the signs of stress and lets me know, “Hey I think you need to slow
down a little bit.” And when that happens, I do things like go to bed earlier.

Other responses related to mind-body connectedness. The study’s definition of
health was energy management, which had 29 responses from all five participants. All
respondents recognized an effect on their performance if they did not manage their
energy and health effectively. Three participants noted that if they did not manage their
own energy resources, others were impacted as well. Participant 1 stated that when “I
can’t focus, my email sounds like I’m falling asleep. I need to log off.” She further
stated,
I realized over the years, not taking time off to physically recover, it’s been detrimental. . . . We lead by example, so if I don’t prioritize my health and wellness my team won’t either, and so it does create a toxic work environment. If they see me dragging myself in, they’re going to think that I expect them to do that, and that’s not the case. So, making sure that I’m aware of the optics of what’s happening around me.

Participant 4 added,

I need to take care of myself as much as I need to care, of whatever else is going on, that is, requiring my attention. It’s not always easy, it’s not automatic, it takes a lot of thought and consciousness. But when I do that, I find I am better able to manage that stress I’m better, and I come up with better solutions than if I simply react to what’s going on.

**Emotional health data.** For this study, emotional health was the self-awareness and controlled response to life in events that promote resilience and self-assurance. The two interview questions created by the thematic peer researchers were as follows:

3. When encountering difficult situations, what practices do you utilize to recognize your emotional state in order to react accordingly?

4. How do you promote emotional resilience conferences and positive interactions during stressful situations?

The majority of the responses were elicited through the questions in this health area, but a number of responses to the questions from the physical health were coded to this health section. Three themes were determined. These are identified in Table 16.
Table 16

Emotional Themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emotional themes</th>
<th>Interviews coded</th>
<th>Artifacts coded</th>
<th>Interview frequency</th>
<th>Artifact frequency</th>
<th>Total frequency</th>
<th>% of frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emotional self-awareness/recognize emotional state</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control of emotions, responses, and choices</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dealing with stress through specific strategies</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>287</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>287</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>554</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>555</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Total frequency of physical grounded area = 555.

Emotional self-awareness/recognize emotional state. After examining interview responses and artifacts, the theme emotional self-awareness/recognize emotional state was identified. This theme was coded within all five participants’ interviews and no artifacts. This included a frequency of 83 coded references in interviews. The theme had a total of 83 of the 555 references in the health area; therefore, this theme had 15% of the frequency total in the emotional health area.

In the artifact, one of the participants shared at a diversity event on her beliefs about diversity, being a role model for women and students of color, and the need to demonstrate intentional emotional “empathy and awareness.”

Responses for this theme included general overall habits and choices on monitoring participants’ own emotions. In addition, there were references to recognizing their own reactions and emotions. Stress was often referenced as part of participants
recognizing their emotional state. Participant 1 was open about her emotional state and proactive use of support; she stated,

I’m very open about mental health. I’m prone to depression and high functioning anxiety. I know that about myself. . . . I have a wonderful therapist and depending on what’s going on in my life, I meet with her either once or twice a month, depending on what’s going on.

Participant 2 explained how she identifies her stress:

It helps when you can name something, you can name the stress, you can identify what it is. . . . the last couple of weeks, I’ve felt more stress on my body, and now I’m acknowledging it a little bit more, which I guess is good, but it doesn’t go away still. It’s always in the back of my mind, “Oh, I have to be careful.”

Participant 4 revealed how she recognizes her stress:

One of the things that helps me is recognizing the level of stress I’m under, recognizing when I’m feeling stressed. I do that in in a couple of ways, one is just paying attention to my body. The other way is family members help me too. I kind of have this support network that recognize the signs of stress and lets me know.

*Control of emotions, responses, and choices*. After examining interview responses and artifacts, the theme control of emotions, responses, and choices was identified. This theme was coded within all five participants’ interviews and one artifact. This included a frequency of 184 coded references in interviews and one artifact reference. The theme had total of 185 of the 555 references in the health area; therefore, this theme had 33% of the frequency total in the emotional health area.
All participants used different situations and strategies to control their emotions and their responses to this theme. These included references to projecting calm and controlling their reactions. This theme had one reoccurring response related to controlling emotional responses, which was not taking things personally. Participant 1 stated,

You’re going to have these stressors, right? You can’t change that, but you can change how you react to that, if you take care of yourself, and you center yourself, so I think perspective and having the mental strength and the mental awareness to realize how you’re feeling—easier said than done.

Participant 4 explained,

It’s not something that is going to overwhelm me, it’s not something that I can’t manage. So, I start with that premise. Okay, this is a problem I need to solve. It’s no more, no less than that. So, I try not to get my emotions wrapped up in the aspects of whatever situation I’m in. I try to use a method of breaking it down and figuring it out, rather than succumbing to an emotional response of anger or stress or fear, whatever that might be. Is to simply say to myself, “Okay, this is an emotion, this is a problem to be solved.”

Responses from four participants included references to the need to not take things personally as a part of controlling their emotions. Not taking things personally or putting ego aside resulted in 37 responses from four participants. These references included descriptions of their own mindset and the resolve to not let negativity or conflict with others affect their own emotional state. Participant 1 explained the mindset needed:
Because these jobs are not made if you care about what people think about you. You will never be successful as an administrator. The weakest administrators are those who are trying to please people and don’t hold people accountable. And you see that because they’ll please, they’ll not hold their teams accountable, and then that creates a lot of stressful and negative situations. You cannot care what people are going to think about you, because haters are going to hate.

Participant 4 added,
I’ve seen in others where their emotion clouds or judgment where they immediately go to that spot instead of to problem-solve it. And I think that’s a natural human behavior; you have to train yourself not to do that. But when you can do that, it does help you manage your emotions, and manage the situation, and be seen as a strong person that can help with the situation not somebody who’s overwhelmed with emotion or anger or hurt or whatever it is.

Participant 5 stated,
I have to continually remind myself it’s not personal. And, whatever the negative responses, it’s not about any person, it is a symptom of something else that’s going on. And I have to continue to facilitate and solicit feedback until we identify what that thing is that’s going on. I keep reminding myself and staying objective that way.

Dealing with stress through specific strategies. After examining interview responses and artifacts, the theme dealing with stress through specific strategies was identified. This theme was coded within all five participants’ interviews and no artifacts.
This included a frequency of 287 coded references in interviews. The theme had a total of 287 of the 555 references in the health area; therefore, this theme had 52% of the frequency total in the emotional health area.

Responses in this theme included general ideas similar to centering one’s self and using strategies to remove negative emotions like defensiveness. These strategies included some things previously mentioned like stepping back and re-centering. Other specific strategies were referenced as well. One was setting boundaries, which all five participants referenced for a total of 52 references. Participant 1 explained her boundaries:

So, I’m going to tell [people] what I feel are my boundaries and what I expect. You can still respect their humanity while creating positive boundaries and positive working relationships. And then, of course, making sure that you’re practicing those boundaries. Because if you let people go beyond your boundaries and impact your self-esteem and that’s really important to keep in mind. You know it’s okay to say no.

Participant 2 added,

What I try to do is compartmentalize my day and kind of what I’m doing. I find that that is usually the best way for me to manage everything. I try my best to have a very strict start and end dates to the day. They’re very long, they aren’t 8-hour days. They are typically between 10- and 11-hour days, but I shut off at a certain time. My team knows that that’s what I’m doing. They know that if the world [is] coming to an end, somebody’s bleeding, dying, or the building is
burning down, they can call me, but otherwise, I know it’s going to wait until the next day.

Another strategy identified was use of mantras or self-talk. This strategy was referenced by all five participants and had 25 references. Participant 1 stated,

I do mantras as well if I’m stressed, and I need to re-center by my emotions. Then I think it’s also reflecting on situations. Things can feel very permanent, and when you take a step back and realize that things are temporary, they may just feel permanent because they’re dragging on, but they are temporary, and life will get better; that also helps to re-center your emotions.

Participant 4 stated that she has taught herself to focus on situations, as merely problems to be solved. It’s not something that is going to overwhelm me, it’s not something that I can’t manage. So, I start with that premise. Okay, this is a problem, I need to solve. It’s no more, no less than that. So, I try not to get my emotions wrapped up in the aspects of whatever situation I’m in. I try to use a method of breaking it down and figuring it out, rather than succumbing to an emotional response of anger or stress or fear, whatever that might be is to simply say to myself, “Okay, this is an emotion, this is a problem to be solved.”

Participant 5 explained how she uses self-talk:

It’s a lot of self-talk. I’m getting better at my emotional intelligence and my own triggers. And I have to tell myself, “I know you want to reach across the table [and] strangle that person, but that’s not what we’re going to do here, try to understand it from their side.”
**Intellectual health data.** For this study, intellectual health was defined as a deep curiosity to acquire new knowledge that stimulates learning increases change adaptability and builds mental agility to generate innovative solutions. The two interview questions created by the thematic peer researchers were as follows:

5. How do you foster your curiosity and acquire new knowledge that stimulates your ability to adapt to change?

6. How do you maintain your intellectual flexibility to generate innovative solutions?

The majority of the coded questions were elicited through these questions, but other parts of the interview tied back to the intellectual areas of health as well. Three themes were determined. These themes are identified in Table 17.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intellectual themes</th>
<th>Interviews coded</th>
<th>Artifacts coded</th>
<th>Interview frequency</th>
<th>Artifact frequency</th>
<th>Total frequency</th>
<th>% of frequency</th>
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<tr>
<td>Life-long learning /curiosity</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>21</td>
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<td>39%</td>
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<td>Logical approach to problem solving</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>28%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Collaborative, inclusive, and synergistic</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>33%</td>
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<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
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<td><strong>26</strong></td>
<td><strong>159</strong></td>
<td><strong>59</strong></td>
<td><strong>218</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Total frequency of physical grounded area = 218.

**Lifelong learning/curiosity.** After examining interview responses and artifacts, the theme lifelong learning/curiosity was identified. This theme was coded within all five participants’ interviews and 15 artifacts. This included a frequency of 63 coded references in the interviews and a frequency of 21 artifact references. The theme had a
total of 84 of the 218 references in the health area; therefore, this theme had 39% of the frequency total in the intellectual health area.

Artifacts in this theme included alumni status of four of the five participants as completing extensive leadership programs from respected organizations for prospective and new CEOs in California community colleges. These programs included working with experts in the field on fiscal planning, research, and legislation. These programs also provided peer collaboration, and one program included 6 months of formalized one-on-one mentoring. Other artifacts were evidence of presentations or recognition for innovative problem-solving or pilot programs within California community colleges. Artifacts included attending, presenting at, and organizing conferences including ACCJC, Strengthening Student Success, and ACCCA.

Responses in this theme included references to specific strategies or ways to continue lifelong learning. These were varied, but four of the five participants specifically cited attending and presenting at conferences. In addition to conferences colleagues, mentors, and work coaches were also referred to. Participant 1 stated,

I try to remember and embrace lifelong learning, and again I’m human so there’ll be times, where I’m like, look I don’t need to know that, but then I need to take a step back. Maybe I do, maybe there’s something new I’m going to learn in this. I love to attend conferences that—not every conference, I’ve got a limited time but there’s one or two a year that I really like to attend that I get a lot out of. The AACC, the National Conference, and then the League for Innovation, those two are really big for me and I love learning about different things because it’s well rounded. It’s not a conference about one thing. I like learning about new things.
Participant 2 also referenced conferences:

I attend conferences, I’ve done leadership development, cohorting, talking to friends and colleagues who are in the seat, or who have been on the seat longer. Mentors are great for that kind of thing.

Participant 3 said,

I will go to any kind of professional development workshop I can. I’m a big believer in the End Core Conference that comes around every year, the National Conference on Race and Ethnicity in Higher ED. I’ve presented there and been attending probably [year redacted for anonymity] years now, not every year.

Then we take about 20 of us to the conference every year.

In addition to formal learning opportunities all five participants referenced reading for their own learning as well. Three participants indicated obstacles of time and more recently extensive Zoom meetings. Two participants shared strategies on how they deal with the obstacles and continue personal learning. Participant 2 explained,

One of the things that I do is I am kind of an avid reader, so I’ll—and when I say avid reader, I don’t mean I sit down and usually pull out chapter books and sit from cover to cover, but I love skimming through information. I get up every morning, and I read the Chronicle and Inside Higher Ed, not from cover to cover, but I skim through articles that I think are related to what I do in my work in community college in particular. I’m always making notes from different articles I’ve read and capturing that.
Participant 3 agreed,

And then also I’ve switched. I love to read, but by the end of the day, my eyes are so tired from Zoom, I’ve switched to audible and podcasts. So, I’m doing a whole lot more learning listening than I ever done before.

**Logical approach to problem-solving.** After examining interview responses and artifacts, the theme logical approach to problem solving to learn was identified. This theme was coded within all five participants’ interviews and 14 artifacts. This included a frequency of 45 coded references in interviews and a frequency of 16 artifact references. The theme had a total of 61 of the 218 references in the health area; therefore this theme had 28% of the frequency total in the intellectual health area.

Artifacts in this theme include extensive training for prospective and new CEOs. Of the two yearlong specific trainings through UC Davis and the CCLC for California community college presidents, three participants did participate in one and four in the other. These covered problem-solving topics and skills including fiscal planning, research, and applying policy. Also, multiple artifacts included presentations or recognition for innovative problem-solving within the California community college in the community.

Responses in this theme included general observations on problem-solving but some distinct problem-solving processes. Some were examples of having dealt with a problem that required using logic in solving problems or thoughtful reflection to determine the real problem, not the symptoms. All five respondents gave examples of problem-solving they do or have done. In the responses, two participants focused on
being objective and taking emotion out of the process as much as possible. Participant 4 stated,

You have to be very much focused on what are the elements here that (a) I can control or (b) that I need some help with. But what are the elements to solving this and take the emotion out of it. That’s what I try to do. Sometimes things are difficult, there’s no doubt about. I’ve seen in others where their emotion clouds or judgment where they immediately go to that spot instead of to problem-solve it.

Participant 5 added,

And, whatever the negative responses it’s not about any person, it is a symptom of something else that’s going on. And I have to continue to facilitate and solicit feedback until we identify what that thing is that’s going on. I keep reminding myself and staying objective that way. Sometimes I can help us find something we all have interest in solving what the real problem is and not necessarily looking at all the symptoms of what the problem is.

The remaining three participants did not describe keeping emotion out of the process directly but rather used logic in different ways. These cases needed the participants to see beyond the obvious and to look beyond what is apparent on the surface to the core problems, looking past the observable symptoms to the more difficult issues.

**Collaborative, inclusive, and synergistic.** After examining interview responses and artifacts, the theme collaborative, inclusive, and synergistic was identified. This theme was coded within all five participants’ interviews and 20 artifacts. It included a frequency of 51 coded references in interviews and a frequency of 22 artifact references.
The theme had a total of 73 of the 218 references in the health area; therefore, this theme had 33% of the frequency total in the intellectual health area.

Artifacts in this theme include leadership programs, additional roles, collaboration projects, and related conference involvement. Four of the five participants participated in one or more of the yearlong programs for prospective and new CEOs in California community colleges. These programs focus on peer cohorts and offer one-on-one mentoring. Artifacts include examples of taking on leadership roles outside of their institutions, serving as joint chairs on taskforces, and regional collaboration. Four of the five participants led teams with different community, college, and state leaders collaborating on projects. Three participants presented individual research related to building collaboration or partnerships in the community. Finally, multiple artifacts included evidence of participants attending, presenting at, and organizing conferences as part of a team or board.

Responses included purposeful collaboration with 23 references, synergistic with 13 references, and inclusiveness of making sure all the people are in the room with 11 references. Three participants described this as needing people to collaborate because it is not one person’s college or decision. While all participants referred to inclusion, two participants used specific examples of intentionally including people not always included on campus for more inclusive decision-making. Three of the participants referenced synergistic aspects of collaboration and how it promotes creativity and utilizes talents and resources. Participant 1 stated,

If you’re threatened by other smart people, you’re going to close off great ideas and people feeling like they can contribute. So innovative solutions take
everyone at the table. I think the best community colleges, are those that embrace and leverage their participatory governance to make things happen.

Participant 2 described,

I love putting some things out there, and then watching people chew on them. Then all these great ideas and how groupthink can make an idea can go from a good idea to something absolute spectacular. That can be everything from the implementation of the idea, to what you call it, to all different kind of things . . . success lies in the fact that you had so many eyes and so many different lenses on things. So, I think that’s one of the ways that I create that flexibility is by using other people’s thoughts and ideas.

Participant 3 added,

I think many times, our student voices that we don’t necessarily hear or that we somehow don’t weigh as heavily. We are academic institutions, and I get those things, but our students are brilliant and just almost always come up with better ideas than we have because they’re experiencing it.

Participant 5 said,

Well, if I am surrounded by people who are very giving of ideas and feedback and input, that’s easy to do. If I am not, I think I am strained to not be innovative and just go with what I know—which is limited because I know I have blind spots.

**Social health data.** For this study, social health was defined as the authentic relationships individuals have based on principle, the fairness, trustworthiness, empathy, and communication that guide mutually rewarding interactions. The two interview questions created by the thematic peer researchers were as follows:
7. How do you develop and nurture authentic relationships within your organization, team, or personal life?

8. What do you do to build and maintain trust and mutually beneficial communication with others?

The majority of the coded questions were elicited through these questions, but other parts of the interview tied back to the physical areas of health as well. Three themes were determined. These themes are identified in Table 18.

Table 18

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Themes</th>
<th>Interviews coded</th>
<th>Artifacts coded</th>
<th>Interview frequency</th>
<th>Artifact frequency</th>
<th>Total frequency</th>
<th>% of frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>3</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Listening and open to feedback</td>
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<td>54</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>54</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mutually rewarding communication</td>
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<td>166</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treat others as human beings first—empathy and respect for others</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>87</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognize, appreciate others / help others rise</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>493</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>525</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Total frequency of physical grounded area = 525.

**Authentic and open trustworthy relationships.** After examining interview responses and artifacts, the theme authentic and open trustworthy relationships was identified. This theme was coded within all five participants’ interviews and three
artifacts. This included a frequency of 107 coded references in interviews and a frequency of three artifact references. The theme had a total of 110 of the 525 references in the health area; therefore, this theme had 21% of the frequency total in the social health area.

Artifacts in this theme included researching dissertations on building trust and relationships in California community college leadership, a specialized training of building relationships in the role, and collaborative activity stemming from relationship building. Again, some of the artifact descriptions are general to protect the anonymity of the participants.

Responses included overall beliefs and attitudes of the importance of authentic relationships that need accessibility, trust, openness, and consistency. In addition, this theme included strategies on being oneself, building trust, being accessible, and reaching out to others. Participant 1 stated,

I treat people equally and with humanity. I talk to everyone the same way, and I will stop and talk to whoever wants to talk to me. I have hugged our employees, when they are crying, I have talked to people who are having meltdowns. People have shared that their moms are sick or their significant other has cancer, and we’ve connected on those things, because they feel that they can talk to me about the human things happening in their life, and I will respond in a human way.

Participant 2 expounded,

It’s really about relationship building and transparency. I think being honest with people—when you can. I always tell people, “You can ask me any question, and I will try to answer.” There are some things obviously I can’t tell you, and I’ll tell
you if I can’t tell you—it’s a personnel issue or I can’t explain to you about this, you just have to trust me. If I can, I will tell people, and I have no problem with that. I’ll even say sometimes, “Well here’s what we’re doing as a district, and here’s the decision we’re making,” and sometimes I’ll say, “Here’s my personal take on that, or here’s my opinion on that.” And I’ll say this is the [name redacted] opinion on this. It doesn’t mean that this is what we’re doing, but here’s what my opinion is, so that they kind of understand how I think and where I’m coming from.

Participant 4 explained,

People have preconceived notions about administrators, for example. . . . You have to dispel that; you have to build trust. It doesn’t happen, you have to earn it. And you earn it by being as open as you can be and as transparent as you can be and stating your intentions and following through. All those things really matter, and even when you do all that, you’re not going to win over and earn the trust of everybody, and you have to recognize that too. That’s just kind of the nature of institutional life, but trust has to be earned. It’s not something that you get without earning it.

Participant 5 described one of her processes:

And to try as much as possible to put everything on the table. I start every meeting with rumors, myths, or concerns. So, people can put it out there, and I end every meeting with “Don’t take it home with you.” If it wasn’t said, let’s talk about it. Because nothing is more detrimental to us personally or to the institution than meetings after the meeting.
Listening and open to feedback. After examining interview responses and artifacts, the theme listening and open to feedback was identified. This theme was coded within all five participants’ interviews and no artifacts. This included a frequency of 54 coded references in the interviews. The theme had a total of 54 of the 525 references in the health area; therefore, this theme had 10% of the frequency total in the social health area.

Responses included listening to others but also being open to feedback. These included direct listen, and general statements on hearing feedback, but there were also several specific references to accepting that the feedback can change the president’s opinion, and if necessary, apologize or admit errors in their prior ideas or actions. All five participants included accepting feedback as part of listening. Two participants gave specific scenarios of taking an action or having a plan or idea, and who, after listening to others’ feedback, revised their previous position openly admitting to the change of direction. Participant 3 stated that she was invited by the academic senate president to attend a retreat in June before her hire date; she stated,

So, I made a special trip to fly down. They were doing an in with the new out with the old kind of cross-training. And I just kind of listened to them. They had been used to a president that was very transactional. . . . But I think the fact that I flew down on my own dime, met with them, had lunch with them, listened to them, I just kind of infiltrated if you will. And then, when I came back in July, I said, “Can we start these meetings where we just sit down, and I can tell you what’s going on in my world and you in yours.”
Participant 4 noted this in her personal life as well:

That helps people feel like, “Okay she’s listening, she’s hearing us, and she’s taking action.” That helped build some trust. Again, not everybody is a fan of [participant name redacted], but that’s not the goal. The goal is really to earn the trust of those you can.

Participant 5 revealed what she did:

This last year, I made an individual appointment for everybody that works at the college: full time, part time, custodian, vice president, it didn’t matter, and give them an hour to tell me how you think I’m doing what you think we should be doing whatever you want, on your audience for an hour. And then I tried to take that feedback and wrap it into reflection and college goals or objectives or discussions about our culture, to make sure people know that they were heard, but also to give people a chance to talk and for me to hear.

**Mutually rewarding communication.** After examining interview responses and artifacts, the theme mutually rewarding communication was identified. This theme was coded within all five participants’ interviews and 11 artifacts. This included a frequency of 164 coded references in the interviews and a frequency of 14 artifact references. The theme had a total of 178 of the 525 references in the health area; therefore, this theme had 34% of the frequency total in the social health area.

Artifacts in this theme included extensive yearlong training in leadership from respected programs for prospective and new CEOs in California community colleges working on building effective relationships with participatory governance and board members. In addition, the programs were cohort based to develop peer-to-peer
relationships. Some artifacts included presentations at conferences with others and organizing professional events as part of a team or board. The artifacts also demonstrated community partnerships and communications for events or projects.

Responses in this theme included different strategies. One was to make interactions with others positive with responses from all five of the participants and 29 responses. These were building communications and in-the-moment communications. Participant 3 stated that she makes time for positive interactions people like attending classified events and “walking into the Veterans’ Center with a couple of pizzas, and just sitting down and see how people are doing.” In addition, she stated that in the first couple weeks of school, I’m in my cart and students will be looking around at the map and their hands or their app or whatever, and I’m like jump in. Within about 5 minutes, I know where they’re from, what their dog’s name is. Participant 4 stated,

I do a lot of note writing, I send notes to people. Typically, I find out about something and I write them a note. Unfortunately, I’ve had staff members whose family members have passed away over this past year, and I make sure I send a card and a note, just so they know I’m thinking about them and I care about them. The strategy of asking questions had responses from all five of the participants with 15 responses. Asking questions was often a choice instead of a less positive communication option. Participant 2 stated that she sees questions as an integral part of planning:

I’m always trying to think two moves ahead of where I am today. So, my team knows I’ll ask them questions when they want to do something, like “OK well let’s look at what are the possible outcomes that could happen as a result of
making that decision” and then “What are you going to do with those different outcomes happen?” Because that helps you be prepared.

Participant 4 described a situation with a manager who was not ready for a project meeting:

I couldn’t figure out why he wasn’t prepared for the meeting we were having, and I’d still been graceful, and I finally just wanted to say, “What is wrong?” But I didn’t. I asked questions. . . . I said something like “Okay, well, I know the deadline for this as X, Y Z. What were your expectations of when the pieces would come together?” Those kinds of things, so I asked questions, but I stay present, even in the discomfort.

Staying focused on the end goal had 16 responses from all five of the participants. In this theme, the choices made were focused on maintaining good communication and relationships with people who need to be at the table in decision-making. However, it also related to remembering what was best for the college and achieving the end goals.

Participant 1 discussed this:

I also try to remember what do I want out of this conversation when I’m having stressful situations—negative interactions that I’d like to make positive. It’s always what do I want to get out of this conversation, and I try to remind my staff that [the goal is] to have a collegial, respectful conversation where we can preserve our working relationships. . . .

In dealing with a personnel issue on accountability that needs to be addressed: I’m not like “Listen, this is what’s going on.” It’s been—As much as I’d like to—it’s been, “Look, these are all the things that I’m noticing, and this is
how it’s affecting me, and this is how it’s affecting the students, this is how it’s affecting the college, and I need you to do X, Y and Z.”

*Treat others as human beings first—empathy and respect for others.* After examining interview responses and artifacts, the theme of treat others as human beings first—empathy and respect for others was identified. This theme was coded within all five participants’ interviews and three artifacts. This included a frequency of 84 coded references in interviews and a frequency of three artifact references. The theme had a total of 87 of the 525 references in the health area; therefore, this theme had 17% of the frequency total in the social health area.

Artifacts in this area were related to outreach during the 2020 Black Lives Matter (BLM) protests, mental health needs in the community, and presentation on topics such as homelessness and food insecurities at community colleges and in communities. Each artifact used words like humanity and phrases like treating each other with empathy or respect.

Responses in this theme included being empathetic and respectful when dealing with people. Some examples were accepting people as they are, seeing other people’s perspective, and seeing the whole person. All participants referenced this at least once, but two participants had the majority of the responses with 81% of the total theme references. Participant 1 stated,

[Employees are] human beings first, the relationships they have in their personal life second, and then employees third. Because that whole shut your emotions down and come to work is so unrealistic . . . Just because [a person] not doing a
good job doesn’t mean [they are] a bad person. I have to respect the fact that [they have] a family, and [they are] going to be scared.

Participant 2 said,

I have a strong sense of being able to gauge people, understand them. I have the ability to put myself in somebody else’s shoes and to really sense and feel what they’re feeling. That helps me make decisions as a leader about how I’m going to approach a certain subject with somebody because I look at it from the aspect of if I were them, how would I want that.

**Recognize, appreciate others/help others rise.** After examining interview responses and artifacts, the theme of recognize, appreciate others/help others rise was identified. This theme was coded within all five participants’ interviews and 12 artifacts. This included a frequency of 84 coded references in interviews and a frequency of 12 artifact references. The theme had a total of 96 of the 525 references in the health area; therefore, this theme had 18% of the frequency total in the social health area.

Artifacts for this theme included volunteer work and volunteer awards from organizations not in the California Community Colleges system. They also included equity work outside their institutions. Also included were evidence of mentoring other administrators through formalized programs or working with programs that train prospective or new administrators.

Responses for this theme included recognizing and appreciating others including personal celebrations and wins. Recognition was informal or formal. These references were usually related to employees, teams, and students. Some specific examples of recognizing and appreciating others included strategies both personal and professional.
They primarily related to students and employees in the president’s institution.

Participant 3 stated,

I’m a big believer in celebrating people’s milestones, try to wish people happy birthday and or even if it’s two days later and notice, “Oops, skipped your birthday.”

She added,

Our athletes are coming back for outdoor conditioning in April. I am literally going to be in my Sue Sylvester outfit with pom-poms. I’m so excited we printed banners. I’m just excited because I’m so I mean those there’s those and I’m going to call them kids because most our athletes are pretty young. (Participant 3)

Participant 5 recognized the importance of appreciating others but also realized it was not her strength, so she explained how she created a “party-planner” role:

People, I need a “woo-hoo” on my team. I’ve got to have one. . . . somebody’s got to be the party planner and tell me hold up, and say, “Hey you need to stop and have fun.” And other people do that for me, and it works out. So, I rely on the strengths of others to do what I don’t have.

Helping others to rise was referenced by all five participants with 31 references. The responses were in intentional actions to help someone move up in life or in position.

To ensure confidentiality, the external involvement was summarized into general statements and no specific responses were added to participant response examples.

Assisting others to rise outside the institutions was represented by teaching doctoral students, purposefully agreeing to participate in doctoral studies, presenting on winning strategies, mentoring, and volunteering at conferences and other programs for advancing
administrators in California community colleges, and being a conscious model for students and employees in and outside her organization, specifically for women of color.

Participant 2 stated,

Mentoring and guiding people is really important too. If you see talent, if you see up-and-coming, if you see people with potential, you reach out. You try to help them and then always giving credit where credit is due. I think it’s so important for leaders to acknowledge good work and to not take credit for it. You’re going to support them, and you want to see good things for them. I always try to promote up my team too. I hate when I lose people, but you want the best for people too. You want them to have opportunities, and when somebody’s a shining star, they need to go. They need to do what they need to do. So that’s another way, mentoring, guiding.

Participant 2 added,

I think that is really important for our students to see that. We’re setting good examples by letting them see that yes, we’ve been successful, we’ve gotten advanced degrees, and we’ve become professors and administrators and staff, but we’re still human. We all had to overcome challenges and then we all mess up, and we make fools of ourselves sometimes.

Participant 3 stated,

We take about 20 of us [college employees] to the [National Conference on Race and Ethnicity in Higher ED] conference every year. And then we create an entire professional learning series at the campus next year. The people that went create
workshops, and then we deliver those throughout the year. So, it’s a nice giving back to that.

Participant 4 explained,

The way I look at it is if all I do is focus on buildings and projects, that doesn’t get to the big part of the college’s investments. So, I started a program called [name]. It’s a leadership development program that we do at [college] and it’s open to all college staff. We typically have 24 in a group, and it’s eight classified, eight faculty, and eight administrators or confidential employees. I talked about leading from where you are and talking about how important it is that my job, really is to make sure I’m maximizing everybody’s talents.

Vocational health data. For this study, vocational health is a leader’s career or calling, leading to personal satisfaction in work that is meaningful; it is the ambition that motivates the leader to search out more challenges and achievements in their field. The two interview questions created by the thematic peer researchers were as follows:

9. How do you ensure your work remains meaningful to you during challenging times?
10. How do you maintain your motivation to seek out new challenges and achievements in your field or profession?

The majority of the coded questions were elicited through these questions, but other parts of the interview tied back to the physical areas of health as well. Three themes were determined. These themes are identified in Table 19.

Meaningful work that provides satisfaction and motivation. After examining interview responses and artifacts, the theme meaningful work that provides satisfaction and motivation was identified. This theme was coded within all five participants’
interviews and 12 artifacts. This included a frequency of 42 coded references in interviews and a frequency of 14 artifact references. The theme had a total of 56 of the 204 references in the health area; therefore, this theme had 27% of the frequency total in the vocational health area.

Table 19

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vocational themes</th>
<th>Interviews coded</th>
<th>Artifacts coded</th>
<th>Interview frequency</th>
<th>Artifact frequency</th>
<th>Total frequency</th>
<th>% of frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meaningful work that provides satisfaction and motivation</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Desire and motivation to seek out new challenges</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidence / self-assurance</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. Total frequency of physical grounded area = 204.*

Artifacts in this theme are almost all related to actions and statements of the importance of creating opportunities for students. The artifacts include creating new partnerships to allow the college to offer training of expensive current technology that is not available in a college budget. Awards can help students, especially disproportionately impacted students, be more supported and successful. The recurring themes of the importance of student success in their professional life and as a personal mission are also of value.
Responses in this theme included 23 direct references to the role community colleges have in changing students’ lives. The remaining 19 interview responses were almost all indirectly or generally related to student success or making change. Meaningful work motivated all participants. This was also stated as the why they take on many challenges of the position. Participant 1 stated,

But in the challenging times, it’s remembering that difference and I may not always feel that way, or may not be told that. These are not very appreciated jobs, and people like to verbally abuse, a lot. Remembering that I make a difference. And the hard work that I do the stressful situations, I navigate they do, positively impact thousands of students and their families to make a better life.

Participant 2 explained,

Somebody has got to be in these leadership positions and fight the good fight for students. Because at the end of the day, they’re counting on us. . . . Our demographic of students, I would say 70% of them are first generation college students, living in poverty. It’s a struggle for them to complete their degrees. And to see their families there, just bursting at the seams, so proud of them, to see the smiles on their faces. And that is what truly keeps me going. Okay, we’re doing the right thing here.

Participant 4 emphasized,

The mission of the college is so compelling. It just spoke to me. So, for me, the work has always been one that brings me gratification and reward because of the transformational nature of the work we do, the ability to help students achieve their goals, help students succeed support them, and provide them with the
resources that will help them reach their goals. . . . The impact we have on people and what they’re seeking from us and what they get from us is just so important to me. I never looked back, I never wanted to go back to working for private industry, I thought, this is where I belong.

Participant 5 stated,

To be at a community college, where we get to change lives. Every day when I get out of my car, I pray let me be, let me see that one thing that will make a difference to somebody else. Sometimes it’s just a smile to a staff person, sometimes it’s asking somebody do you need help, sometimes I don’t even know what it is. But to be here, where you can literally change someone’s life changed the trajectory of families for generations. What other work is there?

*Desire and motivation to seek out new challenges.* After examining interview responses and artifacts, the theme desire and motivation to seek out new challenges was identified. This theme was coded within all five participants’ interviews and 18 artifacts. This included a frequency of 31 coded references in interviews and a frequency of 18 artifact references. The theme had a total of 49 of the 204 references in the health area; therefore, this theme had 24% of the frequency total in the vocational health area.

Artifacts in this theme included continuing their own education with training and certificate training. Four of the five participants have participated in extensive yearlong programs for prospective and new CEOs in California community colleges from respected organizations. Artifacts included evidence of voluntary leadership roles outside their institutions serving as joint chairs on task forces and directors of regional collaboration and voluntarily participating in actions and tasks that require time and
energy beyond their position. There were also multiple artifacts on attending, presenting at, and organizing conferences. Most of the artifacts in this theme were specialized and cannot be described in detail without compromising participant anonymity.

Responses included a few direct comments on seeking challenges, but only three participants gave specific examples of a challenge. However, the sense of intentional steps to seek and take on more challenges was present in four of the five participants’ responses. Participant 2 stated,

I am where I am today because at each step of the way I got to a place where I felt like I could do something more, and I wasn’t challenged at that level anymore. I mean, there’s always challenges, but I never felt like I was growing and once I got to that place or position or role, then I would seek something different.

Participant 3 described her attitude as “a sense of discovery” and her enthusiasm in “tackling the hard ones.” In addition to her feeling toward challenges, she specifically described meeting a colleague presenting a social problem. Afterwards she intentionally sought this colleague to discuss how to be part of the solution. Her intentional desire of a new project morphed into something beyond the position and institution. Participant 4 stated,

I have always been somebody that likes[to] challenge myself. I’ve always been somebody that tends not to look at why I can’t do something, but why I can. And it is just kind of part of my soul or my nature to be that way.

**Confidence/self-assurance.** After examining interview responses and artifacts, the theme confidence/self-assurance was identified. This theme was coded within all five participants’ interviews and 11 artifacts. This included a frequency of 83 coded
references in interviews and a frequency of 16 artifact references. The theme had a total of 99 of the 204 references in the health area; therefore, this theme had 49% of the frequency total in the vocational health area.

Artifacts in this theme include continuing their own education with training and certificate training. Four of the five participants have participated in extensive yearlong programs for prospective and new CEOs in California community colleges from respected organizations. Artifacts included evidence of taking on tasks of mentoring formally through organizations like ACCCA and taking on tasks that shared extensive leadership with others, such as organizing conferences, designing leadership programs, and taking on pilot programs.

Responses included more specific things related to maintaining or developing confidence. These included experience, mentors or peers’ networks, use of mantras in uncertain times, and not being afraid to fail. The references on experience building confidence were represented in all five interviews and some artifacts. Participant 1 stated,

[When] you’re lacking the confidence, you’re not sure what’s going to happen, I just tell myself, I have the skills and ability to get through anything and everything that comes my way. And the reality is I do. Because it’s been [year redacted for anonymity] years and I’m 100 for 100. Everything may have been hard, I may have struggled, I may have dropped, and failed at times, but here I am.
Participant 2 added,

Confidence comes from just surviving so many different things because you look back and you say, well if I survived all of that, and I can live through just about anything. . . . Resiliency comes from knowing that you can survive just about anything that gets thrown at you. It’s not fun, but you gain confidence in the fact that you’ve been here before. You use the tools and the lessons that you learn from the past, and just get to it. That’s kind of how it has to work.

All participants also referenced not being afraid to fail with 16 references. These included personal attitudes, but also that they had been given the “space” at some point to try new things even if they failed. References ranged from general to specific actions or plans. Participant 1 stated emphatically, “I’m not afraid to fail. I’m not afraid to say when I failed. I like trying new things, and sometimes they work and sometimes they don’t.” Participant 3 affirmed,

[Innovation] also comes from being given space to have to do that. So, when I work with my Chancellor, she’s like, “Go get it.” I mean if it’s something that’s controversial, I’ll Ping her and say, hey. And she’s like, go try it, see what happens, you know. So, I like to do that for others, I like to create space, I like to get to yes. Try it, take a risk, tell me how it goes, how can I help you, do you need resources to try that. So, I think when you practice that for others, you naturally feel like you can be innovative, as well.

Participant 4 explained,

I have always been somebody that likes [to] challenge myself. I’ve always been somebody that tends not to look at why I can’t do something, but why I can. And
it is just kind of part of my soul or my nature to be that way. I didn’t learn that. I kind of grew up that way, my family was encouraging and supporting. I was never one to really back away from an opportunity or a challenge. I wasn’t always successful at everything I tried to do, but I didn’t let that stop me.

**Spiritual health data.** For this study, spiritual health was defined as the beliefs or values of an individual’s innermost self that motivate action and inspire toward purposes that invite empathy and go beyond self; it is a commitment to one’s value system as a source of well-being providing a profound sense of global connectedness. The two interview questions created by the thematic peer researchers were as follows:

11. As a leader, how do you maintain and apply your beliefs or values internally and externally, towards a purpose beyond self?

12. How do you develop and maintain your sense of connectedness to others?

The majority of the spiritual coded responses were elicited through these questions, but other parts of the interview tied back to this area of health as well. Two themes were determined. These themes are identified in Table 20.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spiritual themes</th>
<th>Interviews coded</th>
<th>Artifacts coded</th>
<th>Interview frequency</th>
<th>Artifact frequency</th>
<th>Total frequency</th>
<th>% of frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>True to values</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose beyond self/global connectedness</td>
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<td>33</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td><strong>5</strong></td>
<td><strong>34</strong></td>
<td><strong>224</strong></td>
<td><strong>43</strong></td>
<td><strong>267</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Total frequency of physical grounded area = 267.
**True to values.** After examining interview responses and artifacts, the theme true to values was identified. This theme was coded within all five participants’ interviews and five artifacts. This included a frequency of 57 coded references in interviews and a frequency of five artifact references. The theme had a total of 62 of the 267 references in the health area; therefore, this theme had 23% of the frequency total in the spiritual health area.

Artifacts for this theme included participating in opportunities to develop or discuss ethics and values. Three of the four participated in a program to develop “ethical and equity-minded leadership.” Another participant received an award for commitment and service to taking actions that “make a difference.” The final participant expressed their own values and how finding solutions for homelessness is a personal commitment during work on taskforces.

Responses in this theme revolved around having and maintaining personal commitment to one’s values. All of the participants referenced being true to one’s values. Those personal commitments were also represented as important in handling obstacles and conflict. Participant 1 stated,

You can’t please everyone. There’s going to be peanut gallery with their own comments, so leading with your moral and ethical code and not giving a *shit* what people think is going to help you to be successful in navigating these stressful situations and making sure that you’re doing the best you can. . . . At the end of the day, I’m still being true to myself and I’m connecting in a real and authentic way because I’m being me, and I don’t pretend to be anyone else.
Participant 2 explained,

I think that’s just living your life every day with that spirituality, that intentionality. And I think if you’re someone who truly does that, you don’t really think about it. I don’t get up every morning and go, “Well, how can I take my spiritual beliefs and apply those today?” I think, it is part of who I am, and it’s just what I do.

Participant 3 added,

I feel a tremendous responsibility to inspire people to do good work, so I have to find ways to do that for myself, because if you can’t show up for other people then it’s hard for them to do what they need to do, and so I feel a tremendous responsibility and commitment to that.

Purpose beyond self/global connectedness. After examining interview responses and artifacts, the theme purpose beyond self/global connectedness was identified. This theme was coded within all five participants’ interviews and 33 artifacts. This included a frequency of 167 coded references in interviews and a frequency of 38 artifact references. The theme had total of 205 of the 267 references in the health area; therefore, this theme had 77% of the frequency total in the spiritual health area.

Artifacts included service and volunteer recognition, evidence of volunteering additional responsibilities, often outside their own position to help others. Artifacts were generalized to protect the anonymity of the participants, which included participating and presenting at equity conferences, men of color events, and other ethnic awareness events. One participant was awarded multiple volunteer or inspiration awards; the other four presented at conferences on topics related to improving equity. In addition, three
participants were part of a partnership with a person or group outside of the college to work for systemic changes on race, homelessness, and economic disparity.

Responses to this theme had three related topics: (a) a belief in a greater spiritual power, (b) a strong internal belief in helping others in general, and (c) combatting inequality. In their interview responses, all participants expressed a belief in a greater spiritual power whether it was a formalized religion or related to fate or karma with 32 responses. Four participants referred to formalized religion as either their present or past practices. Three also indicated less-formal beliefs in a higher power including karma, the golden rule, spiritual energy, and that general belief that God has a plan. Participant 2 stated,

When I see something that I think is immoral or unethical, I will speak out. I will challenge people on that because I do believe that there is a spiritual energy that comes with being connected to other humans and to really try and uplift. There’s a positive energy that comes from uniting and trying to do good. I think good comes from good. I believe in karma. I believe in all of that.

Participant 3 explained,

I’m not someone that goes to church, but I am someone who has a deep faithful belief. And so certainly my little talks with God from time to time are helpful depending on of what’s there, so I would say all of those things are really you know part and parcel of how I sort of draw wellness into my life.

Participant 5 added,

[When I pray] I am hoping for some clarity in my thought processes. That's usually, when I’m starting to feel like this is it’s not going where I wanted to, or
it's beyond getting to a point of something I can control or manage. And I need clarity in how to think [the situation] through.

In their interview responses, all participants expressed a strong belief in helping others. In addition, all five participants referenced combating inequity with 49 responses. Though many references were general, some were more specific regarding inequity in ethnicity, gender, economic status, homelessness, and food insecurity. References were presented to motivation for beginning and continuing in the career to help students and communities and included volunteer work and personal goals in improving the lives of others in large and small ways. Participant 1 discussed the importance of making a difference:

I navigate—positively impact thousands of students and their families to make a better life, and my goal of ending systematic racism; that’s my pursuit and what I want to do. So, dismantling things that have been in place and fighting these things that are so normalized that people think you’re crazy when you’re trying to question them, it’s hard work.

Participant 2 added,

Our job, our mission, is to support and serve students who don’t have access. We are an open-access institution. So, we have to be relentless in continuing to find ways to get them these services. That’s how you get equity, economic development, upward mobility. And if you’re conservative in your beliefs fiscally then you want people to be able to support themselves. They can’t if they don’t have their education. So, this is the way we solve these problems is by
getting them education, giving them the opportunity for upward mobility, and that means sometimes they need extra help. We gotta do this.

Participant 3 stated,

We’ve been having these issues around the use of proctoring software, and I am at odds with an entire group of faculty; I said, “Let me just be clear with you, you want it, you pay for it, I am not buying surveillance software that does not recognize Black faces.”

Participant 4 explained,

I have always been service-oriented even as a child, growing up. My mother was our campfire group leader, and we went and sang at nursing homes, and we did things like that to earn our beads, but I just feel you have to. I have an orientation to others; I don’t know exactly where it stems from. It’s just part of my being.

Participant 5 shared, “Every day when I get out of my car, I pray let me be, let me see that one thing that will make a difference to somebody else.”

**Grounded strategies compiled.** The responses to Research Question 2 identified strategies exemplary female presidents in California community colleges use to develop and maintain grounded leadership in the six areas of balance (physical, emotional, intellectual, social, vocational, and spiritual health). These were presented in the qualitative data section. These strategies have been compiled into one section (see Table 21).

**Data Summary**

The purpose of this explanatory mixed methods study was to identify and describe what exemplary female presidents in California community colleges do to stay grounded
using Bob Rosen’s (2014) six areas of health: physical, emotional, intellectual, social, vocational, and spiritual health. The quantitative data were collected as participants rated themselves on grounded health behaviors. The survey included five questions for each health area and 10 on an overall grounded section for a total of 40 questions. The survey was administered using SurveyMonkey and included a question as to the participants’ willingness to participate in the interview. Sixteen participants completed the survey. Of the 16 survey respondents who answered, nine were willing to be interviewed, five of these were interviewed based on availability and schedules. The five interviews were transcribed and coded into 19 themes along with related artifacts.

Chapter IV presented the data and findings from both the survey and interviews as well as artifacts. Chapter V presents in more detail major findings, unexpected findings, conclusions, implications for actions, and recommendations for further research. Chapter V ends with the researcher’s concluding remarks and reflections on the study.
Table 21

*Specific Strategies Compiled and Identified by Grounded Health Areas*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Health area/strategies</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Total references</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>P1</td>
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<td>P3</td>
<td>P4</td>
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<td><strong>Physical health strategies</strong></td>
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<td>Think consciously about mind-body connectedness</td>
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<td>29</td>
<td>11</td>
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<td>Using meditation, breathing, or re-centering</td>
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<td>17</td>
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<td>Establishing and maintaining boundaries</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>9</td>
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<td>52</td>
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<tr>
<td>Take time to think</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>35</td>
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<td>Self-talk/mantras</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Use of technology to calm (calm app, music, Apple watch, etc.)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td><strong>Intellectual health strategies</strong></td>
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<td>Reading</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alternative reading strategies (podcasts, skim, etc.)</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td><strong>Vocational health strategies</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidence through varied, tough experiences</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>38</td>
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<tr>
<td>Confidence—not afraid to fail, willing to take risks</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td><strong>Social health strategies</strong></td>
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<td>Treat others as human beings first—empathy and respect</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
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<td>Listen to others—purposeful listening</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>56</td>
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<tr>
<td>Help others rise</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make interactions with others positive</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accept feedback</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>28</td>
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<td>Recognize and appreciate others</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>19</td>
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<tr>
<td>Being accessible (open door, walk the campus, visit people, meet with people across campus)</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>18</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stay focused on the end goal</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>Ask questions</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
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</table>
CHAPTER V: FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overview

This explanatory mixed methods study was a thematic study conducted by a research team of seven doctoral students. The thematic research team applied Rosen’s (2014) theory to exemplary leaders in various fields and organizations to identify strategies successful leaders use to remain grounded in uncertain times. The thematic study included a quantitative survey, Stay Grounded, on which leaders rated themselves. In addition, qualitative interviews of participants gathered data with specific questions on the six areas of grounded health. This particular study focused on successful grounded strategies of female community college presidents in California.

The data gathered were summarized in Chapter IV. Chapter V restates the purpose statement and research questions and summarizes the research methods, population, and sample. This chapter also presents major findings, conclusions, implications for action and recommendations for further research, and the researcher’s concluding remarks and reflections.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this explanatory mixed methods study was to identify and describe what exemplary female presidents in California community colleges do to stay grounded and maintain physical, emotional, intellectual, social, vocational, and spiritual health.

Research Questions

1. How do exemplary female presidents in California community colleges rate themselves on the Stay Grounded survey in the six areas of balance (physical, emotional, intellectual, social, vocational, and spiritual health)?
2. What strategies do exemplary female presidents in California community colleges use to develop and maintain grounded leadership in the six areas of balance (physical, emotional, intellectual, social, vocational, and spiritual health)?

**Research Methods and Data Collection Procedures**

This study used an explanatory mixed methods design. The team of seven peer researchers used both quantitative and qualitative instrumentation and data analysis to answer the research questions. This involved the intentional collection of both quantitative and qualitative data and the combination of the strengths of each method to answer the research questions. The team of seven peer researchers, in collaboration with faculty, developed both the quantitative survey and the qualitative interview protocol in a reiterative process.

The quantitative survey instrument used structured questions in the form of scaled items based on the six areas of grounded health in Rosen’s (2014) theoretical framework (physical, emotional, intellectual, social, vocational, and spiritual). The survey used a Likert scale for subjects to rate themselves to best reflected their beliefs or perceptions in response to each statement. Participants who met the sample criteria were e-mailed a link to the survey, and survey data were collected using SurveyMonkey.

The participant criteria for the study were defined as having at least four of the following seven criteria:

- evidence of successful development of grounded leadership skill (physical, emotional, intellectual, social, vocational, and spiritual);
- evidence of leading a successful organization or unit;
- a minimum of 5 years of experience in the field;
• articles, papers, or materials written, published, or presented at conferences or association meetings;

• recognition by her peers;

• membership in professional associations in her field; and

• participation in workshops and seminars in work/life balance.

**Population**

The population is a large group that meets a distinct criterion, which allows a researcher to generalize findings from the study (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014). The study population for this study was female community college presidents. In the United States in 2020, there were 941 public community colleges (Duffin, 2020). According to the American Council on Education’s *American College President Study 2017*, 30% of presidents in U.S. colleges are women, while in 2-year associate degree institutions in the United States, women are presidents to a higher degree of 36% (Gagliardi et al., 2017). The target population for this study was female community college presidents in the California Community Colleges system (see Figure 4). There are 116 California community college presidents. The number of female California community college presidents at the time of the study was 42.

**Sample**

A sample is a subset of the target population representing the whole population (Patten & Newhart, 2018; Patton, 2015). This study used both purposeful and convenience sampling. Purposeful sampling utilizes a judgment in subject selection to determine a study sample with needed characteristics for the study (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014) or intentional recruitment of participants who exhibit the desired
characteristics or criteria for the study (Patton, 2015). For this study, subjects were selected using the exemplary leader criteria cocreated with the thematic peer research team. Convenience sampling accounted for practical obstacles such as scheduling, cost, and availability (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014). COVID and the use of Zoom mitigated cost, but scheduling and availability remained a factor.

For this study, 16 female presidents of California community colleges were selected to participate based on the exemplary criteria. Of the 16 survey participants, nine indicated in the survey they were willing to be interviewed. Of the nine, five were interviewed using Zoom based on availability and schedules.

**Major Findings Related to the Literature**

Both qualitative and quantitative data were used to determine major findings. The data from the two instruments were related to the literature review. Major findings are presented for each of Rosen’s (2014) six variables of grounded leadership health: physical, emotional, intellectual, social, vocational, and spiritual health.

**Finding 1: Female Community College Presidents Ensure Their Physical Health by Implementing Strategies to Maintain Mind-Body Awareness**

Female presidents of California community colleges understand the importance of mind-body awareness and have strategies to recognize and maintain health awareness. Leaders with physical wellness are in touch with their bodies. Rosen (2014) defined physical health and its importance to becoming a grounded effective leader as “paying attention to your body; it needs constant care and maintenance” (p. 38). According to Mattson (2012), the top coping mechanisms to deal with stress of California community college CEOs included talking with others, purposeful relaxing, physical activity, and
praying or mediating. CEOs’ mind-body awareness was mostly related to dealing with stress. They often relied on the coping mechanisms listed in the research for California community college CEOs of physical activity, meditating and a purposeful re-centering through breathing and relaxing.

Finding 2: Female Community College Presidents Practice Emotional Intelligence Particularly Within High Stress Situations

Female presidents of California community colleges practice emotional intelligence when they control their emotions and responses especially in high stress situations. Many researchers recognize that awareness and control of their own emotions is part of strong emotional intelligence and leadership behaviors (Aguilar, 2018; Bacha 2014; Brooks, 2017; Brown, 2018; George, 2000; Goleman, 1995, 2011; Muktak, 2017; Podsakoff et al., 1990; Salovey & Mayer, 1990). In the survey statements, emotional health statements related to awareness and control of one’s own emotions were rated high with 5.8, 5.9, and 6.0 (see Table 8). Interview responses showed a high reference to both emotional awareness and the control of emotions and responses. Female presidents’ emotional awareness included knowing when to rely on support such as seeing a therapist and listening to one’s body as well as utilizing strategies to retain control in stressful situations.

Finding 3: Female Community College Presidents Create a Collaborative Environment Through Open-Mindedness and Active Listening

Female presidents of California community colleges practice collaboration using active listening and staying open-minded to others’ ideas. Research shows that a key part of a college president’s job is to collaborate with shared governance and all stakeholders
However, being open-minded when collaborating is critical (Diaz-Saenz, 2011; Gunn & Gullickson, 2003; Horstmeyer, 2018; von Stumm, 2018); if leaders think they are expected to have all the answers, they do not listen to opinions or new ideas from others (Gunn & Gullickson, 2003; Horstmeyer, 2018). In the quantitative data, the participants rated themselves high in areas related to being open-minded and collaborative. In interview responses and artifacts, examples of collaboration on projects, team-building, and decision-making were apparent.

**Finding 4: Female Community College Presidents Utilize Transparency and Authenticity to Build and Maintain Positive Relationships**

Female presidents of California community colleges build positive relationships using authenticity including trustworthiness and transparency. Social skills include building and maintaining positive relationships (Goleman, 2006; Gulliford et al., 2019; Rahim et al., 2018; Rath & Harter, 2010; Van Oosten et al., 2019). Leaders with social health remain authentic and true to themselves as they create meaningful relationships with others (Goleman & Boyatzis, 2008; Rahim et al., 2018; Rath & Hartner, 2010; Rosen, 2014). This study showed that female presidents of California community colleges have strong social health. They focus on building relationships, being trustworthy, and being transparent. They work to build positive relationship through demonstrating interest and caring for people, which includes making time, recognizing people, and helping others to succeed.
Finding 5: Female Community College Presidents Focus on Making a Difference and Serving Others

Female presidents of California community colleges are highly motivated to make a difference and serve others. Mintz-Binder (2012) noted that occupational match or the position to the individual’s values and needs was important and specifically noted that academic administrators find fulfillment in the intrinsic rewards of making a difference and needing to, or having a willingness to, serve others. Female presidents of California community colleges maintained a service-focused worldview. Their focus on service primarily included helping college students succeed. However, the willingness and need to help others was clear in their volunteer work, offering to mentor others, and joining and leading groups with the goal of improving lives through fighting homelessness, hunger, inequity, and economic disparity.

Finding 6: Female Community College Presidents Ground Themselves and Their Work by Seeing it as a Vocation and a Calling

Female community college presidents are passionate about the mission of the California community colleges and the built-in goal to help students succeed. These community college presidents see their vocation not only as a job but also as a calling. Vocational health consists of employees’ vocation adding reward and aligning with their values (Gatchel & Kishino, 2012; Mintz-Binder, 2012). The work was essentially meaningful because it positively impacted students’ lives. Therefore, the community college mission matches the presidents’ own service-related values.
Unexpected Findings

In this explanatory mixed methods study, data were analyzed to discover major findings. In this process, two unexpected findings were discovered. The unexpected findings came from discrepancies among the literature, survey responses, and qualitative data. Each unexpected finding follows.

Unexpected Finding 1: Physical Activity Is Directly Connected to Social Support and Emotional Health

Occupational stress and the resulting absenteeism is reduced by more specific factors such as exercise, social support, and emotional health (Harper, 2000). This study revealed that exercise, social support, and emotional health may be more interconnected. In their survey responses, participants ranked themselves low on the statement “Exercise daily” with a mean of 4.9 and an SD of 1.2 with three responses on the disagree side. This was the second highest number of disagree responses in the survey. Of the 40 statements in the survey, only four statements were rated with a lower mean than this one. This suggests that physical activity is not regular or may be displaced with more important tasks or expectations. This was contradicted in the interview references regarding activity. All five participants made exercise a part of their routine though not daily. However, in addition to exercise regimes like golfing, elliptical, swimming, and weight-lifting, four of the participants referenced regularly walking on the campus, and the other one referenced walking during meetings when possible. It was clear that physical activity was important, but it was not always daily or a standard exercise routine. Because the interview data indicated that the participants walked the campus to meet and talk with others, and one participant described participating in student staff sports as a
way to interact with students in a positive way, the reward from activity was not for the primary benefit of exercise but rather provided benefits such as interacting with others, reducing stress, or taking time to re-center.

**Unexpected Finding 2: Personal Trust Related to Vulnerability Was Ranked Lowest of Emotional Health Areas**

The literature showed the need for exemplary grounded leaders to be vulnerable. Rosen (2014) endorsed vulnerability and Brene Brown (2018) in her book *Dare to Lead* explained that vulnerability is “the emotion that we experience during times of uncertainty, risk and emotional exposure” (p. 19). The female community college presidents ranked themselves higher on areas within their control and lower on areas outside their control related to the vulnerability of openly sharing or what others at work provided them in areas of supportive feedback. In interviews the references to trust were almost all on how the female community college presidents can be trustworthy and how they can build others’ trust of them. As part of the emotional responses, it was surprising how low the survey score was for the two statements related to personal trust: “My colleagues at work offers supportive feedback” had a mean of 4.5 with a standard deviation of 1.1, and “Talk openly about my emotions” had a mean of 4.3 and a standard deviation of 1.3. These were the lowest two means for the survey responses.

The interviews had some additional references to trusting and vulnerability, but these were most often related to mentors, peers, or small groups of personal friends rather than staff and employees. Even with these safe groups, issues of trust were noted. One participant stated that she had a personal social media account and a president’s social media account because, she laughingly said, “I don't trust what my family posts.” In
regard to employees and staff, one participant stated, “I'll trust you until I can't,” yet she tied this directly related to work scenarios and information such as who would take information and spread it around campus and who would not. Two participants specifically referred to vulnerability in the work environment with staff administration and faculty but were not deeply personal; however, they used examples such as how one’s weekend was. Despite stating the importance of being themselves and being open, four participants indicated at some point the degree to which that could be open based on the topic. These participants stated or implied that some topics were confidential like personnel issues. Overall, vulnerability was limited or restricted.

Conclusions

Conclusion 1: Female Community College Presidents Who Create Workplace Relationships That Incorporate Physical Activity Build Work Bonds and Physical Health

Based on the findings and the review of literature, the researcher concluded that female community college presidents who create workplace relationships that incorporate physical activity will build work bonds and physical health. In a specific reference to California community college CEOs, Mattson (2012) found physical activity as one of the top coping mechanisms to deal with stress. Part of social health is building mutually rewarding relationships and being part of teams and communities in the workplace (Goleman, 2006; Goleman & Boyatzis, 2008). Female college presidents expressed their enjoyment of physical activity in “walking on the campus” or other social physical activities. These were not part of an exercise regime but often related to another type of reward. The physical activity was secondary to the additional benefits of interacting with
others, reducing stress, or taking time to re-center. Therefore, a set exercise regime is not
the only way presidents engage in physical activity, but physical activity is also a
pathway to other more emotional and social rewards. In each case, the importance of
“walking the campus” was tied to emotional, social, and spiritual rewards. Therefore, for
this study and in examining the role of exercise, the distinction between exercise regimes
and physical activity was relevant, and social and emotional rewards were more
important in their choice to engage in physical activity.

**Conclusion 2: Female Community Colleges Presidents Who Practice Mind-Body
Awareness Will Manage Stress and Conflict and Improve the College Culture**

The mind can overrule sensations from the body; mind and body awareness
allows one to recognize their own responses and be aware of physical limitations (Rytz,
2009). Woods-Giscombé and Black (2010) noted that women in particular may not
address stressors with coping mechanisms as they feel the need to present an image of
strength by suppressing emotions and postponing self-care. Mind-body awareness is a
practice to recognize the body as part of the self and environment with the stressors and
the whole-body reaction to stress responses (Mehling et al., 2011). Based on the findings
and the review of literature, the researcher concluded that female community college
presidents who practice mind-body awareness manage their stress effectively and reduce
the negative impact of relational conflict. Leaders who maintain their own health
awareness positively impact their own health and the overall health of their employees
(Franke et al., 2014; Gurt et al., 2011; Kranabetter & Niessen, 2017). Presidents who
practice strong mind-body awareness reduce personal stress, long-term illness, and
improve the overall health of the college. Modeling mind-body awareness will create
fewer negative reactions. Leaders who model mind-body awareness behaviors and show that personal health and wellness is valued.

**Conclusion 3: Female Community Colleges Presidents Who Model Emotional Awareness and Self-Control Will Build a Culture of Trust**

Based on the findings and the review of literature, the researcher concluded that female community college presidents who are emotionally self-aware and control their responses build a culture of trust with others. Leaders who use strong emotional intelligence leadership behaviors of recognizing and controlling their own emotions and being aware of others’ emotions build trust (Aguilar, 2018; Bacha 2014; Brooks, 2017; Brown, 2018; George, 2000; Goleman, 1995, 2011; Muktak, 2017; Podsakoff et al., 1990; Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Female presidents of California community colleges remain conscious of their emotions in stress or conflict. They avoid responding in emotion and instead take their time and use strategies to react with more thoughtful, less emotional responses. Through their own actions they strive to reduce the negative emotions in a situation. This awareness and control ensures that female college presidents’ interactions do not become negative and trust is built, so they strive for their interactions to be positive and productive.

**Conclusion 4: Female Community Colleges Presidents Who Actively Listen and Practice Intentional Inclusion Will Create a Collaborative Culture**

Based on the findings and the review of literature, the researcher concluded that female community college presidents who practice intentional inclusion and active listening create a collaborative culture. Leaders should not think they have all the answers, or need to have all the answers, because otherwise they do not listen to opinions...
or new ideas from others (Gunn & Gullickson, 2003; Horstmeyer, 2018). To achieve transformational change, college presidents are collaborative. They also use intentional inclusion to have all stakeholders in the conversation and ensure all stakeholders are active in the conversation. Leaders actively listen to all stakeholders making them feel valued and respected. These behaviors and sentiments build a culture of engaged collaboration from all parties.

**Conclusion 5: Female Community College Presidents Intentionally Support Other Leaders on Their Leadership Journey**

Based on the findings and the review of literature, the researcher concluded that female community college presidents take intentional steps to support others in their leadership. Women are often held back in leadership by not receiving mentoring or role models or seeing themselves in higher positions (Behr & Schneider, 2015; Fedrizzi-Williams, 2016; Janiak, 2018; Parker, 2015). Female presidents of California community colleges practice intentional steps inside and outside of their organization to help others to rise in their leadership journeys. They intentionally support employees and administrators of their college as well as administrators at other colleges. Through their intentional actions of supporting others, they build stronger leaders and become role models for other leaders. The added benefit is presenting women with female leader role models so they can visualize more women in leadership.

**Implications for Action**

**Implication 1: Mind-Body Awareness**

Habits and behaviors of an administrator are usually well-established before they take on the role of president. Therefore, development of behaviors and strategies for
mind-body awareness need to begin in the pipeline to the presidency in the manager and administrator ranks. The human resources (HR) departments of colleges within the community college system will incorporate mind-body activities and ensure administrators can regularly participate in mind-body activities at as part of the district culture. Additionally, in collaboration with college HR departments, the community college system will pay for and make mindful apps available for California community college administrators throughout the state of California and include mind-body awareness opportunities at state-sponsored conferences from organizations such as ACCJA, ACCCA, and RP group. Presenting mind-body awareness strategies and activities in such a way would not only make access easy, but through regular promotion, it would help remove possible negative connotations. A variety of mind-body awareness strategies and activities need to be offered to appeal to more people with different interests and styles would assist in that area.

**Implication 2: Emotional Trust and Ensuring a Safe Space for College Presidents**

Colleges want to reduce turnover and should demonstrate commitment to supporting the mental health of the college president. As part of their contract and benefits, HR departments will include biannual access to counseling and support services not connected to the college for presidents of colleges. This normalizes seeking a safe place to share and promotes an opportunity for presidents to deal with stresses that they may not be able to share in other areas due to confidentiality or professionalism concerns. The biannual counseling support meetings are personal and confidential and are meant to provide the president with strategies to remain grounded while fulfilling their role.
Implication 3: Create a Women’s California Community College President Association

According to the literature review, one obstacle on the path to the community college presidency for women is a lack of mentoring or role models. This study’s findings show that female community college presidents actively help others rise in leadership. Creating a women’s California community colleges presidents’ association will better facilitate women on their path to the presidency. Women leaders in the pipeline to the presidency will have mentoring, interaction with female role models, and increased networking to better visualize and prepare themselves to become college presidents. This association would be formed of female college presidents and other female administrators of community colleges with the goal of supporting each other’s success, building important relationships, and lifting up emerging women leaders.

Implication 4: Human-First Retreats

Administrators will participate in college-wide or statewide human-first retreats to work with others, be aware of others’ feelings, build better relationships, and work more deeply through the internal practice needed to develop, maintain, and demonstrate a human-first mentality. Retreats not only reinforce seeing people as people first and employees second, but they will also allow more experience with generational differences in the workplace and among peers. This not only builds empathy but also includes practice in courageous conversations and even employee discipline. Training occurs within HR practices and policy. Training administrators in the pipeline ensures that more prospective candidates have this viewpoint and preparation when applying for the presidency.
Implication 5: Create Confidence Through Experience

Administrators in the pipeline for the presidency need to be provided opportunities to develop leadership abilities with college-wide or higher visibility scenarios. These can include leading or co-leading taskforces, working with other areas of the campus, and gaining more emergency situational awareness. These will build confidence in more areas and in responding to varied situational crises. Research shows there are fewer qualified candidates willing and ready to take over higher educational institutions (Aspen Institute, 2017, 2020; CCLC, 2002; McNair, 2010). Findings from this study show female California community college presidents gained confidence from dealing with varied experiences and crisis situations. Therefore, experience with varied and emergency scenarios will better prepare administrators for the presidency and higher leadership by building confidence in more areas and situations, through additional leadership opportunities, the training for the unexpected. Senior administrators will be required to cross-train at least once a year within their college and district. In addition, the chancellor’s office or other statewide agency will create simulated training of emergency situations for administrators: bomb threats, lockdowns, extreme weather closures, fires, suicide attempts or deaths on campus, and so forth.

Implication 6: Work Coaches and Mentorships

The chancellor’s office will create work coach mentorships for all presidents in their first year of leadership or in any interim position that may lead to leadership. Work coaches should be experienced presidents or chancellors currently in the position or recently retired. A work coach creates assistance similar to mentoring, but it is more formalized. By making it through the chancellor’s office, it becomes a requirement of the
position and part of the reputation of the college. As the coach is someone experienced or retired, the ability for the coachees to learn and also have a safe place to share their professional and personal concerns becomes more normalized. Required components of the coaching include the findings and outcomes of this research focused on groundedness.

**Recommendations for Further Research**

**Recommendation 1**

It is recommended that this study be replicated with male presidents in California community colleges. This would determine differences and similarities in gender populations in the same position, system, and geographical state. In particular, it could compare and investigate the findings of commitment to the California Community Colleges mission through the lens of gender.

**Recommendation 2**

It is recommended that the study be replicated with female vice presidents or deans of community colleges. This would reveal data on the groundedness of women in the pipeline to the presidency. This study could help explore differences in experiences and confidence at different stages in the pipeline to the presidency for women.

**Recommendation 3**

It is recommended that this study be replicated with female presidents in 4-year universities. Research shows that there is a smaller percentage of women in 4-year research institutions. Their struggles and strategies can help other women outside of California and at a different institution. This could be done in both public or private universities.
**Recommendation 4**

It is recommended that a mixed methods study be conducted on the grounded elements of emotional and social health. These two health areas received over 50% of all qualitative references in the study. This suggests the importance and relevance of these two areas of health in grounded leadership. Based on the data, these two areas play an important role in strategies and successful communication with others.

**Recommendation 5**

It is recommended that a phenomenological study be employed to explore singularly the grounded element of spiritual health. Based on the research, spiritual health is a critical factor in remaining grounded overall. This study revealed the importance of the purpose beyond self in choosing to be college president. This study also focused on strategies but also took a deeper look at the spiritual tools and pathways that leaders take to reach stay focused in hard times and also in making leadership career choices.

**Recommendation 6**

As this study was part of a thematic research team, a meta-analysis could be done to look at the different researchers’ specific populations and analyze similarities and differences in their population groups.

**Recommendation 7**

It is recommended that this study be replicated with the same population after the COVID mandates are removed. This population was studied approximately one year into California Community Colleges system’s restrictions on gatherings, and most colleges
moved completely or mostly to online teaching and staff and administrator work. Would the result be noticeably different outside the pandemic environment?

**Recommendation 8**

It is recommended that a phenomenological study be employed to explore women leaders who successfully navigate physical health over time in a leadership position. This population ranked themselves as the lowest two survey numbers for sleep and exercise. By not practicing physical health self-care, severe physical effects as well as burnout and illness can occur.

**Concluding Remarks and Reflections**

To be here, where you can literally change someone's life, change the trajectory of families for generations. What other work is there?

—Participant 5

Community colleges change the lives of students and improve communities and the state. California community colleges serve students who may not be able to get an education beyond high school in academics or for career training. It is no surprise that a college president must be multiskilled and most of all passionate about the mission. Yet as current presidents retire or become burned out, where will the leadership for community colleges come from in the next decades?

The purpose of this study was to identify and describe what exemplary female presidents in California community colleges do to stay grounded in times of stress and uncertainty using Bob Rosen’s (2014) six areas of grounded health: physical, emotional, intellectual, social, vocational, and spiritual. Dealing with stress and uncertainty is germane for California community college presidents. In past decades, the role and
responsibilities of the community college president have become increasingly complex resulting in additional stress. Subsequently, presidents are remaining in their positions for fewer number of years. Therefore, determining the strategies exemplary leaders use to remain grounded will help California community college presidents and prospective presidents remain in the position longer and reduce the impact of turnover at individual colleges.

The focus on women for this study was in part personal but also logical. There are fewer women college presidents across the United States and in the California Community Colleges system compared to male presidents. Yet women outnumber men in earning doctoral degrees, an important step to the presidency. Women in leadership roles also experience more stress than their male counterparts as they navigate their own and other’s gender role expectations. With additional stressors and fewer role models and mentors, women may not see themselves as leaders and often only applied for the presidency only after a “tap on the shoulder” suggestion.

This study validated the importance of grounded health and strategies in times of stress and uncertainty. Female California community college presidents consciously use a variety of strategies to stay focused on the college mission and the relationships needed to accomplish it. In particular, strong emotional and social health allows presidents to build authentic connections with their colleagues, staff, and students. However, a service-focused orientation was also a major factor in decision-making and reinforcing grounded strategies.

I chose this thematic topic first because of my own experiences and observations. As a leader, I struggled with staying grounded myself and felt that gender expectations
impacted my professional life. Therefore, the opportunity to learn from others motivated me to participate in this thematic study as I hoped to incorporate their strategies to improve my own grounded health. Beyond that personal perspective, I had worked with six California community college presidents and three interims in 16 years, and the turnover was disconcerting. In addition, I observed a high number of women in administration in middle management but not a corresponding number of women presidents. Until I worked with two female college presidents closely, I had not been able to visualize a woman, someone who looked like me, in the role. In addition, this study has helped me have a greater appreciation of the role of college president and especially the women who choose to become college presidents. This is not just because of their struggles, though those were there as well, and not just because of their strategies and strength, though those inspired me too, but by their deep and persistent commitment to the mission of the California Community Colleges system and enduring desire helping others.
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APPENDIX A

California Community College List by President Gender (Nov. 2020)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Community College Names</th>
<th>M/F</th>
<th>Dr?</th>
<th>President</th>
<th>degree</th>
<th>Perm/Int</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Sng/Mlt</th>
<th>District</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Allan Hancock College</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Dr.</td>
<td>Kevin G. Walthers</td>
<td>Ph.D.</td>
<td>Perm.</td>
<td>PRES</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Allan Hancock Jt CCD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>American River College</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Dr.</td>
<td>Thomas Greene</td>
<td>Ph.D.</td>
<td>Perm.</td>
<td>PRES</td>
<td>Multi</td>
<td>Los Rios CCD</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Antelope Valley College</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Dr.</td>
<td>Edward Knudson</td>
<td></td>
<td>Perm.</td>
<td>Super/Pres</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Antelope Valley CCD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Bakersfield College</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Dr.</td>
<td>Sonya Christian</td>
<td>Ph.D.</td>
<td>Perm.</td>
<td>PRES</td>
<td>Multi</td>
<td>Kern CCD</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Barstow Community College</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Dr.</td>
<td>Eva Bagg</td>
<td>Ph.D.</td>
<td>Perm.</td>
<td>Super/Pres</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Barstow CCD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Berkeley City College</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Dr.</td>
<td>Angélica Garci</td>
<td>Ed.D.</td>
<td>Perm.</td>
<td>PRES</td>
<td>Multi</td>
<td>Peralta CCD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Butte College</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Dr.</td>
<td>Samia Yaqub</td>
<td>Ph.D.</td>
<td>Perm.</td>
<td>Super/Pres</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Butte-Glenn CCD</td>
</tr>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Cabrillo College</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Dr.</td>
<td>Matthew Wetstein</td>
<td>Ph.D.</td>
<td>Perm.</td>
<td>Super/Pres</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Cabrillo CCD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>F</td>
<td>Dr.</td>
<td>Ajita Talwalker</td>
<td></td>
<td>Interim</td>
<td>Pres/CEO</td>
<td></td>
<td>Calbright</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Cañada College</td>
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<td>Dr.</td>
<td>Jamillah Moore</td>
<td>Ed.D.</td>
<td>Perm.</td>
<td>PRES</td>
<td>Multi</td>
<td>San Mateo County CCD</td>
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<td>Jose Fierro</td>
<td>VM.D.</td>
<td>Perm.</td>
<td>Super/Pres</td>
<td>Single</td>
<td>Cerritos CCD</td>
</tr>
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APPENDIX B

Survey Instrument

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Grounded Leadership FT</th>
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</table>

Demographics

* Please choose the pass code provided to you by the researcher from the drop down list.

Please indicate your gender.

Please indicate the number of years of experience in your current field.

Please indicate the number of years in your current position.

Please indicate the ethnicity(s) with which you identify. (Mark all that apply)

- African American/Black
- American Indian/Alaska Native
- Asian/Asian American
- Filipino
- Hispanic or LatinX
- Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- White or Caucasian
Grounded Leadership FT

**Directions:** For purposes of this research, a grounded leader is defined as an individual who is firmly rooted during uncertain times by incorporating the six principles: Physical, emotional, intellectual, social, vocational and/or spiritual health.

6 = Agree Strongly  
5 = Agree Moderately  
4 = Agree Slightly  
3 = Disagree Slightly  
2 = Disagree Moderately  
1 = Disagree Strongly

Listed below are the strategies that research suggests that leaders practice to maintain groundedness in organizations. Using the following descriptions, to what degree do the strategies reflect your own ability to stay grounded.

*Physical Health is an individual’s mind body awareness to minimize fatigue, maximize energy management, build immunity, and maintain resilience to stress, while sustaining a peak physical performance lifestyle (Donatelle & Ketcham, 2017; Rosen, 2014).*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Agree Strongly</th>
<th>Agree Moderately</th>
<th>Agree Slightly</th>
<th>Disagree Slightly</th>
<th>Disagree Moderately</th>
<th>Disagree Strongly</th>
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<td>Exercise daily.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sleep 7-9 hours daily.</td>
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<td>Maintain a nutritious diet.</td>
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<td>Take time to relax.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Think consciously about mind-body connectedness</td>
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</table>
Emotional health is the self-awareness and controlled response to life events that promotes resilience and self-assurance (Aguilar, 2018; Hattie, Myers, & Sweeney, 2004; Uline, 1996; Wang, Xie, & Cui, 2016).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Agree Strongly</th>
<th>Agree Moderately</th>
<th>Agree Slightly</th>
<th>Disagree Slightly</th>
<th>Disagree Moderately</th>
<th>Disagree Strongly</th>
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<td>Talk openly about my</td>
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<td>emotions.</td>
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<td>My colleague at work</td>
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<td>offers supportive</td>
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<td>Remain calm when</td>
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<td>interacting with others</td>
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<td>emotions.</td>
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<td>Treat others with</td>
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<td>compassion.</td>
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<td>Feel comfortable around</td>
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<td>others.</td>
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Intellectual health is a deep curiosity to acquire new knowledge that stimulates learning, increases change adaptability, and builds mental agility to generate innovative solutions. (Rosen, 2013; Van Rensburg, Surujal, & Dhurup, 2011; Naz, Rehman, Katper, & Hussain, 2014)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Agree Slightly</th>
<th>Disagree Slightly</th>
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<td>Ability to challenge</td>
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<td>yourself to see all sides</td>
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<td>Develop your own ideas.</td>
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<td>Expose yourself to new</td>
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<td>Ask questions to explore</td>
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* Vocational health is a leader's career or calling leading to personal satisfaction in work that is meaningful. It is the ambition that motivates a leader to search out more challenges and achievements in their field (Senge 1990, Hutchins 1969, Yurus 2014).

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* Spiritual health is the values of an individual's innermost self that motivate action and inspires toward purposes that embody empathy and go beyond self. It is a commitment to one's value system as a source of well-being providing a profound sense of global connectedness (Dehler & Welsh, 1994; Chirico, 2016; Covey, 1989; Uni, 2019).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th>Disagree Moderately</th>
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<tr>
<td>Follow values that</td>
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<td>create balance in life.</td>
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<td>Respect others</td>
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<td>regardless of</td>
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<td>differences.</td>
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<td>Make others feel</td>
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<td>appreciated.</td>
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<td>Maintain a world view</td>
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<td>that is service focused.</td>
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<td>Aware of the feelings</td>
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<td>of others.</td>
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*Social health is the authentic relationships individuals have based on principles of fairness, trustworthiness, empathy and communication that guide mutually rewarding interactions (Mderoy, Gottlieb, & Hearney, 2002; Pastor, 1998; Parry, 1998; Rosen, 2014).

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Agree Strongly</th>
<th>Agree Moderately</th>
<th>Agree Slightly</th>
<th>Disagree Slightly</th>
<th>Disagree Moderately</th>
<th>Disagree Strongly</th>
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<tr>
<td>Have mutually rewarding relationships.</td>
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<td>Practice active listening.</td>
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<td>Show forgiveness that creates humility.</td>
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<td>Make decisions without bias.</td>
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<td>Demonstrate interest in other people.</td>
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*Grounded is a deep connection to the authentic self with “a sense of being fully embodied, whole, centered and balanced in ourselves and our relationships.” In this study the roots of being GROUNDED are in physical health, emotional health, intellectual health, social health, vocational health, and spiritual health (Rosen, 2013; Daniels, 2005).

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<tr>
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<th>Agree Strongly</th>
<th>Agree Moderately</th>
<th>Agree Slightly</th>
<th>Disagree Slightly</th>
<th>Disagree Moderately</th>
<th>Disagree Strongly</th>
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<tr>
<td>Conscious of what’s going on with other people.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Maintain a strong support system.</td>
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<td>Stay focused on what really matters.</td>
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<td>Stay true to values.</td>
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<td>Courage to take action.</td>
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<td>Adaptable to sudden change.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ability to control emotions to channel in productive ways.</td>
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<td>Contribute to others without expecting something in return.</td>
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<td>Take time to reflect.</td>
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<td>Build positive relationships by accepting people.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Thank you for your participation. If you are willing to participate in a follow up interview to be conducted on Zoom please check the box and provide your contact information. Your participation is greatly appreciated.

* I am willing to participate in an interview.
  
  ☐ Yes
  ☐ No
APPENDIX C

Brandman Participant Bill of Rights

BRANDMAN UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD Research Participant’s Bill of Rights

Any person who is requested to consent to participate as a subject in an experiment, or who is requested to consent on behalf of another, has the following rights:

1. To be told what the study is attempting to discover.

2. To be told what will happen in the study and whether any of the procedures, drugs or devices are different from what would be used in standard practice.

3. To be told about the risks, side effects or discomforts of the things that may happen to him/her.

4. To be told if he/she can expect any benefit from participating and, if so, what the benefits might be.

5. To be told what other choices he/she has and how they may be better or worse than being in the study.

6. To be allowed to ask any questions concerning the study both before agreeing to be involved and during the course of the study.

7. To be told what sort of medical treatment is available if any complications arise.

8. To refuse to participate at all before or after the study is started without any adverse effects.

9. To receive a copy of the signed and dated consent form.

10. To be free of pressures when considering whether he/she wishes to agree to be in the study.

If at any time you have questions regarding a research study, you should ask the researchers to answer them. You also may contact the Brandman University Institutional Review Board, which is concerned with the protection of volunteers in research projects. The Brandman University Institutional Review Board may be contacted either by telephoning the Office of Academic Affairs at (949) 341-9937 or by writing to the Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs, Brandman University, 16355 Laguna Canyon Road, Irvine, CA, 92618.

Brandman University IRB Adopted November 2013
APPENDIX D

Field Test Electronic Consent – Survey

Grounded Leadership FT

The success of any organization depends in large part on the quality of leadership in the organization. In today’s turbulent economic and social environment, it is imperative that leaders remain grounded. Grounded leaders are truly up to the task of meeting today’s wide-ranging challenges. Grounded leaders inspire people to do good work, not just work hard. Most importantly, they possess the invaluable ability to unite people around visions, both grand and sustainable. For purposes of this study, grounded leaders are explored from the view of Bob Rosen’s six principles from his book Grounded: How Leaders Stay Rooted in an Uncertain World. This survey is intended to solicit the expert perceptions of leaders regarding strategies used to implement these six principles in their work as a leader. The survey will take approximately 10 minutes to complete.

PURPOSE OF STUDY: You are being asked to participate in a thematic research study conducted by Greg Montamio, Christopher Schoenwandt, Audrey Dangluw, Martha Godinez, Penny Shreve, Candy McAm and Vicki Hou, doctoral students from Brandman University. The purpose of this explanatory mixed method study is to identify and describe what exemplary leaders do to maintain their physical, emotional, intellectual, social, vocational and spiritual health.

I understand that:

a) There are minimal risks associated with participating in this research. I understand that the investigators will protect my confidentiality by keeping the identifying codes and research materials in a locked file drawer that is available only to the researchers.

b) The possible benefit of this study to me is that my input may help add to the research regarding the strategies leaders utilize to remain grounded in turbulent times.

c) If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact the researcher using the information provided in the invitation to participate.

d) My participation in this research study is voluntary. I may decide to not participate in the study and I can withdraw at any time. I can also decide not to answer particular questions during the interview if I so choose. I understand that I may refuse to participate or may withdraw from this study at any time without any negative consequences. In addition, the investigator may stop the study at any time.

e) No information that identifies me will be released without my separate consent and that all identifiable information will be protected to the limits allowed by law. If the study design or the use of the data is to be changed, I will be so informed and my consent re-obtained. I understand that if I have any questions, comments, or concerns about the study or the informed consent process, I may write or call the Office of the Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs, Brandman University, at 18355 Laguna Canyon Road, Irvine, CA 92618, (949) 341-7641.

I acknowledge that I have received a copy of this form and the “Research Participant's Bill of Rights.” I have read the above and understand it and hereby consent to the procedure(s) set forth.

ELECTRONIC CONSENT: Please select your choice below.

Clicking on the "agree" button indicates that you have read the informed consent and the information in this document and that you voluntarily agree to participate.

If you do not wish to participate in this electronic survey, you may decline participation by clicking on the "disagree" button. The survey will not open for responses unless you select agree to participate.

○ AGREE: I acknowledge receipt of the complete "Informed Consent" packet and "Bill of Rights." I have read the materials and give my consent to participate in this study.

○ DISAGREE: I do not wish to participate in this electronic survey.
APPENDIX E

Alignment Table - Rosen’s Variable Dimensions Survey and Interview

Attribute Table for Rosen’s variable dimensions and the survey and interview questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The purpose of this explanatory mixed method study is to identify and describe what exemplary leaders do to maintain their:</th>
<th>Research Questions, Definitions</th>
<th>Survey Questions</th>
<th>Interview Questions</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 33, 35, 36, 39</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 20, 21, 25, 30, 31, 34, 36, 37, 40</td>
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<tr>
<td>Intellectual</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 33, 35, 36</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vocational</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 24</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5, 17, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 30, 31, 34, 35, 38, 39</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
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<td>6, 8, 9, 10, 22, 23, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 35, 40</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Grounded</td>
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<td>31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40</td>
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<tr>
<td>Physical</td>
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<td>1, 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emotional</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3, 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Intellectual</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5, 6</td>
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<td>Vocational</td>
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<td>7, 8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spiritual</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9, 10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11, 12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grounded</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1 - 12</td>
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APPENDIX F

Field Test Survey Feedback: Survey Critique by Pilot Participants

As a doctoral student and researcher at Brandman University your assistance is so appreciate in designing this survey instrument. Your participation is crucial to the development of a valid and reliable instrument.

Below are some questions that I appreciate your answering after completing the survey. Your answers will assist me in refining both the directions and the survey items. You have been provided with a paper copy of the survey, just to jog your memory if you need it. Thanks so much.

1. How many minutes did it take you to complete the survey, from the moment you opened it on the computer until the time you completed it?_________________

2. Did the portion up front that asked you to read the consent information and click the agree box before the survey opened concern you at all? ___ Yes ___ No
If so, would you briefly state your concern ____________________________

3. Was the Introduction sufficiently clear (and not too long) to inform you what the research was about? ___ Yes ___ No
If not, what would you recommend that would make it better?

__________________________________________________________________

4. Were the directions to, and you understood what to do? ___ Yes ___ No
If not, would you briefly state the problem ____________________________

__________________________________________________________________

5. Were the brief descriptions of the rating scale choices prior to your completing the items clear, and did they provide sufficient differences among them for you to make a selection? ___ Yes ___ No
If not, briefly describe the problem ____________________________

__________________________________________________________________

6. As you progressed through the survey in which you gave a rating of # through #, if there were any items that caused you say something like, “What does this mean?” Which item(s) were they? Please use the paper copy and mark those that troubled you? Or if not, please check here:

Thanks so much for your help.
APPENDIX G

Interview Question Script

Grounded Leadership Interview Protocol

My name is Penny Shreve and I am currently a full-time faculty at Barstow Community College in the English and Humanities departments. I have been in the California Community Colleges system for almost 20-year teaching and then the last 10 years I have worked in instructional leadership roles at Barstow College. I have worked with several different community college presidents, and my experiences with these presidents who have been both men and women have helped me chose my research topic.

I am a doctoral candidate at Brandman University in the area of Organizational Leadership. I am a part of a research team examining the roots of healthy leadership using Bob Rosen’s premise that exemplary leaders grounded in strategies that cultivate balance in the six dimensions of health are better equipped to facilitate effective and sustainable leadership during times of uncertainty. The study seeks to identify and describe what exemplary leaders do to maintain their physical, emotional, intellectual, social, vocational, and spiritual health based on the six dimensions of Rosen’s healthy leader model. This interview is to specifically explore what it is that you, as an exemplary leader, do to cultivate and maintain a healthy balance of wellness and effective leadership practices.

Our team is conducting approximately 35 interviews with leaders like yourself. The information you, and others, give will provide a clearer picture of the thoughts and behaviors that exemplary leaders use to create and maintain the roots of healthy leadership.

Incidentally, even though it appears a bit awkward, I will be reading most of what I say. The reason for this to guarantee, as much as possible, that my interviews with all participating exemplary leaders will be conducted in the same manner.

Informed Consent

I want to remind you any information that is obtained in connection to this study will remain confidential. All of the data will be reported without reference to any individual(s) or any institution(s). For ease of our discussion and accuracy, I will record our conversation as indicated in the Informed Consent sent to you via email. I will have the recording transcribed to a Word document and will send it to you via electronic mail so that you can check to make sure that I have accurately captured your thoughts and ideas. The digital recording will be erased following the review and approval of the transcription.

Did you receive the Informed Consent and Brandman Bill of Rights I sent you via email? Do you have any questions or need clarification about either document? If not, would you please sign the hard copy of the IRB requirements for me to collect, or you can scan it to me. We have scheduled an hour for the interview. At any point during the interview, you may ask that I skip a particular question or stop the interview altogether. For ease of our discussion and accuracy, I will record our conversation as indicated in the Informed Consent.

Do you have any questions before we begin? Okay, let’s get started, and thanks so much for your time and responses.

Important Note for the Interviewer: To ensure validity and reliability, please ask each question for every interview participant.
Interview Questions

**Physical Health.** An individual’s mind-body awareness to minimize fatigue, maximize energy management, build immunity, and maintain resilience to stress, while sustaining a peak physical performance lifestyle (Donatelle & Ketcham, 2017; Rosen, 2014).

1. 1…How do you maintain your physical health, so you have maximum energy for your work requirements?
   Prompt: Can you share with me an example of your daily routine?

2. What do you do to keep your balance to remain physically resilient during times of high stress?
   Prompt: Would you expand upon that a bit?

**Emotional Health.** The self-awareness and controlled response to life events that promote resilience and self-assurance (Aguilar, 2018; Hattie, Myers, & Sweeney, 2004; Ulione, 1996; Wang, Xie, & Cui, 2016).

3. When encountering difficult situations, what practices do you utilize to recognize your emotional state in order to react accordingly?
   Prompt: Can you give me an example?

4. What practices do you utilize in stressful situations to remain self-assured and positive in interactions with others?
   Prompt: Can you share an example of this?

**Intellectual Health.** A deep curiosity to acquire new knowledge that stimulates learning, increases change adaptability and builds mental agility to generate innovative solutions (Rosen, 2013; Van Rensburg, Surujlal, & Dhurup, 2011; Naz, Rehman, Katpar, & Hussain, 2014).

5. How do you maintain your ability to keep learning and generate innovative solutions?
   Prompt 1: Can you give me an example of this?

6. How do you maintain intellectual flexibility, resilience, and growth in your expertise?
   Prompt 1: Can you share an example?

**Vocational Health.** A leaders’ career or calling leading to personal satisfaction in work that is meaningful. It is the ambition that motivates a leader to search out more challenges and achievements in their field (Senge 1990, Hutchins 1969, Yunus 2014).

7. How do you continue to find purpose in your work during challenging times?

8. How do you maintain your motivation and ambition for your current position or chosen profession?

**Spiritual Health.** The values of an individual’s innermost self that motivate action and inspire toward purposes that embody empathy and go beyond self. It is a commitment to one’s value system as a source of well-being providing a profound sense of global connectedness (Dehler & Welsh, 1994; Chirico, 2016; Covey, 1989; Uni, 2019).
9. As a leader, how do you maintain and apply your values internally and externally towards a purpose beyond self?
   Prompt 1: Tell me a little more about what you do to apply your values.

10. How do you develop and maintain your sense of spiritual well-being?
    Prompt: Tell me more about what you do on a daily basis.

Social Health. The authentic relationships individuals have based on principles of fairness, trustworthiness, empathy, and communication that guide mutually rewarding interactions (Mderoy, Gottlieb, & Heaney, 2002; Pastor, 1998; Parry, 1998; Rosen, 2014).

11. How do you develop and nurture authentic relationships within your organization or team?
    Prompt 1: Can you share an example of this?

12. What strategies do you use to build and maintain trust and mutually beneficial communication with others?
    Prompt 1: Can you give examples of how you do this?

Additional prompts can be used at any point that you feel that the answer was not sufficient in detail. You may not use or ask any of them but they are listed here to be used if needed.

1. “What did you mean by ...?”
2. “Do you have more to add?”
3. “Would you expand upon that a bit?”
4. “Why do think that was the case?”
5. “Could you please tell me more about ...”
6. “Can you give me an example of ...”
7. “How did you feel about that?”
8. “Why do you think that strategy was so effective?”
APPENDIX H
Informed Consent – Interview

INFORMATION ABOUT: Exemplary leaders: How do exemplary leaders rate their use of grounded leadership strategies in the six dimensions of physical, emotional, intellectual, social, vocational, and spiritual health on the “Stay Grounded” survey?

RESPONSIBLE INVESTIGATOR: ____________

PURPOSE OF STUDY: You are being asked to participate in a research study conducted by _____________ a doctoral candidate from the School of Education at Brandman University. I am a part of a research team examining the roots of healthy leadership using Bob Rosen’s premise that exemplary leaders grounded in strategies that cultivate balance in the six dimensions of health are better equipped to facilitate effective and sustainable leadership during times of uncertainty. The study seeks to identify and describe what exemplary leaders do to maintain their physical, emotional, intellectual, social, vocational, and spiritual health based on the six dimensions of Rosen’s healthy leader model. This interview is to specifically explore what it is that you, as an exemplary leader, do to cultivate and maintain a healthy balance of wellness and effective leadership practices.

The interview(s) will last approximately 45-60 minutes and will be conducted in a one on one interview setting.

I understand that:

a) There are minimal risks associated with participating in this research. I understand that the Investigator will protect my confidentiality by keeping the identifying codes and research materials in a locked file drawer that is available on to the researcher.

b) I understand that the interview will be audio recorded. The recording will be available only to the researcher. The audio recordings will be used to capture the interview dialogue as a text document and to ensure the accuracy of the information collected during the interview. All information will be identifier-reredacted, and my confidentiality will be maintained. Upon completion of the study, all recordings will be destroyed. All other data and consents will be securely stored for three years after completion of data collection and confidentially shredded or fully deleted.

c) The possible benefit of this study to me is that my input may help add to the research regarding exemplary leaders, how they stay grounded especially in high stress environments. The findings will be available to me at the conclusion of the
study and will provide new insights about this study in which I participated. I understand that I will not be compensated for my participation.

d) If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact me at _______________ or by phone at _______________ or Dr. Cindy Petersen (Chair Advisor) at cpeterse@brandman.edu or Dr. Keith Larick (Committee Member) at larick@brandman.edu

e) My participation in this research study is voluntary. I may decide to not participate in the study, and I can withdraw at any time. I can also decide not to answer particular questions during the interview if I so choose. I understand that I may refuse to participate or may withdraw from this study at any time without any negative consequences. Also, the Investigator may stop the study at any time.

f) No information that identifies me will be released without my separate consent and that all identifiable information will be protected to the limits allowed by law. If the study design or the use of the data is to be changed, I will be so informed, and my consent re-obtained. I understand that if I have any questions, comments, or concerns about the study or the informed consent process, I may write or call the office of the Vice-Chancellor of Academic Affairs, Brandman University, at 16355 Laguna Canyon Road, Irvine, CA 92618, (949) 341-7641. I acknowledge that I have received a copy of this form and the “research Participant’s Bill of Rights.” I have read the above and understand it and hereby consent to the procedure(s) set forth.

Signature of Participant

______________________________

Signature of Principal Investigator

______________________________

Date: __________________________
APPENDIX I

Interview Feedback Reflection Questions

Conducting interviews is a learned skill set/experience. Gaining valuable insight about your interview skills and affect with the interview will support your data gathering when interviewing the actual participants. As the researcher you should reflect on the questions below after completing the interview. You should also discuss the following reflection questions with your ‘observer’ after completing the interview field test. The questions are written from your prospective as the interviewer. However, you can verbalize your thoughts with the observer, and they can add valuable insight from their observation.

1. How long did the interview take? _____ Did the time seem to be appropriate?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

2. How did you feel during the interview? Comfortable? Nervous?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

3. Going into it, did you feel prepared to conduct the interview? Is there something you could have done to be better prepared?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

4. What parts of the interview went the most smoothly and why do you think that was the case?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

5. What parts of the interview seemed to struggle and why do you think that was the case?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

6. If you were to change any part of the interview, what would that part be and how would you change it?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

7. What suggestions do you have for improving the overall process?

________________________________________________________________________
Conducting interviews is a learned skill set based on experience and feedback. Gaining valuable insight about interview skills and affect with the interview will support the collection of data gathering when interviewing actual participant. As the interview observer you should reflect on the questions below after the interview is finished. You should provide independent feedback at the conclusion of the interview field test. As observer you should take notes that will assist the interviewer to be successful in improving their interview skills.

1. How long did the interview take? _______ Did the time seem appropriate? ___ Yes ___ No

2. Did the interviewer communicate in a receptive, cordial, and encouraging manner? ___ Yes ___ No

3. Was the introduction of the interview friendly with the use of commonly understood language? ___ Yes ___ No

4. How did the interviewee feel during the interview?

5. Was the interviewer prepared and relaxed during the interview? ___ Yes ___ No

6. Did the interviewee understand the interview questions, or did they require clarification? ___ Yes ___ No

7. What parts of the interview went smoothly and why?

8. What parts of the interview seem to struggle and why do you think that was the case?

9. Did the interviewer maintain objectivity and not interject value judgements or lead the interviewee? ___ Yes ___ No
10. Did the interviewer take opportunity to discuss or request artifacts that support the data gathered from the interview? ___ Yes ___ No

11. If you were to change any part of the interview, what would that part be and how would you suggest changing it?

12. What suggestions do you have for improving the overall process?
APPENDIX K

Certificate: Human Subjects Research Social Behavior Educational Researchers 1 Basic

 completion Date 26-May-2019
 Expiration Date N/A
 Record ID 31726916

This is to certify that:

Penny Shreve

Has completed the following CITI Program course:

Human Subjects Research (Curriculum Group)
Social-Behavioral-Educational Researchers (Course Learner Group)
1 - Basic (Stage)

Under requirements set by:

Brandman University

Verify at www.citiprogram.org/verify/?wfi2923f3-7091-4f63-a317-8f3c275ca006-31726916
APPENDIX L

Invitation to Participate

DATE:

Dear California Community College President,

My name is Penny Shreve, and I am a Doctoral Candidate in the School of Education at Brandman University. I am participating in a thematic dissertation with six other researchers. This letter serves as an invitation for you to participate in a research study.

PURPOSE: I am a part of a research team examining the roots of healthy leadership using Bob Rosen’s premise that exemplary leaders grounded in strategies that cultivate balance in the six dimensions of health are better equipped to facilitate effective and sustainable leadership during times of uncertainty. The study seeks to identify and describe what exemplary leaders do to maintain their physical, emotional, intellectual, social, vocational, and spiritual health based on the six dimensions of Rosen’s healthy leader model. This interview is to specifically explore what it is that you, as an exemplary leader, do to cultivate and maintain a healthy balance of wellness and effective leadership practices.

PROCEDURES: If you choose to participate in this study, you will be invited to participate in a questionnaire and a 60-minute, one-on-one interview conducted on Zoom. I will ask a series of questions designed to allow you to share your experience as an exemplary mental health leader in a Veterans Health Administration office. The survey is intended to solicit the expert perceptions of leaders regarding strategies used to implement these six principles in their work as a leader. The survey will take approximately 10 minutes to complete. The interview is designed to specifically explore what it is that you, as an exemplary leader, do to cultivate and maintain a healthy balance of wellness and effective leadership practices. The interviews will be audio-recorded for transcription purposes.

RISKS, INCONVENIENCES, AND DISCOMFORTS: There are no major risks to your participation in this research study. The interview will be at a time and place, which is convenient for you.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS: There are no major benefits to you for participating; nonetheless, a potential benefit may be that you will have an opportunity to identify strategies to inform best practice with different political styles of board members. The information for this study is intended to inform researchers and leaders of strategies used by exemplary leaders to work successfully with the different board member political styles.

ANONYMITY: If you agree to participate in the survey and interview, you can be assured that it will be completely confidential. No names will be attached to any notes or records from the survey or interview. All information will remain in locked files, accessible only to the researchers. No employer will have access to the interview information. You will be free to stop the survey or interview and withdraw from the study at any time. You are also encouraged to ask any questions that will help you understand how this study will be performed and/or how it will affect you. Feel free to contact the principal investigator, Dr. Keith Larick by email larick@brandman.edu or by phone at 916-212-5410, to answer any questions or concerns you may have. If you have questions, comments, or concerns about the study or your rights as a participant, you may write or call the Office of the Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs, Brandman University, at 16355 Laguna Canyon Road, Irvine, CA 92618, 949-341-7641.

Sincerely,
Penny Shreve
Doctoral Candidate, Ed.D.
Victorville, CA 92395
## APPENDIX M

### Themes and Frequencies Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of Health</th>
<th># of Themes</th>
<th>Frequency of codes</th>
<th>% of frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>222</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>555</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intellectual</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>525</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>267</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td><strong>19</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,991</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>