

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, NORTHRIDGE

A View from Inside: An Examination of Institutional Culture on Noncredit
Administrators and Their Enrollment Management Decisions

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ABSTRACT

A VIEW FROM INSIDE:
AN EXAMINATION OF INSTITUTIONAL CULTURE ON NONCREDIT
ADMINISTRATORS AND
THEIR ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT DECISIONS

By

Alfred Ramirez

Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership

Noncredit administrators are responsible for the education of six percent of the total California community college students. These same students are regularly referred to in studies as underserved, unemployed, or unprepared. The noncredit administrator is responsible for the service, employment and preparation of these students through the programs, services, and facilities that must meet their needs. Research regarding noncredit education is limited and studies concerning noncredit administrators are virtually nonexistent.

California budget cuts created the stage for disproportionate decreases in noncredit class offerings compared to credit. New success measures and legislative direction proposed mission shifts from access to success. As this study demonstrates, the noncredit administrator must be uniquely qualified as organized, flexible, and accountable to respond to the complexities of their institutional culture and meet the needs of the students they are committed to serve.

This study provides an in depth examination of the institutional culture and challenges encountered by noncredit administrators as they make enrollment management decisions. An ethnographic case study offers a holistic cultural portrait of the environment at three southern California community colleges that represent successful noncredit programs. Interviews of the noncredit administrators, their supervisors (vice presidents), and academic senate presidents offered a variety of viewpoints to examine the social structures in the colleges. Literature review provided a framework to the context of noncredit education. Extensive document analysis of the colleges' Self-Study reports as well as their Educational Master Plan reports contributed to the complete portrait of the institutional environment and culture.

The findings from this report exposed the need for noncredit administrators to be flexible in managing resources and developing strategies that respond to requests and mandates. The requirement to organize data defined by success measures is a new assignment. Collaborating with colleagues and aligning to credit is now an obligation. Planning is critical to organize the multiple responsibilities required to maintain program integrity. Accountability is the main component to all funding and reporting for the future. Ultimately, noncredit administrators achieve success by maintaining their commitment to the students they serve.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Background

California community colleges have evolved to offer education for all people, encouraging a goal of continued growth and almost unlimited access with funding based on the number of students enrolled in classes (American Association of Community Colleges [AACC], 2012). In relatively robust budget environments, encouraging enrollment was consistent with the mantra of access that historically defined community colleges. With growth as a goal, colleges developed many programs and services that expanded the mission of community colleges. A program arising from community demand was noncredit education, which became an available option for a segment of the population with needs that differed from credit. The main difference with the programs is described by the fact that, “students who enroll in noncredit courses do not receive...credit...nor do they receive official grades” (The Academic Senate for California Community Colleges [ASCCC], 2006, p. 1). These students make up six percent of all full-time equivalent students (FTES) for all community colleges noted in the comprehensive community college database for California, known as the Data Mart which is available in California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office website (California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office [CCCCO], 2013). Available data notes that twenty colleges accounted for 83% of the total noncredit FTES in the state. These colleges provided for the needs of their respective communities. Budget cuts targeted programs not specifically developed towards graduation, degrees, or employment such as “avocational courses” (B. A. Russell, personal communication, January 22, 2010), which created difficult enrollment management decisions to be made

by noncredit administrators. Chancellor's Office Data Mart information (CCCCO, 2013) revealed extensive cuts in noncredit course sections of 17% in 2008-2009 and 16.4% in 2009-2010 with continued reductions through 2012. These cuts compared to credit section cuts of 7.9% in 2008-2009, and 4.4% in 2009-2010 provide a clear indication of the mission shift challenging noncredit administrators in California Community Colleges.

Legislators passed Assembly Bill 86 (AB 86), which was approved by the Governor of California on July 1, 2013, resulting in a project to create planning to work with adult education. "The California Community College Chancellor's Office and the California Department of Education are tasked with implementing AB 86" (AB 86 Planning website, n.d.) with a grant application due in January 2014. The structure of this grant is to create collaborative agreements between adult education programs including adult schools and community colleges. Noncredit administrators are responsible to actively participate and for the most part take the lead in this planning grant, which encourages educational leaders to develop relationships that will either enhance current services or lead to an entirely new system of noncredit education.

Noncredit administrators operate in a variety of environments with different organizational structures based on specific college needs and responsibilities to their communities, but they maintain a shared vision of serving the current 1.2 million (CCCCO, 2013) noncredit students who attend school with multiple goals. The purpose of this qualitative study is to highlight and examine the experiences of California community college noncredit administrators who are responsible for enrollment management within the changing environment and culture of community colleges.

This ethnographic case study highlighted challenges faced by noncredit administrators including a focus on their roles through their own perspective, the views of credit faculty colleagues, and executive administrators. I gathered information through a review of the literature, analysis of college reports, demographic and enrollment data, as well as semi-structured interviews utilizing a design consistent with a realist ethnography, which focused on objective participation (Creswell, 2012). Through this ethnographic design, this study provided an understanding of how noncredit administrators make enrollment management decisions within legislative and budgetary constraints as well as within the internal institutional culture. Participants in this study included noncredit administrators, higher level administrators (vice-presidents), and academic senate credit faculty to triangulate the gathered information from a variety of perspectives. The multisite ethnographic case study focused on three major noncredit community college programs in the southern California area.

Problem Statement

Community colleges face challenging times based on the commitment to student access and their response to budget issues that California is experiencing, along with a new and defined focus on student success guided by the recommendations of the Student Success Task Force (California Community Colleges Student Success Task Force [SSTF], 2012). Budget cuts have resulted in fewer class offerings with a continued drop in enrollment (CCCCO, 2013) and SSTF recommendations have resulted in a mission shift away from offering free avocational, community based courses traditionally offered through noncredit programs. In this new fiscal and outcomes-based environment, which may not be consistent with noncredit students' needs, noncredit administrators face

structural and institutional cultural challenges to maintain their program's credibility and viability amongst internal and external stakeholders.

Noncredit administrators are charged with the difficult task of responding to district policies which are based on statewide budgetary limits and legislative guidelines placed on them, while maintaining and advocating for noncredit programs in their enrollment management decisions. A drop from 2.1 million noncredit students in 2007-2008 to 1.2 million noncredit enrolled students in 2011-2012 is alarming to administrators who have continuously advocated for access to all education including noncredit education. The goal of my study was to highlight and analyze challenges that noncredit administrators face with budget cuts, mission shift, credit/noncredit faculty relationships, and community needs as they advocate for their programs and manage enrollment.

Purpose and Significance

The purpose of this ethnographic study was to examine the institutional cultural setting present at three colleges, focusing on the primary issues that noncredit administrators face, identifying how they address important issues related to enrollment management and internal relationships, presenting their roles within their institutions, and highlighting best practices that will assist current and future noncredit administrators with planning and leadership.

I reviewed the underlying factors that influence a college's enrollment management decisions in general. The major focus of my study was to understand how budget and legislative issues were driving forces in the California community college system. Decisions made based on budget and the funding system in the California

community college system make noncredit programs an easy target for reductions based on lower funding for noncredit than for credit. I reviewed the organizational structure of the noncredit program at the colleges in my study. I examined how noncredit programs were prioritized in overall decisions that were made based on the position of noncredit education in the hierarchical system of the college as a whole. The relationship that noncredit programs have with credit programs and faculty impact enrollment management and other institutional decision making processes in the colleges. I presented and analyzed the role that noncredit administrators have within the college's institutional cultural environment.

I documented the historical aspects of noncredit programs within community colleges and how the colleges in my study developed their local noncredit programs. The current fiscal climate and legislative recommendations that have influenced the delivery of noncredit programs were presented as a background for the environment that administrators must work in at the time of my study. Identifying key noncredit administrators in charge of final enrollment management implementation and determining their role within the college system was an important aspect of this study in order to determine what barriers were encountered and what successful practices were highlighted in providing noncredit education to the community. The reduction of noncredit sections and the related drop in enrollment numbers have drastically reduced the access to education available to students that are seeking to learn English, basic education, parenting skills and other goals declared by adult learners. The interviews with supervising administrators and academic senate faculty members provided a

description of the cultural context and environment evident that guide key institutional decisions regarding noncredit education.

Research Questions

I developed research questions to obtain an overview of the cultural context and the influence this context has on noncredit administrators and their decisions. The questions were:

1. What institutional cultural factors shape enrollment management decisions among noncredit administrators in community colleges?
2. How do noncredit administrators contend with these factors in their decision making process?
3. How are the roles of noncredit administrators perceived within their institutional environment?

Conceptual Framework

The cultural values that noncredit administrators hold were made evident as I transitioned into the role during my career. Working in an educational environment that targeted vulnerable noncredit students that were in need of literacy, basic skills, parent education, lifelong learning, and more, instilled a different sense of responsibility to community needs compared to the global transfer and degree goals traditionally attributed to credit education. It is important to review noncredit administrators' roles in terms of their human behavior within the institutional culture (Spradley, 1979) in a loosely coupled system (Kezar, 2001) where change is the norm. Administrators work in an open system organization that relies on interdependence or resource dependence (Pfeffer, 1997; Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). Within the dynamic interaction of human

behavior in organizations that are departmentalized and rely on government funding, I looked at the interaction of these factors on noncredit administrators and how they interact in their respective environments. My review focused on a conceptual framework discussed by Blumer (1969) and Spradley (1979) as “symbolic interactionism” theory that seeks to explain human behavior in terms of meanings of things to people. The relationship developed from behavior and interactions was consistent in my review with attention to the concept of power that may be considered with symbolic interactionism (Dennis & Martin, 2005) especially when I analyzed the hierarchy in relationships. A study of administrators within this vibrant environment required an ethnographic review. Symbolic interactionism is based on the meanings things have on us, which arise from our social interaction where, “social structures are comprised of acting and interacting of individuals and groups” (loc.181, Blumer, 2004). This was an effective point of reference as I studied the relationship between noncredit administrators, their supervising administrators, credit faculty members along with the environmental challenges they responded to as they supported the most needy students attending community colleges. The multisite case study ethnography provided a representation of the challenges that noncredit administrators faced within the educational environment as they made enrollment management decisions responding to internal and external influences.

Overview of Methodology

I completed an ethnography best described as a multiple, instrumental, bounded case study (Creswell, 2012) that illustrated how noncredit administrators navigated through a variety of organizational, political, and budgetary influences as they made enrollment management decisions. The multisite case study (Merriam, 2009) was

conducted in large noncredit programs in Southern California. Noncredit programs have traditionally been the target of scrutiny because classes are not transferrable for credit and noncredit administrators must take into account the missions, policies, and practices specific to their individual colleges. Therefore, this qualitative ethnographic study examined enrollment decisions of noncredit administrators in the context of district policies and the current fiscal environment which are primary components of the institutional culture.

As an administrator in charge of a large noncredit program, I am involved with enrollment management by working with the Vice President of Instruction. My decisions are often based on parameters that have been placed on me by my administrative supervisor while working within budget constraints. Through this research, I have documented how successful programs operate their noncredit enrollment management with details related to the challenges that noncredit administrators encounter in the process.

Research Tradition

The ethnographic case study I completed involved interviews and a comprehensive review of data. Through this study I created a, “holistic cultural portrait” (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012, p. 32) and obtained “insiders views of their lives” (Rossman & Rallis, 2012, p. 95) consistent with ethnographies. Although they were members of the noncredit culture, the case studies were appropriate to gain insight of the variety of organizational structures, political structures, and budgets found in the three community colleges that were reviewed. Colleges have developed different noncredit programs that

vary in class offerings, size, and structure based on a variety of decisions, policies, and issues that were in place when the noncredit programs were created at the colleges.

I conducted a realist ethnography (Creswell, 2012) in order to minimize any potential bias from my experience as a noncredit administrator and to provide an objective study. My realist ethnography was done to “seek to explore and understand the social structures that shape everyday lives, primarily in organizational or institutional settings” (Rossman & Rallis, 2012, p. 95); therefore, it may be referred to as an institutional ethnography. The information I obtained will provide noncredit administrators important information about decision making and practical leadership. I have presented all college administrators with important facts about colleges’ noncredit programs and the specific challenges that their noncredit counterparts encounter.

Research Setting

A majority of the 112 California Community Colleges provide some form of adult education, continuing education, or noncredit education, depending on the historical evolution of the colleges. By reviewing the Chancellor’s Office Data Mart (CCCCO, 2013), I identified three local Southern California community colleges reporting some of the highest noncredit FTES in the state. This purposeful combination sampling strategy, using convenience, extreme, and criterion sampling, provided the best opportunity to maximize the results I wanted to achieve in understanding enrollment management decisions made by noncredit administrators by using various sources to filter information (Glesne, 2011). As Creswell noted this assisted my goal to “develop an in-depth exploration of a central phenomenon” (2012, p. 206). My research also addressed

whether these colleges have administrators with significant internal noncredit influences in enrollment management based on their respective sizes.

Limitations

I purposely selected larger noncredit sites to have the opportunity of identifying how enrollment management was handled in a potentially more complex environment. I felt a smaller noncredit program would be administered by someone as an ancillary unit, whereas a larger noncredit program would be administered as a stand-alone division. Since I focused on colleges that are larger, I did not include over 85% of the California community colleges in my study. The decision to focus on these sites was to obtain information from programs that were already successful because of their size and gather information that other administrators could utilize as a best practice. Although smaller noncredit programs may not be able to identify with the complexities and the increased independence of the larger noncredit programs in the study, my report may provide beneficial insight to the challenges faced and overcome by administrators of loftier programs. There may be demographic limitations in this review since the focus was in the Southern California region. Other regions across the state experience issues related to weather, industry composition, and immigration to name a few which may not be similar to those included in the case studies that are part of this research. A multisite ethnographic case study provided a window into noncredit administration which is a limited view that may be enhanced with future mixed methods studies focusing on a wider array of variables and colleges.

Organization of the Dissertation

I have presented background information in chapter one which includes the introduction, problem statement, purpose and significance, research questions, conceptual framework, overview of methodology, limitations, and this organization of the dissertation. Chapter two presents a literature review including an introduction, review of literature and a summary. In chapter three, I describe the methodology including an introduction, research design and setting, research sample and data sources, instruments and procedures, data collection, data analysis, my role as a researcher, and a summary. Findings of interview data as well as from document analysis are provided in chapter four. In chapter five, I conclude with a comprehensive overview and discussion of this study.

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The historical campaign calling for access to education created a natural response by California community colleges to meet the needs of their respective communities. Noncredit education evolved to meet the specific desires of 2.1 million students at the highest point of annual enrollment in California. Colleges function in an open system environment (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978) responding to the limited resources supplied by the state and work in an internal loosely coupled system (Kezar, 2001) relying on departmentalized shared governance. The prioritization of noncredit programs was reduced by statements and decisions at the state level, resulting in reflection and revision of missions for many colleges. Students relying on noncredit courses including, English as a second language, classes for disabled, older adult programs, basic skills, literacy and more, have been marginalized by the limitation of access and shift to success as was defined by the SSTF and enforced by legislators.

Purpose

The purpose of this literature review is to identify information resources related to noncredit education and the challenges faced by noncredit administrators as they make enrollment management decisions. This chapter will examine themes related to noncredit education, student success, noncredit to credit articulation, planning, and accountability. These themes create a context for the institutional cultural environment that noncredit administrators work within.

Problem Statement

Based on recent legislation and California's budget issues, community colleges are looking to develop processes that will result in completion of degrees, transfer to universities, basic skills attainment, or completion of courses in career and technical education. This mission shift from a focus on open door access to a mission of completion may affect the availability of education for noncredit students. This change supports the need to highlight enrollment management decisions that noncredit administrators make by examining the environmental factors and cultural context of the institutions. The goal of this study is to highlight and analyze challenges that noncredit administrators face with budget cuts, mission shift, credit/noncredit faculty relationships, responding to community needs, and enrollment management.

Review of Literature

Noncredit Education

The simplified definition of noncredit education in the community colleges is education that cannot be transferred for credit. The noncredit programs at California community colleges are designed similarly to the way adult education is arranged in the K-12 system (ASCCC, 2006). Including noncredit education in Education Code in 1996 established it as a classified educational program within the community college system. The expanse of noncredit education is significant given information from 2003-2004 noting that "over 1.1 million students attend adult schools and over 800,000 students attend in the community colleges" (ASCCC, 2006, p. 22), while Chancellors' Office Data Mart information reports over 1 million in noncredit student headcount from summer 2012 through fall 2013 (CCCCO, 2013). The amount of students served through

noncredit education is considerable and these students, along with the leaders that assist in administering noncredit education, deserve further attention.

Serving a large diverse population, noncredit education is focused on courses “intended to provide students with lifelong learning, colleges transfer and career preparation opportunities” (California Community College System, 2006, p. 3). The programs provide offerings that are approved by Education Code covering areas in parent education, basic skills, English as a second language, immigrant education, substantial disabilities, vocational programs, older adults, family and consumer sciences, as well as health and safety (California Community College System, 2006). Historically, adult education and noncredit have responded to needs created by major events such as the Great Depression and World War II as well as to immigration issues and access to education in general.

Noncredit programs have provided an easy path to education largely in part due to the flexibility of open admissions and the availability of open entry/open exit classes (ASCCC, 2006). The accessibility that defines noncredit has accommodated a diverse student population since “many low-income and minority people enter the community college through noncredit” (Dougherty, Reid, & Nienhusser, 2006, p. 4). Since noncredit programs focus on a more transitory group of students, the connection to a community college system of education emphasizing completions, transfers, and higher education has been difficult to achieve. In order to define noncredit education in the context of a higher education system it has been important to link noncredit to credit. The articulation from noncredit to credit is increasingly important but commitment toward this goal is lacking (ASCCC, 2006). Many states lack funding or other direct support for noncredit to credit

articulation including those in the Dougherty et al.(2006) study, which focused on Florida, New Mexico, North Carolina, Texas, and Virginia. The implications of their statements of articulation and lack of funding are similar to California which funds credit and noncredit disproportionately, at \$4,367 for credit Full Time Equivalent Student (FTES) and either \$3,092 or \$2,626 for noncredit FTES depending on the noncredit category (ASCCC, 2006). The authors' recommendation stresses that the importance for noncredit education is dependent upon the commitment to fund the programs.

The scarcity of data regarding noncredit is directly related to the inadequate investment that is made for noncredit education. "There must be interest in Congress and a tie-in to either costs or standards; noncredit work does not have this appeal" (Milam, 2005, p. 59). Milam (2005) reports on the first National Study of Noncredit Course Activity and indicates that the results "suggest that noncredit activity is an important issue for many state agencies and many institutions" (Milam, 2005, p. 65). However, insufficient data in tracking noncredit enrollment, completion, or other success measures is highlighted as an issue related to meager financial support and investment for the noncredit programs that serve a large and diverse group of students in need.

Student Success

Success for noncredit programs cannot be measured by degree attainment since classes, by definition, do not achieve credit. A measurement that is currently collected at the state level in California through the Accountability Reporting for the Community Colleges (ARCC) report is the career development and college preparation (CDCP) progress and achievement rate. The CDCP courses were defined legislatively as noncredit courses aligned with vocational education and with college preparation or basic

skills. The CDCP rate tracks outcomes from students enrolled in noncredit CDCP courses who achieve outcomes in a variety of defined number of credit courses (CCCCO, 2013). Noncredit programs operate differently than credit classes because most are open entry/open exit allowing students to take courses at their convenience and thus permitting them to discontinue for whatever reason. With new accountability measures that focus on credit-based achievements like diplomas, certificates, and transfers, the absence of a true definition of student success for the noncredit student is highlighted (California Community College System, 2009). Administrators of noncredit programs have historically worked without accountability measures for success, which have now been assigned by legislators through the implementation of new regulations and recommendations.

Noncredit administrators must focus their efforts to meet the success criteria clearly defined and illustrated in the recommendations made by the Student Success Task Force (SSTF, 2012) which are directing the mission of colleges towards transfer, basic skills, career and technical education, certificates, and diploma attainment. As a result, using data appropriately will be an additional responsibility that administrators will need to add to their repertoire of skills in order to effectively respond to changing mandates defining student success (Jenkins & Kerrigan, 2008). In their research, Jenkins and Kerrigan (2008) focus on decision making and how appropriate and effective data analysis is related to reporting student success properly and planning for success. Their study, which included 41 colleges across 7 states, focused on administrators and faculty members participating in the Achieving the Dream initiative to examine data use in planning for student success. The study found that noncredit faculty members were less

interested than credit faculty in reviewing student outcome data. This lack of interest could be a functional byproduct of the lack of full-time faculty assigned to noncredit versus credit (Grubb, Badway, & Bell, 2002). The review of data is essential for reporting success. The results identified the importance of the use of data by administrators as well as faculty members to evaluate student outcomes, substantiate administrative decisions, and coordinate college-wide planning, which are all critical in achieving student success. The above studies suggest noncredit faculty are less likely to engage in this important behavior.

Romano (2012) provides a budgetary aspect to the responsibility administrators have when dealing with student success by revealing historical data consistent with the fact that achieving appropriate measures involves an added expense. Romano (2012) notes there is a rising cost for research based on, “increased administrative costs of documenting and reporting student progress” (p. 176). The cost of personnel and technology as well as the cost for achieving some of the success related environmental investments could be considerable based on the size of the institution. The technological investments that Romano (2012) highlights in the study include costs needed to modernize technology in the classrooms and in all the offices. Technology and professionals trained in utilizing technology are essential to collect, study, and report data from examples of online catalogs to financial records. Success is gradually being defined and mandated without parallel budgetary support to provide for compilation of the data through investment in colleges’ technology and personnel budgets. Although Jenkins and Kerrigan (2008) advocate for increased data review based on the SSTF recommendations, the cost associated for such measures, such as a comprehensive enterprise resource

planning (ERP) system and hiring research analysts, which are described as investments in personnel and technology by Romano (2012), are at times overlooked.

Administrators must develop methods for reporting success because, although there may be a documented expectation that noncredit programs such as English as a second language are essential in society (Blumenthal, 2002), the need to provide evidence of success through assessment is essential. The additional dilemma of developing an appropriate baseline of data through comparative studies when programs are varied is also highlighted in Blumenthal's (2012) study. Blumenthal (2002) reports on the variety of ESL students that create a challenge for administrators to categorize when developing success measures and she specifically notes that retention is "not an accurate measure of overall success" (p.47). She argues retention rates may be a legislator's or politician's definition of success, but leaving an ESL class for a job, relocation due to a house purchase, or feeling confident to speak within the community setting are ESL learners' definition of success. Specific and individual anecdotal success is no longer going to be acceptable for legislative stakeholders or for administrators reporting on noncredit programs. The question remains to be answered as to how success will be measured for noncredit. Blumenthal (2002) refers to lack of identifiable data (social security numbers) as a challenge in data gathering amongst the population of noncredit students. These as well as other challenges relating to credit-based success measures such as limiting repeatability (where repeatability is a term used to mean repeating courses) are what Blumenthal (2002) points to as "a glimpse of some of the more pressing concerns of ESL" (p. 52), which are issues affecting noncredit as well in California community colleges.

In an earlier study Clagett and McConochie (1991) recommended that success measures take into account measures of course satisfaction by students. Additionally, the authors recommended course attendance, completion of requirements, employment, pursuit of further education, and achievement of personal goals as measurable success outcomes (Clagett and McConochie, 1991). Many of these recommendations, however, would not be acceptable in these more recent times since legislators are looking for more specific and quantified course outcome measures and not necessarily measures of satisfaction or long term goals (SSTF, 2012). The Academic Senate makes a suggestion that legislators carefully review and design measures of success specific to noncredit because of the various types of programs and students (California Community College System, 2009). Blumenthal (2002) agrees with the recommendations of the Academic Senate of the California Community College by indicating that success will be very difficult to define collectively because of the noncredit student population's individual needs as well as their diversity.

The achievement of success involves properly combining student diversity, multiple goals, data results, and stakeholder plans towards one cohesive vision. The diverse population served by noncredit programs traditionally includes displaced workers, immigrants, high school students, and many students that could not successfully complete credit courses. The challenge for noncredit administrators is to achieve success measures that are now focused on completion of certificates, degrees, or attainment of employment (SSTF, 2012). Characteristics of noncredit students that make it difficult to define success measures include students' varied goals and the wide gaps of educational preparation. These are indicative of most students in remedial education (Deil-Amen &

Rosenbaum, 2002) as well as noncredit students from underrepresented groups (Levin, Cox, Cerven, & Haberler, 2010). Student success involves not only a program design, but a program goal that requires a true connection of all stakeholders, including students. This is highlighted in a qualitative study which discusses the involvement of faculty, staff, and students toward the common goal of student success (Levin et al., 2010). Long term investment of funds is important in achieving success in noncredit education. Levin et al. (2010) highlight how administrative focus of funds directed to programs targeting diverse needs of noncredit or remedial students is more meaningful for sustainability than funding small projects that use up funds for plans that cannot be institutionalized. Ultimately, Levin et al. (2010) discuss the need for “cohesion, cooperation, connection, and consistency” (p.52), which requires a comprehensive investment throughout the institution to make programs sustainable and successful regardless of the diverse goals and composition of the students.

Investment in programs includes review of administrative procedures that may impact student success. For example, specific findings in a quantitative, longitudinal analysis revealed that lack of success was correlated with late applications, late registrations, and delayed enrollment (Wang & Pilarzyk, 2007). This research provides administrators with proven success measures achieved by implementing fixed deadlines as a mandatory motivator for successful planning for students. These recommendations may be difficult to achieve since noncredit programs must meet the demand of an open access policy. A broad recommendation from the study is to consider more regimented course scheduling or registration requiring students in need of “student retention coursework” to take certain classes (Wang & Pilarzyk, 2007). The structure of noncredit

enrollment which is generally open and continuous may not be directly related to the findings made by Wang and Pilarzyk (2007), but enrollment management professionals could utilize the results to formalize admissions more effectively, especially when improving the transition to credit and preparing students for success.

Student achievement is of primary importance for noncredit leaders especially when administrators are compelled to make enrollment management decisions guided by a broad range of services and college programs (Wang & Pilarzyk, 2007). Success measures are difficult to identify due to the fluidity of the variables including students themselves, as described by Deil-Amen and Rosenbaum (2002), as well as Blumenthal (2002). The noncredit administrator must assure that programs within their scope of oversight are in place to meet the demands of their students as well as the obligations of the college. In this arena, the noncredit program is no longer a separate department functioning independently within the college, but it is a part of the college's curricular identity to "operate as united communities" (Wood & Hilton, 2012, p. 208) and is accountable for the overall success measurements for students. Success as defined in reports from the Institute for Higher Education & Policy at California State University, Sacramento (Moore, Shulock, Ceja, & Lang, 2007; Shulock & Moore, 2007; and Shulock, Moore, Offenstien, & Kirilin, 2008) describe how students need to complete certificates, degrees, or transfer to achieve success and these reports reference the need to increase college completers. Along with SSTF recommendations that move forward with much of the recommendations made in these reports, success has now been framed as successful outcomes. Noncredit, by definition, was not considered to be a pathway to credit, but has been a pathway for basic skills, English, parent education, citizenship,

vocational training and other educational endeavors as outlined in Education Code (California Community College System, 2006). With newly clarified goals for education, administrators must now create and open the pathway to the new success measures to assure that noncredit education will be part of the community college educational framework. Therefore, successful goals must include working with departments outside of noncredit through the development of articulation agreements to achieve seamless transition to credit for those students looking to achieve credit certificates, degrees, or transfer to four-year institutions.

Noncredit to Credit Articulation

Although there may be students that attend a college with the goal of pursuing a degree, credit certificate, or transfer to a university, they may find a fractured connection when they make the transition from noncredit to credit programs within the same college. Credit and noncredit administrators as well as their program's faculty members must get along as noted by Fouts and Mallory (2010) in order to be successful and to formulate successful decisions through an ethic of local community (Wood & Hilton, 2012). Fouts and Mallory's case study identified a disconnect between noncredit and credit which was attributed to the perceptions held by the credit faculty of noncredit as ancillary to the college mission (2010). This finding is consistent with the opinion held by credit faculty that noncredit programs have less respect (Grubb, Badway, & Bell, 2002; Oleksiw, Kremidas, Johnson-Lewis, & Leke, 2007). This kind of sentiment compounds the challenge noncredit administrators must overcome in articulating noncredit to credit and provide a successful transition for students.

“Noncredit to credit articulation has become increasingly of interest” (Dougherty, Reid, and Nienhusser, 2006, p. 4) to researchers and administrators in light of increasing underprepared and unprepared students who must be counted for success. The report by Dougherty et al. (2006) is a comprehensive study of five states involved in a sponsored program designed to achieve success relative to low-income students and students of color with various references to the importance of noncredit education. The authors argue, in developing an environment of success, noncredit administrators must facilitate a seamless transition from basic skills to program achievement identified as measurable success; namely, career and technical education completion, transfer to universities, and attainment of certificates or degrees. Transition to credit must be expedited because the likelihood of dropout may escalate if students take increased amounts of remedial courses, which was a significant barrier specifically identified in the research conducted by Deil-Amen and Rosenbaum (2002). Very often, the classes offered by credit do not take into account the student learning outcomes achieved by students completing noncredit classes so there is no pre-requisite or recommended preparation addressed in the curriculum outlines produced by credit faculty. Conversely, much of noncredit curriculum is not developed with the goal of articulation into credit. Dougherty et al. (2006) argue in lieu of state policies that address this lack of articulation, noncredit administrators are responsible for leading the charge of articulation at their respective colleges.

College-wide collaboration in formulating transitions from noncredit to credit is important to the achievement of success as related by Becker (2011) in her report examining previous articulation studies. Becker (2011) finds that noncredit students who

transition to credit have “high success rate of completion in subsequent terms” (p. 17). This idea is amplified by Dougherty et al. (2006) with a recommendation to create defined performance measures for colleges supporting the transition of noncredit to credit. The importance in relationship building is evident within institutions because agreements must be established between colleagues in order to create a plan for success. The deficiency in articulation agreements between credit and noncredit programs in community colleges is the responsibility of the noncredit administrator as the lead in developing a united community focused on student success (Wood & Hilton, 2012). “Transitioning to credit requires involvement and commitment from the entire community of practice – learners, instructors, administrators, and staff” (Becker, 2011, p. 23) and is related to the “connection” factor that Levin et al. (2010) describe as necessary for success. The suggestion here is that further planning is needed to not only take advantage of working in the same institution, but also to take advantage of all opportunities that present themselves to the noncredit administrator.

The difference in perception between credit and noncredit faculty and staff is formed from an institutional divide based on what faculty and administrators envision their programs to represent for the college. Attitudinal barriers must be overcome (Fouts & Mallory, 2010) to eliminate the lack of respect given to noncredit programs (Grubb et al., 2002; and Oleksiw et al., 2007) in order to create the collaboration between programs that lead to comprehensive and effective articulation. Fouts and Mallory (2010) review the difficulties that are encountered by credit and noncredit groups in their case study and they identify the importance of relationships when lack of agreements creates barriers for faculty working together.

Planning

Planning is a critical component in all aspects of decision making for the noncredit administrator. This involves review of data, collaboration with colleagues, looking at trends, and reviewing historical information. A report taken from surveys and interviews of chief academic officers revealed that there is an important consideration in planning when dealing with adult learners (Williams & Southers, 2010). Their study revealed a negative response from adult learners in sharing their learning environment with early college students who joined them with a significant age difference. The authors provide advice to administrators that, based on their findings, they should be “aware of the consequences - both positive and negative – of integrating high school students with adult learners” (Williams & Southers, 2010, p. 30). This aspect of enrollment management provides an example of the issues not immediately evident in data made available to administrators when reviewing and analyzing enrollment numbers exclusively and not delving into a deeper more holistic review of student satisfaction or student concerns.

A noncredit administrator must be able to examine and interpret data to appropriately understand and define the population they are serving as well as the context in which they are being served. Courses in ESL, adult basic education, and in vocational education have been traditional course offerings for noncredit administrators. One of the more significant options available for noncredit education in recent times is in workforce education. Research describing and studying planning strategies is available to guide administrators in developing programs related to workforce education (Van Noy, Jacobs, Korey, Bailey, & Hughes, 2008; and Van Noy & Jacobs, 2009), and vocational education

(Roksa, 2006). These programs are significant options to pursue in the field of noncredit education. The recommendations to articulate noncredit to credit and to connect short-term training with long-term education presented in the report by Van Noy and Jacobs (2009) are based on previous studies from “2007 and 2008 by the Community College Research Center at Columbia University” (Van Noy & Jacobs, 2009, p.87). These linkages will also support workforce training as a broad area of opportunity for the noncredit administrator to focus on, with the purpose of integrating noncredit to other institutional programs. The findings suggest that workforce training provides for ideal situations to obtain funding and allow for flexible arrangements that noncredit programs can offer if planned correctly by administrators (Van Noy, Jacobs, Korey, Bailey, & Hughes, 2008). The authors identify articulation agreements, transcript additions, and industry certifications, as examples of planning factors noncredit administrators could consider in conjunction with all other aspects of their organization.

In their national study, Oleksiw, Kremidas, Johnson-Lewis, and Lekes (2007), review the organizational structure of noncredit programs, including funding, state policies, regulations, responsibility of planning, and community relationships. The authors found that noncredit accessibility, partnerships, and reporting mechanisms were reported for most states, however, not always in the same way. California was included in this study. Additionally, the authors found that planning for future reporting including developing a nationwide database would require “significant federal and state investments” (Oleksiw et al., 2007, p. xi). This aspect of planning for the investment involved in the data gathering process is related to Romano’s (2012) point regarding costs associated in obtaining student success measures. Since noncredit programming is

different from state to state, Oleksiw et al. (2007), find there are only general relationships that are evident when studying noncredit programs from state to state. With a lack of congruency, administrators will encounter the challenge of identifying best practices or determining what program would be ideal to employ as a model. The difference between credit and noncredit program data availability along with the “tension in the field regarding what the primary mission of the community college is or should be” (Oleksiw et al., 2007, p. 1) creates increased challenges for the noncredit administrator.

The melding of credit and noncredit factions in planning involves a collaborative mission goal. Ayers (2002) reports from his analysis on the importance of the role of administrators in organizing, articulating, and interpreting college missions with a focus on developing a shared vision for the institution. The mission shift relating to success as opposed to access is addressed as a best practice in prioritizing college goals and effective strategic planning (Ayers, 2002). Administrators ought to quickly be determining by what means to help students adjust to college while simultaneously planning for a focused educational goal as SSTF recommendations are emphasizing student educational plans to be developed expeditiously (SSTF, 2012). The impression that community college is an educational institution built on the principle of access and is a place to explore educational goals is discussed in the context of a new mission designed to streamline pathways towards completion and success. Ayers (2002) indicates that although “it is possible that community colleges are immune to the forces that compel other organizations to focus on niche markets” (p. 26), administrators must plan a comprehensive strategy targeting specific goal achievement with less emphasis on

general education. The focus on specific objectives is what makes noncredit responsive to student and institution needs.

An example of strategic planning for specialty programs under the purview of continuing education and within the allowable scope of noncredit programs is found in McElhoe, Kamberelis and Peters' (2006) study on lifelong learning. The mixed-method study identifies the importance of reviewing students' perspective of programs in lifelong learning. The authors used mixed methods because, as they report the "protocol we developed for this study was intended to provide administrators with more relevant information for the improvement of lifelong learning programs" (McElhoe, Kamberelis, & Peters, 2006, p. 133). As in most noncredit programs and as this study highlights in lifelong learning, noncredit administrators face challenges related to planning in hiring, curriculum development, and enrollment management. This study reveals the consistent challenge pointing to a scarcity of prior research in noncredit partly due to lack of degrees or certificates available for defined data sources found with credit programs. The authors surveyed students and instructors, completed observations, conducted interviews, and reviewed student evaluations for data gathering. This report provides recommendations including an evaluation model as a tool using a case study design and surveys for data. This model is relevant to support planning for noncredit administrators as they make enrollment management decisions for specific programs, such as lifelong learning, and substantiate their recommendations to the institution.

Developing planning strategies for adult learners is not solely an administrative decision according to Pusser et al. (2007) when they reviewed various categories of adult learners. Planning for their success would entail a commitment from administrators,

faculty, and student services, which is an idea again of “connection” (Levin et al., 2010) that covers the realms of success. Pusser et al. (2007) indicate that, “few factors influence learners’ success more than student/institutional planning and counseling” (p.4) all of which would require support from policy makers. Along with Romano’s (2012) discussion of the investment needed to implement processes to gather data, Pusser et al. (2007) discuss the importance of resource allocation inherent in all planning decisions. Their national survey revealed that planning would be significant in developing appropriate tracking data, and arranging for dispersed information, effective marketing and integration of resources. Planning is critical for noncredit administrators to assure appropriate resource allocation to strategic programs.

In addition to planning, administrators must make decisions regarding curriculum through data driven strategies. Kortesoja (2009) completes a regression analysis to study non-traditional students to determine if they prefer noncredit courses of study over credential programs. The findings suggest that although demographics, educational backgrounds, and motivation have some influence as independent variables on the dependent variable of highest credential program pursued, students ultimately pursue credential programs that build on terminal goals driven by employment aspirations or higher education. The driving force encouraging vocational education is, Kortesoja (2009) indicates, emanating from governmental policies. The broad alternatives that students pursue are taken into account by administrators when planning future curriculum. This differs from Pusser et al. (2007) who identify more strategic focused planning, which is more fiscally in line with the budgetary constraints that are prevalent in the college system statewide.

Noncredit administrators must be cautious not to apply generalizations in planning decisions. Bahr (2010) employs a cluster analysis to organize a behavioral typology defined as transfer, vocational, drop-in, noncredit, experimental, and exploratory students. This helps to identify trends of enrollment behaviors that any administrator can evaluate and review. However, even Bahr (2010) indicates that there is a limitation to the study based on the use of the cohort model focused on first time college students and their initial enrollment patterns, which cannot be applied more generally to “returning, special admin (high school), and reverse transfer students” (Bahr, 2010, p. 745). Administrators must be flexible in their planning based on the institutional environment and based on dynamic student needs.

The planning involved with enrollment management is intricate and with college missions focusing on transfer along with other goals, noncredit programs must fit with the college culture. A classification of first-time students is organized for three colleges to study enrollment management focused on transfer and compared ethnographically by Shaw and London (2001). The results provide a comparative analysis of transfer, which is important to administrators as a success measure. Most administrators look at transfer as a goal. For noncredit administrators, looking at transfer requires them to explore “its symbolic nature-that is, its meaning in the culture and ideology of the community college itself, as well as the life of the student, his or her family and friends, and the educational structure of this society” (Shaw & London, 2001, p. 111). One of the colleges in the study with a noncredit program equivalent to credit in terms of student headcount did not have a unified culture because of its size but was still able to create transfer path opportunities. Furthermore, findings in the study highlight the structure of office hours,

and student responsibility as important factors to achieve successful transfer rates. The results of this research reveal the many factors related to transfer success and highlight the multitude of variables administrators must consider in order to plan effectively. Shaw and London conclude that, “it is critically important to explore how these institutions construct and enact policies and procedures that affect the life chances of students who attend them” (p.111). Noncredit administrators must realize that some colleges function within a unified culture creating defined parameters for enrollment management. Conversely, other colleges function with multiple goals but are committed to transfer. These internal dynamics must be recognized by the administrator to be able to plan effectively.

Besides institutional complexities, students bring challenges administrators must recognize and address in planning. Developmental education presents separate issues for noncredit administrators, which are discussed in a study by Boylan and Bonham (2011). Dealing with students in noncredit education demands specific emphasis on employment issues since the option of vocational and workforce education is a noncredit goal. Boylan and Bonham (2011) list several issues they reference as myths related to underprepared students including, lower academic standards, attrition, cost, specific benefit to minorities, responsibility for developmental education, and duplication of high school. These are the myths they propose are often associated with any discussion of developmental education. Boylan and Bonham (2011) suggest that underprepared students are a part of higher education and they propose their educational needs must be addressed. They provide examples of methods colleges may undertake to actually raise standards by working with students in developmental education. Their report provides

data on how cost is made up through the investment in remedial education and in what way opening doors to all levels of higher education is important to the entire institution. The report and reference to literature help to dispel the above mentioned myths and direct administrators to recognize that, “in order to obtain maximum benefits, developmental programs must be organized and delivered properly” (Boylan & Bonham, 2011, p. 35) through administrative planning. Administrators of noncredit programs must advocate for students who are most in need such as those requiring developmental education.

A study by Frentzos (2005) provides insight for planning in his quantitative study regarding unemployment and noncredit enrollment. Economy and enrollment play significant roles in the strategies administrators choose for planning for the future. The predictions that administrators have to formulate are not limited to internal institutional factors. Administrators must additionally consider all environmental factors and in this case, Frentzos (2005) reports that, “by understanding the effects of the economy, community colleges can design their non-credit classes around the needs of the community” (p. 102). Noncredit administrators should bear in mind all external and internal factors which may be obvious or underlying as Shaw and London (2001) reported in their study.

Budgetary considerations are embedded in much of the literature involving planning and management of educational institutions. Innovative plans for change are not as dramatic as noted in Krieger’s case study (2001) describing the consolidation of colleges and functions of colleges. The college system in the study may be compared to the California Community College system and the implications of the study may be considered planning. These planning methods looking at systems, individuals, programs,

and processes must come together to make a feasible option and not a fragmented set of projects. This study provides a global organizational structure bringing several colleges under the umbrella of a system. The Kentucky Community and Technical College System (KCTCS) model joined 14 community colleges and 15 postsecondary technical institutions to form a system of 68 campuses across the state (Krieger, 2001). The discussion of noncredit is insignificant in the context of such a large system of colleges as Krieger accounts for the exclusion of noncredit funding in the KCTCS model and others as less than secondary in the full budget picture. This presentation of a statewide fusion of resources and programs highlights the fact that noncredit programs would not be a priority. In California, the Legislative Analyst's report delineating common statewide definitions, common statewide policies, and an integrated data system for noncredit education in California makes the details and suggestions in the KCTCS model a real and relevant possibility for noncredit administrators in California (Legislative Analyst's Office [LAO], 2012, p. 20). Noncredit administrators must be careful dealing with system-wide collaboration so that the importance of their programs is not lost in the discussion.

Including noncredit as a part of any educational master plan is of prime concern to achieve institutional effectiveness. Skolits and Graybeal (2007) reported on the importance of planning in their mixed-method case study analyzing institutional effectiveness. The concept of planning in an effort to accomplish set goals was consistently reported. Planning was noted to be an essential component in the minds of administrators as they rated strategic planning process elements favorably in their study (Skolits & Graybeal, 2007). Although the goal of institutional effectiveness was

paramount for faculty, staff, and administrators, the time commitment, difficulty in data gathering, and complexity in planning was significantly challenging to all constituents. Noncredit administrators are obligated to understand planning by reviewing data related to all aspects of the college including credit issues, mission goals, and enrollment management. These planning issues lend themselves to establish the accountability that all programs must adhere to and report in order to receive legislative support for progress as a comprehensive educational institution that offers various programs.

Accountability

The strategic planning noncredit administrators must incorporate as they deal with other administrators, employers, colleagues, faculty, and students and their related cultural perspectives are bounded by the accountability or results that are imposed upon them by legislators, budget constraints, or political pressure. A significant process of accountability relates to understanding the many facets that involve policy implementation as noted by Mills (1998) in his qualitative study of three institutions. Colleges in the Mills' (1998) study met a variety of policy standards including testing and mandatory remediation. The amount of accountability requirements placed on the colleges were not met favorably as, "the faculty and staff members of all three institutions had little or no respect for the role of the OSRHE [Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education] in policymaking generally" (Mills, 1998, p. 681). Knowledge of data and relationships with college administration, students, staff and community are fundamental as related in Mills (1998) findings. Although the focus of McGoey's (2007) more recent report points to presidential effectiveness, it describes the emphasis of accountability to uppermost principal administrators as the main measure of performance

by stakeholders. The individual commitment to accountability noted in McGoey (2007) relates to Mills' (1998) description of how accountability fits institutionally. This reaction to accountability is a challenge for administrators that must answer to policy makers and carry forward mandates that may be popular or unpopular to certain groups.

A qualitative study by Shults (2008) describes how responding to change is appropriately achieved by making institutions more accountable and restructuring them based on data and on appropriate use of available resources. Shults (2008) and Mills (1998) both suggest that review of policy guidelines are valuable, but not necessarily a tenet towards the goals, missions, and values that many colleges call their own. Shults (2008) discusses how difficult accountability is becoming for institutions in a time of change "given their multiple markets and numerous external stakeholders" (p.133). Although guidance is available, there are times when the legislative mandates do not coincide with the actual needs or are unpopular (Mills, 1998). Regardless of the acceptance of mandates by those that must carry out the policies or students who are subject to the requirements, administrators have the ultimate responsibility to meet accountability goals. These goals come from multiple sources including legislative, administrative, student based, or from the general public. During these times, administrators use as much flexibility as possible to both remain in compliance and serve their student needs (McGoey, 2007; Mills, 1998; Shults, 2008).

Noncredit administrators make decisions for the purpose of enhancing institutional effectiveness and maintaining institutional accountability which is the subject of the study related to quantifying accountability by Clagett and McConochie (1991). The authors indicate how institutional accountability is a priority among

governments who provide funding for higher education. An overarching educational requirement demanded by legislators is defined by student outcomes which are proposed in the recommendations outlined in the Student Success Task Force (SSTF, 2012). Clagett and McConochie found that a lack of data and assessment information which could be used to create a source of base information to rely upon was a challenge for institutions. Furthermore, the authors recognize assessment of noncredit programs is essential for their success. Accountability is a goal requiring data that is only significant if it is valid and appropriately assessed.

In a review of nationwide colleges Oleksiw et al. (2007) reveal in their study that, “even with millions of adults enrolled in noncredit courses at community colleges, there is little detailed information available on the profile of these adult learners” (p.6). A lack of accountability is reported by Shults (2008) who indicates that institutions are often “swimming in red ink” (p.145). Keeping track of a revolving door of students and maintaining the accounting of students and classes is challenging as noted by Shults (2008) which at times leads to budget discrepancies at many colleges. Accountability is the overarching implication that is suggested in the Student Success Task Force recommendations and provides benchmarks for success and budget requests that administrators must contemplate. “Accountability is intrinsic to noncredit programming” (Oleksiw et al., 2007, p. 7), which is the key in analyzing programs to determine the viability of them. With limited tracking of data, there is a corresponding lack of accountability and policymakers are aware of this deficiency. This will be a significant challenge for current and future noncredit administrators.

The consideration of who the stakeholders are when planning effectively is important for all administrators to be aware of when addressing institutional issues (Hom, 2011). On campus, administrators must be familiar with the demands of staff, faculty, students and local trustees. These desires are more familiar to administrators because of the regular interaction they have with these stakeholders. However, outside groups including accrediting commissions, governmental bodies, potential students, employers, K-12 schools, taxpayers, and news media have needs that are more difficult to recognize (Hom, 2011). The psychological research utilized by Hom (2011) is a multiattribute utility technology (MAUT) structure which is a model of “how individuals can evaluate a product or service by integrating evidence about different dimensions...of a product or service” (Hom, 2011, p. 93) to be able to view how services are evaluated. Hom (2011) indicates there is an overabundance of outside influence in institutional system planning which could overburden the college. A general implication from this study is “how different stakeholders develop different perceptions of institutional effectiveness” (Hom, 2011, p. 95). These differences provide challenges to administrators to direct successful decisions and garner support from all stakeholders. Administrators must be able to identify situations when some perceptions are helpful even if they are not consistent with general consensus of students, accreditation members, board members, or the community who may all be stakeholders by group or collectively.

Summary

Administrators in charge of noncredit programs must be flexible and aware of the options by looking at what success measures are required by the entities reviewing their programs. Their interactions based on their relationships are critical points to examine,

through a symbolic interactionist perspective, in determining how effective their roles are within their cultural environment. Student success has been the cornerstone for education. The charge of the California Community Colleges Student Success Task Force (SSTF) was to identify standards of success. Literature has suggested that data is necessary to report success (Blumenthal, 2002, Jenkins & Kerrigan, 2008), but the task of reporting success is not as simple as writing a report. The transition that noncredit administrators must make from collecting anecdotal stories to empirical data is going to be difficult and costly (Romano, 2012). Several studies make recommendations on how to report student success in terms of groups such as remedial groups, or underrepresented groups (Deil-Amen & Rosenbaum, 2002, Levin et al., 2010). Barriers seemed to be an overarching description of the difficulties noncredit students encountered. A primary consideration of success for noncredit students was to assure that they transition to higher educational paths.

Transitioning from noncredit to credit has been noted in literature to be a universal measure for success (Becker, 2011, Fouts & Mallory, 2010, Dougherty et al., 2006). However, it is also well documented that there is a division between noncredit and credit which must be eliminated in order to achieve any sort of seamless transition towards higher educational achievements (Becker, 2011, Fouts & Mallory, 2010, Levin et al., 2010). The work between credit and noncredit faculty would require collaboration regarding curriculum and reporting requirements, or may need state policies mandating cooperation (Dougherty et al., 2006). These arrangements and partnerships would only be successful with appropriate planning.

The planning function of administrators is universal by requiring data collection, review, innovation, organization, follow through, and assessment. Data for noncredit administrators necessitates an understanding of the variety of students served including adult learners (Williams & Southers, 2010), students interested in workforce training (Van Noy et.al, 2009), lifelong learners (McElhoe, Kamberelis & Peters, 2006), non-traditional students (Kortesoja, 2009), developmental education (Boylan and Bonham, 2011), and others (Bahr, 2010, Kortesoja, 2009, Shaw & London, 2001). With data illustrating the particular needs of the populations served, administrators would be educated and prepared to formulate their plans effectively. The plans would include reviews of data, trend analysis, internal and external influences (Oleksiw et al., 2007, Romano, 2012, Ayers 2002). Connecting and collaborating (Levin et al., 2010, Shaw & London, 2001) with faculty, community, students, and legislators are all factors consistent with successful planning. Globalized planning (Krieger, 2001) is cautioned because of the limited impact of noncredit within the bigger picture or within institutional effectiveness reporting (Skolits & Graybeal, 2007). These planning ideas involve a review of mission goals, program goals, and accountability which administrators consider as they make enrollment management decisions.

Accountability is the way programs get funded and gain support. Noncredit programs have to meet policy standards (Mills, 1998, Shults, 2008) and have assessments that inform (Clagett & McConochie, 1991). The lack of accountability in noncredit is prevalent (Oleksiw et al., 2007, Shults, 2008, Hom, 2011). In meeting the need to provide accountability measures, noncredit administrators are responsible for creating systems that are credible (Hom, 2011). Noncredit administrators are also charged with

making sure they are successful within their own institutions. The planning process takes into account the data and research that creates an accountability system allowing them to substantiate their goals, visions, and mission. Research describing community college administrators and their challenges is sparse with even less information related to noncredit administration. The students served by noncredit education are typically the neediest of society. The people benefiting from noncredit education who have been sharing stories are single parents, disabled, immigrants, high school drop-outs, veterans, displaced workers, older adult learners, and others. Anecdotal success stories during a budget crisis were not adequate for legislators and state leaders. New quantified success measures are being discussed which are not consistent with the way noncredit education has been reviewed. Credit type of success measures focusing on degrees and transfer have resulted in a mission shift from open access in community colleges. This and other challenges for noncredit administrators will be highlighted focusing on the cultural environment of the institutions they work in while they seek to continue to provide noncredit education.

CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

Introduction

California community colleges are open access systems which developed many programs and services subsequently expanding the mission of community colleges. Noncredit education was not a new program; it was just named differently, as listed in the California Master Plan of 1960-1975, the program was referred to as extended-day classes that were offered in nine evening junior colleges in 1958-1959 (California State Department of Education [CDE], 1960). Adult education and continuing education have also been synonymous with the extended-day classes and noncredit education, which provides access to education through community colleges. The evolution of noncredit education within the community college structure would benefit from a study of the cultural environment and interactions of noncredit administrators within that system.

Research Purpose

In 2010, the California Community College Vice Chancellor submitted a memo announcing a reduction of \$120 million statewide to colleges suggesting a reduction in noncredit classes (B. A. Russell, personal communication, January 22, 2010). The responsibility for orchestrating appropriate cuts while maintaining noncredit programs lies in the scope of work of noncredit administrators. The purpose of this qualitative study was to describe and review the experiences of noncredit California community college administrators and their environments as they made enrollment management decisions within each of their unique and complex college cultures.

Research Questions

This ethnographic case study highlighted the specific challenges faced by noncredit administrators including their perceptions of their roles within the larger college community. I asked questions related to the interaction of noncredit administrators at their colleges.

What institutional cultural factors shape enrollment management decisions among noncredit administrators in community colleges?

How do noncredit administrators contend with these factors in their decision making process? How are the roles of noncredit administrators perceived within their institutional environment?

Chapter Organization

I presented and reviewed the ethnographic design, describing its relationship to the research purpose and research questions. The research setting was introduced along with site selection information. The data sources from interviews and college research information, data analysis, and the roles of the researcher including my experience in noncredit education were described. My role as a researcher, my biases as a noncredit administrator, and how I assured this study's integrity was examined.

Research Tradition

My research tradition provided a comprehensive vision of noncredit programs and the activities of noncredit administrators by examining the role of the college culture on the decisions they made. I presented a holistic cultural portrait (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012) with insiders views (Rossman & Rallis, 2012) utilizing a realist ethnography

(Creswell, 2012) to explore and understand the social structures in the institutional setting (Rossman & Rallis, 2012).

Case Study

This study was guided by a multiple, instrumental, bounded case study (Creswell, 2012) of noncredit enrollment management that targets three community colleges. My approach consisted of a multisite case study (Merriam, 2009) of noncredit administrators, their supervising administrators, and academic senate faculty members at three different sites. I gathered data for detailed analysis to identify overarching themes (Merriam, 2009). The individuals involved in my research were the human subjects of my case study who provided insights to the variety of organizational formations, political structures, and budget issues apparent in the three community colleges. This examination helped form a cultural portrait of noncredit enrollment decisions (Creswell, 1996) which were bounded in terms of the specific colleges that were part of the study (Creswell, 2012). The colleges in this study have developed noncredit programs that vary in class offerings, size, and structure based on a variety of decisions, policies, and issues that were in place at the time the noncredit programs were established at their respective colleges. I obtained a “descriptive, heuristic, inductive” (Rossman & Rallis, 2012, p. 103) review of each of the colleges by multiple methods (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012) to provide a consistent background for the study.

Ethnography

Expanding on the comprehensive review of the case study, I was able to “link to cultural” issues and “sociology” (Rossman & Rallis, 2012, p. 103) by way of an ethnography. I utilized this ethnographic design to highlight the culture surrounding the

issues faced by noncredit administrators in their decision making processes. I delved into the issue of noncredit enrollment, bounded by the criteria specific to community colleges that have large numbers of noncredit full-time equivalent students (FTES). I conducted interviews, reviewed literature, and analyzed data. I created a holistic cultural portrait consistent with ethnographies (Rossman & Rallis, 2012). My review of noncredit programs as a cultural paradigm was evident through the case studies. I relied on my reporting on the experiences (Smith, 2005) of the subjects of my study to identify cultural theme (Creswell, 2012) or cultural meaning (Spradley, 1979). I conducted a realist ethnography which was a decidedly objective form of conducting research (Creswell, 2012) in order to minimize any potential bias from my own experience as a noncredit administrator. I provided “empirical data about the lives of people in specific situations” (Spradley, 1979, p. 13). The result was to produce a comprehensive, objective, and truthful study focusing “on the experiences of those active in the institutional process” (Smith, 2005, Loc. 895).

Connection between Tradition and Research

My realist ethnography was pursued to “seek to explore and understand the social structures that shape everyday lives, primarily in organizational or institutional settings” (Rossman & Rallis, 2012, p. 95); therefore, it may also be referred to as an institutional ethnography. An “institutional ethnography begins by locating a standpoint in an institutional order that provides the guiding perspective from which that order will be explored” (Smith, 2005, Loc. 685). Through my research, I identified and reported on the influences within the institutions that impact decisions that are made by administrators. The information I gathered provided important information about

decision making and practical leadership to noncredit administrators. My research is useful in that it facilitate “institutions engaging in change to conduct an institutional self-audit or assessment of their culture” (Kezar, 2001, p. 115) with the findings of my report. The environment and culture that create the institutional context are essential components to study in order to review in detail all of the influences noncredit administrators encounter. “The defining characteristic of ethnography is that it is oriented toward the description and interpretation of cultural behaviors” (Schram, 2006, p. 67). A multisite case study was “a particularly appealing design for applied fields of study such as education, social work, administration, health, and so on” (Merriam, 2009, p. 51) which, when incorporated with an overall ethnographic design, presented the noncredit administrators world of work and revealed cultural behaviors. I provided all college administrators with important facts about colleges’ noncredit programs and the specific challenges that their noncredit counterparts encounter. By scanning the colleges’ environment through an ethnographic multisite case study, I have been able to “systematically seek out information about their context” (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978, p. 268), which few organizations reveal about themselves or seek to study from others. The community colleges that participated in my case study were good examples because they were considered leaders in noncredit education, based on their consistent amount of service to noncredit students as evidenced by enrollment data.

Research Setting and Context

Background

A majority of the 112 California Community Colleges provide some form of adult education, continuing education, or noncredit education, and about half of the colleges

reported having over 100 noncredit FTES (CCCCO, 2013). Adult education has evolved from the opening of the first adult school in 1856, which was not a very significant event, to the establishment of community colleges. More recently, community colleges received legislative approval of enhanced funding for some noncredit programs, which was a decision that highlighted legislative and statewide support of noncredit education (California Community College System, 2006). By reviewing the Chancellor's Office Data Mart (CCCCO, 2013), I identified three Southern California community colleges that had the highest noncredit FTES in the state. For convenience given limited resources and time, I stayed local and chose extreme cases for my research (community colleges with large numbers of noncredit FTES), establishing a focused perspective of large noncredit programs in the southern California area. This was a purposeful combination sampling strategy because it targeted convenience, criteria, and extreme sampling methods to achieve the best opportunity to maximize the results of obtaining cultural aspects of enrollment management decisions made by noncredit administrators. This combined strategy afforded me with various sources to filter information (Glesne, 2011). As Creswell (2012) notes, this assisted my goal to, "develop an in-depth exploration of a central phenomenon" (p. 206).

Site Information

I visited three community colleges (all referred to by pseudonyms), which are within the top fifteen in numbers of noncredit FTES compared to all the community colleges in the state. One college, Alpha Community College, is part of a large multi-college district. The second I visited was Beta Community College, which is from a smaller multi-college district. The third college participating in my study is Gamma

Community College, which is from a single college district. Alpha Community college reported approximately 50% female and 50% male, with two thirds of students between 20 to 49 years of age, and over 60% Hispanic, with close to 7% of its FTES attributed to noncredit. Beta Community College was just over 60% male, with well over two thirds of its students between 20 to 49 years of age. Beta Community College's students numbered just under 50% Hispanic with one third of their FTES attributed to noncredit. Gamma Community College was a little over 50% female, with over 50% between 20 to 49 years of age. Gamma Community College identified its students as a little over 50% Hispanic, and 17.3% Asian, with over 17% of its FTES attributed to noncredit. All three community colleges served large suburban communities and were all Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSI) serving noncredit populations under varied demographic environments (CCCCO, 2013). Their large numbers of noncredit FTES, compared to all 117 colleges, provided a good way of identifying programs of interest for my study.

Rationale for Sites

I selected noncredit community colleges as the center of this study with a purposeful review of colleges with large numbers of noncredit FTES to be able to examine how enrollment management was handled. Considering their large FTES numbers, enrollment management was noted to play a significant role for noncredit. Since the larger noncredit programs based on total noncredit FTES were identified within a local geographic area, I was able to refine my targeted study to the Southern California area to efficiently use my time and allow for ease of opportunity to offer follow up and conduct any necessary member checking with the participants of my research. By focusing on programs with large noncredit FTES numbers, the complexity of the

noncredit departments allowed for effective insight to the challenges faced by noncredit administrators.

Access to Sites

Access to the research sites was possible because of my involvement as an administrator in charge of noncredit programs. In my experience, I have met many leaders and I have several names of contacts at various colleges. Initially, I identified myself as a peer in order to facilitate contact with gatekeepers at the colleges I used for my research. Following my initial contact with the gatekeepers, I transitioned my role to be clearly identified as a researcher. My multiple roles in this research facilitated the gathering of information and data to help me report my results. The research samples and data sources once identified were contacted to commence the process of actual research and complete this dissertation.

Research Sample and Data Sources

Sources of Data

In my ethnographic case study of issues and challenges related to noncredit enrollment management decisions, I investigated and identified the administrators in primary leadership positions of noncredit programs, their administrative supervisors, and faculty members involved with the academic senate. I identified extremes in my sample to review exceptional noncredit programs as well as a convenience sample or opportunistic sample, since they were all located in close proximity to my location (Creswell, 2012, Glesne, 2011). In addition to statewide data, I also reviewed local data by reviewing each of the three institution's easily available web-based data for demographic and enrollment information to gain a historical perspective of trends in

areas affecting college mission shift, emphasis on enrollment trends, and noncredit trends in general. I also reviewed accountability reports and accreditation self-studies required for all institutions to obtain specific data regarding noncredit programs in the context of college budget, curriculum development, or enrollment management.

I obtained data from the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office to gain general statistics and facts concerning each college's demographic and enrollment history that can be compared statewide or college by college, depending on the data obtained. I relied upon data reviewed and interviews used in my ethnographic case studies to obtain a cultural perspective on the institutional environments that I studied (Rossman & Rallis, 2012). I obtained comparative data from each college from Chancellor's Office Data Mart queries as well as specific information regarding enrollment and demographic trends from accreditation reports. This allowed me to formulate a comprehensive cultural perspective on the colleges I chose to visit. I sought assistance from each of the college's web sites to gain access or direction to important demographic, historical, and local data particular to each college.

Accreditation documents were reviewed to obtain a focused view of each college and insight on how each college evaluated itself as required in accreditation documentation. A specific focus was on the inclusion or exclusion of noncredit programs, administration, or services embedded in the reports compared to data obtained through other sources.

Data was used to identify the sites for my study, and to identify the participants I contacted for my semi-structured interviews. Data was also essential in describing the

institutional environment, such as enrollment trends, historical records, and demographic data. It also supported information obtained from interviews and observations.

Sampling Strategy

I used criterion-based sampling to identify administrators in direct charge of noncredit enrollment management from the three sites described above. The criteria provided for a sample of individuals with similar professional responsibilities that experience the “same phenomenon” (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012, p. 104) in administering noncredit programs because they were the lead administrators (managers, directors, deans, or vice-presidents) of noncredit programs that were primarily responsible for decisions in planning including enrollment management. By targeting community colleges with large noncredit programs and interviewing administrators critical to the success of the programs along with highly influential supervisors and colleagues, I gathered best practices that may be followed by future readers of this study. For the purpose of identifying participants, I identified administrators overseeing noncredit education by reviewing each of the websites of the colleges. I followed up by contacting each of the offices directly. Once the person was identified, I sought confirmation from noncredit colleagues at other colleges to obtain introduction to these sources. I sent an email with a follow-up telephone call describing my intent for research and my background as an administrator. My gatekeepers were primarily the noncredit administrators in my study who helped me to gain further contact with supervising administrators and academic senate credit faculty who were also sources of data and participants in my interviews.

Sample Characteristics

The noncredit administrators, their supervising administrators, and the credit faculty senate members from the community colleges I selected, represented the highest echelon of noncredit sources involved with enrollment management in the state. The Chancellor's Office Data Mart information provided background and quantified data that identified the programs for my study. I provided demographic background information of the colleges and utilized the data in appropriate context within my study. Noncredit programs provide basic skills, English as a second language, vocational training and other educational services. The information I gleaned has provided a full description of the noncredit program and services available in each college.

Rights of Research Subjects

The selection of community colleges and noncredit administrators, their supervising administrators, and academic senate credit faculty members presented challenges in maintaining confidentiality and anonymity of my research subjects due to the extreme case sampling utilized. I have used utmost care in assigning pseudonyms and presenting identifying data or demographics that may reveal my samples. I reviewed my research project goals and discussed my research questions with all of my human subjects beyond the informed consent (Glesne, 2011), so as to ensure that my research project was fully supported by my research subjects. I requested that my research study be approved by the Institutional Review Board of each college or the superintendent/president or designee of each of the institutions participating in my study, again I gained sponsorship and assistance from my research subjects as gatekeepers. I also obtained the endorsement from the superintendent/president of my college and

colleagues I have met through the years to assist in any contacts or authorizations that I needed to obtain.

Process of Access

The process to obtain authorization to access my research samples was based on Institutional Review Board or superintendent/president approval. I needed support from my gatekeepers and administrators to access research data from each of the institutions I visited. College enrollment data, enrollment management plans, accreditation reports, and other information were readily available publicly, but maintaining contact with each institution's gatekeepers was valuable. The interviews and data retrieval were successfully conducted by following strategic procedures and utilizing appropriate instruments of data gathering.

Instruments and Procedures

A full range of instruments were utilized to obtain adequate participation in this ethnographic case study including a research invitation, informed consent form, and interview protocol. I submitted research invitations to noncredit administrators in three southern California community colleges with large numbers of noncredit full-time equivalent students. Additional invitations were provided to the supervising administrators, as well as academic senate credit faculty members at the colleges (Appendix A). I developed a standard informed consent form, which was provided and reviewed with the participants (Appendix B). Information regarding the interviews, confidentiality, informed consent, and my contact information was discussed in a pre-interview session (Appendix C). Semi-structured interviews designed to elicit thoughtful responses aligned to the main research questions were constructed (Appendix D). Data

regarding enrollment management trend helped to describe the context and history of growth, decline, or stability of the noncredit program compared to the college in general.

Research Invitation

The research invitation was an introductory request to participate in the research process. A telephone call and email introduction were used as the communication mode to initiate the research invitation, with formal and less formal approaches depending on familiarity with the participant at the specific college. The research invitation contained a brief background of the research subject matter and included a statement of my commitment as a professional involved with noncredit administration. I made sure to acknowledge the importance of their schedules and times. The invitation also included a statement regarding confidentiality. Once the invitation was accepted and I obtained authorization to conduct my research, I personally reviewed an informed consent form with the participants.

The purpose of the research invitation was to gain access to conduct research. The invitation provided initial assurance of professionalism and instilled curiosity and intent to support my research goals.

Informed Consent

The informed consent form contained a complete description of the responsibilities of the researcher and the participant with the subject of confidentiality stressed throughout the form. It illustrated the purpose of the study I pursued along with a statement regarding the procedures I followed to conduct the research. I explained all potential risks to the participants along with the benefits. A description of how I maintained confidentiality of data was written in complete detail. I delineated all of the

rights participants had and identified where participants could obtain additional information regarding their rights and had them sign the informed consent form prior to conducting interviews.

The informed consent form was used as a formal agreement built from the initial understanding that I formulated my research invitation. The information outlined in the informed consent form provided a detailed description of the ethical boundaries I adhered to during the research process. The informed consent fully portrayed the “study’s purpose and audience” (Rossman & Rallis, 2012).

Interview Protocol

Interviews were conducted at three community colleges with three individuals from each of the colleges; one noncredit administrator, an executive administrator, and a credit faculty senate representative. Following a review of background information about the interview process, and collection of brief demographic information, I proceeded with one-on-one, semi-structured interviews. Noncredit administrators were questioned regarding how they perceived their roles within their college and in what way their decisions in enrollment management were influenced by budget policies, legislative changes, community feedback, student requests, or institutional policies. Their supervising administrators were questioned regarding their understanding of noncredit education in the context of wider institutional goals and values. Academic senate credit faculty members were questioned regarding their perspective of noncredit faculty and programs compared to credit in terms of prioritizing class offerings. Each line of questioning included main questions focused on the information identified as critical in my literature review. I had specific sub-questions that I felt were important in order to

obtain a comprehensive description of the culture at the colleges and I used more flexible follow up questions to guide the interview process more naturally. I gathered data from one-on-one, semi-structured interviews to obtain personal perspectives from noncredit administrators, executive administrators, and credit faculty leaders regarding noncredit enrollment management decisions (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012, Creswell, 2012).

The interview protocol allowed focused access to the observations and ideas that were needed for the research. It guided me to the goal of my main research questions. By organizing an interview protocol that aligned with my research directly, it provided the cultural analysis of noncredit administration within the college environment (Rossman & Rallis, 2012). Interview questions focused on what administrators perceived the future would look like for community college noncredit programs in five years and how they advocated for the noncredit program in their respective colleges. I questioned supervising administrators (Vice-Presidents) who managed noncredit administrators, regarding the vision they perceived their colleges to embrace and obtained their viewpoint regarding noncredit education at their college. I questioned credit faculty members representing the academic senate regarding articulation trends between credit and noncredit and obtained their input regarding noncredit. The interviews provided a cultural perspective of the institution in terms of the overall perception of the role of noncredit education.

Data Collection

Preparation

I sought authorization from the superintendent/presidents or designees to participate in interviews as subjects and to allow me to conduct interviews of noncredit

administrators and credit faculty senate members. My goal was to gain support of the superintendent/president to take part in an interview and to act as my gatekeeper for access to conduct my research. I was referred to the Vice President's office or the Institutional Review Board by all of the colleges. I furnished a consent form that described full disclosure of my role as the researcher along with a description of participants' roles taking part in my case study. Along with the consent form to all participants, I explained verbally what was written and implied in my study to assure complete disclosure was supplied. I conducted interviews to gain a subjective personal view and follow up with a review of data that may impart more objective insight to the relationship dynamic that I endeavored to describe in my study.

Interviews

Interviews were scheduled and conducted with each college's vice president, noncredit administrator, and a credit faculty senate member. The interviews were semi-structured one-on-one, with a realist point of view which assured that my personal bias and my experience as a noncredit administrator did not interfere with the objective analysis I conducted. I relied on "using closely edited quotations" (Glesne, 2011, p. 244) to remain objective and avoid assumptions based on feelings that they "share the same way of looking at the world" (Spradley, 1979, p. 49). The interviews were preceded with an overview of the study and assurances of confidentiality and future member-checking. My questions focused on the influences that budget, legislative actions, and college decisions had on the self-confidence, morale, or empowerment noncredit administrators ascribed to within the marginalized environment of noncredit education (Rossman & Rallis, 2012). Although my experience led me to believe administrators advocate for

noncredit programs, I allowed my subjects to describe their experiences and monitored my line of questions. Therefore, my interview questions were semi-structured following the framework suggested in my interview protocol (Appendix D) which was developed to cover main research questions and sub-questions, grand tour questions that allowed for more insight, and follow-up questions imbedded throughout the interview which highlighted certain points and encouraged in-depth descriptions. The questions were designed to highlight the cultural perspective within the educational institution specific to noncredit education and the role of the administrators of noncredit programs in the context of an environment of limited resources (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). Following the interviews, I personally and immediately transcribed the interviews and remained in contact with the participants to ensure trustworthiness of the data included in my study (Glesne, 2011). The data gathered from my informants provided the framework of determining the culture I analyzed ethnographically (Spradley, 1979). The electronic transcription was downloaded and kept on my laptop computer and was password protected. A copy was kept in a password protected portable hard drive that I kept in my office. ATLAS.ti was the coding tool I utilized to code interview data into patterns related to student success, credit influences, integrity, innovation, and other related categories that will be evident in the transcriptions.

Data Analysis

Data analysis is the bridge between intangible ideas plus assumptions and the tangible material that makes the report credible (Glesne 2011). Rossman and Rallis indicate that “data analysis is the process of bringing order, structure, and meaning to the mass of collected data” (p. 273, 2012), which I followed by writing memos and

interviewing to obtain data for this ethnographic case study of noncredit administrators. I looked for themes throughout the process which I reviewed analytically with the data from interviews and previous data such as literature review. I evaluated the semantic relationships extracted from interview data and analyzed the content to form a sense of domains described by Spradley (1979) as “larger units of cultural knowledge” (p. 94) which, although I did not use as a part of any subsequent interviews to save time, I organized domains and filtered them to create themes. By reviewing field notes and memos regularly I simultaneously analyzed my existing data as I gathered new data (Creswell, 2012). I used a continuous iterative and progressive method of analyzing domains, themes, statements, and words to examine relationships and commonalities within the data.

Preliminary Data Analysis

My initial background in noncredit administration focused my attention to begin with preliminary codes involving credit versus noncredit ideas, as well as with codes related to enrollment management. In community colleges, credit encompasses mostly courses qualifying as transferrable to universities and leading to degree attainment; whereas, noncredit courses include those courses not used for transfer and focus more on basic skills, English as a second language, and short-term vocational courses. The ideas faculty members had and the academic cultural perspective regarding these two varied systems were a primary focus of my study. Starting with a preliminary code helped to organize the data from the start and encouraged data management (Glesne, 2011). I wrote memos to myself which included information I obtained as well as reflections of my thoughts as I analyzed the information during preliminary procedures such as

responses to interview arrangements, and gatekeeper interaction, which encouraged and captured thoughts as they occurred (Glesne, 2011; Rossman & Rallis, 2012). Themes from literature review drove the types of interview questions I used and created a focus base during my review of data. In this manner preliminary data analysis guided the research process and analysis.

Early Data Analysis/Coding

The way I interpreted initial data guided how the interviews were used to process and organize further data as an iterative process. I used the written memos and analyzed them to develop coding themes. I used an open coding strategy and developed major categories towards axial coding and identified central themes (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). This information provided a filtering vision that was then used to formulate a more directed strategy for interviewing and further data gathering. I transcribed the semi-structured interviews of my subjects personally while maintaining confidentiality and kept the data secured with password protection on my personal laptop and appropriately backed up on a secure portable hard drive. Utilizing ATLAS.ti as the tool to code the interview data, I reviewed and continually analyzed the data to show relationships (Glesne, 2011). My data was available to be completely reviewed by member checking with the participants. I did not find it necessary to conduct secondary interviews although participants were advised and willing to participate.

Thematic Data Analysis/Developing Networks

The evaluation process that directed my research was an iterative process, arising from my initial ideas, assumptions, and personal experience. Through the analysis of written memos, reorganization of coding, and review of data, the framework of my

research was tightened to well defined themes that truthfully addressed my research questions. As coding was an evolving process (Glesne, 2011), it was consistently reviewed and developed to include as many themes that arose to later drill down by networking to the more specific subjects targeted in the final analysis. My analysis followed Creswell's (2012) recommendation of a six-step process to prepare and organize data for analysis, explore and code the data, build descriptions and themes from the codes, represent and report the qualitative findings, interpret the findings, and validate the accuracy of the findings. I focused on the evidence arising from the data and recoded as needed to propose compelling themes which guided the research report.

Interpretation

The analysis of information led to the foundation of the theme and theory of the report and was the basis for the conclusions that are ultimately described. The literature, data review, and interviews were interpreted into "something that makes sense to others" (Rossman & Rallis, 2012, p. 284) and into a "larger portrait of what was learned" (Creswell, 2012, p. 473). This required reflection of the entire process and understanding of the information in the context it was obtained. Using what was heard, seen, reviewed, and coded with my personal unbiased viewpoint was the goal of this report. "Developing rapport and eliciting information" (Spradley, 1979, p. 78) was the first step in the ethnographic interview process which led to authenticating data (Ambert, Adler, Adler, & Detzner, 1995) that established accuracy in the findings and presented valid results (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012; Creswell, 2012; Glesne, 2011). Offering the availability of scheduling follow up interviews and reviewing transcripts allowed for appropriate

member checking assuring that information and data acquired from the interviews was accurate.

Roles of the Researcher

Background

I have been the lead administrator for our college's noncredit programs for two years, and I have been working as an administrator for over eight years. Moreover, I have been involved in local and statewide advocacy representing noncredit programs and I have met many colleagues from other colleges. The experience and interaction I have had with noncredit administrators reveals a culture of passion and commitment to the students served and the programs provided through noncredit education, especially when compared to credit programs.

Since I am an administrator in charge of a large noncredit program, I am involved with enrollment management by working with the Vice President of Instruction. In my experience, I have found I must make certain decisions based on parameters placed on me by my administration while working within budget constraints. I experience issues that seem directly related to noncredit independently of the college as a whole. Through this research I plan to document how other successful programs operate their noncredit enrollment management with details related to the challenges that noncredit administrators must face in the process.

Personal Assumptions

One of the distinctions of the noncredit program we (noncredit administrators, faculty members, and staff) recognize is that the noncredit program continually has to advocate for itself at our respective colleges and districts and at the state level. This is

based on my observations collaborating with noncredit staff personally and through electronic discussions. We have frequently shared our experiences regarding our competition with the credit program. Through my study, I researched noncredit administrators and their experiences with enrollment management. My role as a noncredit administrator was challenging as I conducted my research without exhibiting or reporting in a biased fashion. This is why I monitored my role by being purposeful in my research and focused on the research as opposed to focusing on the presumed findings. I performed a realistic ethnography (Creswell, 2012) to further inhibit my influence on participants during interviews and observations, or any interactions during my research.

Personal Connection

The noncredit program I work with is one of the top fifteen in noncredit full-time equivalent student (FTES) counts in the state (CCCCO, 2013), and I reviewed three other community college noncredit programs that fall within the same category in Southern California. I took time to research the structure of the noncredit programs as they fit in the other college organizations to avoid any assumptions I had based on the organizational structure of the program I have worked in. This was part of the comprehensive description of the cultural setting for each of the colleges I used in my case study.

Safeguards

I have had interaction with several colleges during my career as a noncredit administrator and I have connected with several peers in this role. After I researched college information and selected the participants for my ethnographic case study, I was certain to consider my role as a noncredit administrator, colleague, and advocate of

noncredit education as I made contact with the colleges and participants of my study. I emphasized my role as student and researcher. These defined roles facilitated a non-biased approach to my research. I conducted my interviews in my participants' offices or colleges to avoid any peer or colleague dialog that may occur if the interviews were held in a less formal or neutral location. I purposely made certain that my role as an advocate for noncredit programs was not evident and the participants of my research were not influenced to allow me to decisively obtain information in an unbiased manner.

Summary

The purpose of this ethnographic case study was to develop and present an overview of the culture and environment that noncredit program administrators must work in as they carry out their enrollment management responsibilities. The multi-site case study highlighted noncredit programs with large FTES with a convenience sampling to account for the time and resource limitations yet allow for ease of member checking and follow up. Semi-structured interviews and data gathering as well as my choice of noncredit administrators, their supervising administrators, along with credit academic senate faculty assured the trustworthiness of my study with defined triangulation of data sources. Throughout my research, I continued to identify my biases and assumptions to mitigate any lack of integrity of my study. These methods provided the compilation of information that offer current noncredit administrators, interested educators, and scholars access into the rarely reviewed environment and culture of noncredit education in terms of enrollment management.

CHAPTER 4 FINDINGS

Introduction

This multiple, instrumental, bounded case study (Creswell, 2012) was developed as an ethnographic review of the environmental and cultural influences noncredit administrators contend with as they make enrollment management decisions. Three noncredit programs were chosen primarily based on their size and location, and secondarily on their individual college structure. The colleges' noncredit programs were all within the top 15 noncredit FTES count in California (CCCCO, 2013). Alpha College is part of large multi-district college system. Beta College is from a smaller multi-district system. Gamma College is from a single college district. Centering my interviews on three individuals at each college was a decision developed from my personal experience as a noncredit administrator and my historical interaction and knowledge of other noncredit programs as well as understanding community college organizational structures. The noncredit administrator, their supervising vice president, and the academic senate president of the college were the human subjects included this report. The study focused on the following research questions:

1. What institutional cultural factors shape enrollment management decisions among noncredit administrators in community colleges?
2. How do noncredit administrators contend with these factors in their decision making process?
3. How are the roles of noncredit administrators perceived within their institutional environment?

Background information presented in the review of literature (Chapter 2) describes the overall context related to noncredit education pertaining to its function within the California community college system. This context was the impetus in focusing on individual administrators of noncredit programs, their working environment, and the role they have in their college. Along with interviews of the noncredit administrators, input from their supervising administrators was obtained to expand the study of the program within the college's immediate environment. The academic senate president at each of the colleges was identified to provide another cultural perspective of noncredit within the curricular college environment. The data from these sources was further triangulated by including a comprehensive review of each of the colleges' Self-Study reports and their Educational Master Plan reports to compare with themes and categories gleaned from interview data.

In this chapter, I present by what means interview data was analyzed and categorized. The interview analysis is reviewed in various groupings to allow for different perspectives. I separate interviews by college to examine any potential relationship by institution. I also group interview results by the positions held by the human subjects selected for this research to observe relationships occurring by position. Information obtained from Alpha College, Beta College, and Gamma College is then reviewed by college and collectively as a group, followed by a similar review of the three colleges' Self-Study reports and Educational Master Plan reports.

Interview Data

The information obtained through the interview process provided interesting groupings of iterative categories, using domain analysis (Spradley, 1979) as a review of

the cultural knowledge presented by the human subjects participating in the study. This data presented distinct categories that were categorized based on their similarities and differences. As these cultural domains were filtered to themes, they were compiled and classified utilizing ATLAS.ti qualitative analysis and research software as well as Microsoft Excel tables into general categories in line with thematic data analysis (Creswell, 2012), with the descriptions noted in Table 4.1. By examining cultural domains, evaluating related comments, and looking at the context of statements, definite categorical themes were developed for further analysis. These categories were selected and defined as consistent themes based on a review and categorization of the content of the interview responses.

Table 4.1

Response Categories from Interviews and Descriptions

Category	Description
Adult Ed Leader	Highlights the importance of noncredit.
Community Relationship	Highlights work with the community.
Disproportion	Highlights difference between credit and noncredit.
Evidence	Highlights data collection.
Flexibility	Highlights uncertainty and flexibility in noncredit.
Growth	Highlights growth, expansion, and rebuilding of noncredit.
Integral	Highlights important or vital points of noncredit education.
Integration	Highlights working together, inclusion, collaboration, or cooperation with noncredit.
Minimalize	Highlights cuts, statements, recognition, or processes targeting noncredit.
Mission Shift	Highlights changes internally or statewide to the mission or processes affecting noncredit.
Multiple Responsibilities	Highlights varied assignments or work performed by noncredit staff.
Pathway	Highlights transitions or movements from noncredit to credit or workforce.
Reduction	Highlights specific reductions to noncredit.
Resources	Highlights physical resources or human resources, and budgetary resources that impact noncredit.
Student Services	Highlights student services with respect to noncredit.
Supportive	Highlights support for noncredit either externally or internally.

Focusing on these categories and the description assigned to them, the iterative process of breaking down instances of related ideas provided a specific compilation of data displayed in Table 4.2. Initial themes were reviewed and refined within the context of the comments made during the interviews by using ATLAS.ti software. The relationship between colleges and instances of categories was an obvious focus of my review. During the process of data review, I felt it was significant to review the relationship between positions and instances of categories. The instances are the references made to the categories during the interviews.

The data was coded by descriptive categories to provide a number of instances these categories were discussed during interviews. An inference may be made based on the data in Table 4.2, which shows that academic senate presidents provided 12 instances referring to integration with 9 of those instances attributed to Gamma College. This reveals that the category of integration (highlighting working together, inclusion, collaboration, or cooperation with noncredit) was an important category held by the academic senate president of Gamma College. Equally evident is that the data reveals administrators did not feel compelled to bring up the category of disproportion (highlighting difference between credit and noncredit) in their responses.

Table 4.2

Categorical Interview Instances by College and Position

	Alpha	Beta	Gamma	Ad	VP	AS
Community Relationship	1	3	2	1	3	2
Disproportion	4	4	5	0	5	8
Evidence	1	2	1	1	3	0
Flexibility	2	2	4	5	2	1
Growth	1	3	4	2	6	0
Integral	1	5	4	2	8	0
Integration	4	5	9	3	3	12
Minimalize	6	8	3	4	6	7
Mission Shift	4	6	0	2	5	3
Multiple Responsibilities	3	4	3	5	1	4
Pathway	4	4	1	4	3	2
Reduction	1	4	5	3	1	6
Resources	10	7	6	6	12	5
Student Services	4	2	3	2	6	1
Supportive	1	1	1	2	1	0

Interview Review

Interviews were conducted at three colleges obtaining information from three individuals from each of the colleges. Focusing on the primary research questions regarding the cultural setting that noncredit administrators function in, the factors

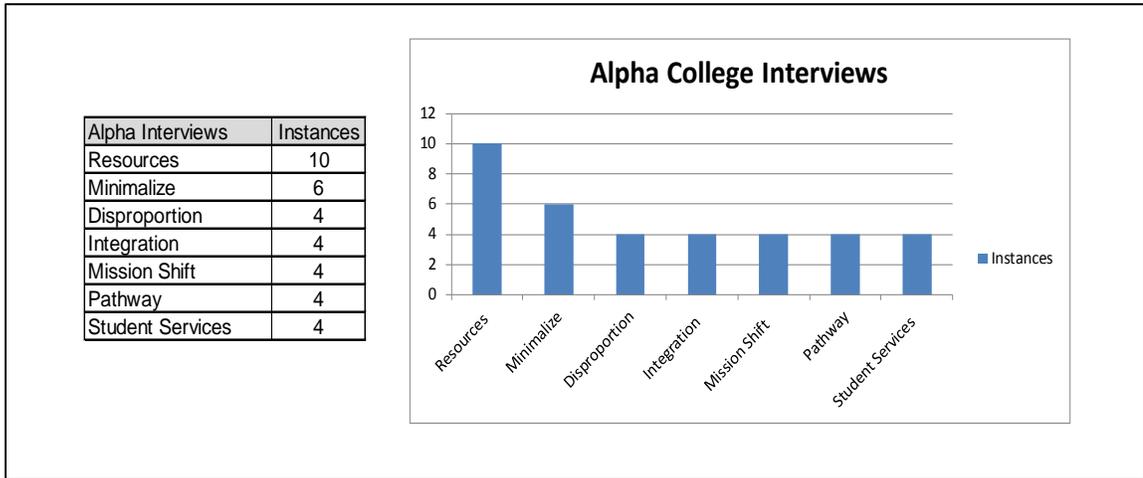
influencing their enrollment management decisions, and their roles within their college environments, I interviewed the noncredit administrator, the vice president supervising noncredit, and the academic senate president at each college. The semi-structured interview process provided an opportunity to obtain data which was broken into the categories presented in Table 4.1 utilizing theme analysis. As explained by Spradley (1979) “theme analysis involves a search for the relationships among domains and how they are linked to the culture as a whole” (p.94). The interview transcripts offer a perspective of the various individuals and colleges which, when broken down by data categories, provide a comprehensive description of the cultural environment challenging noncredit administrators. The interviews were reviewed and the responses were grouped by college and by interview positions (i.e., administrators, vice presidents, and academic senate presidents). This classification is a natural and logical sorting of categories that enhances the review process and presents the results in a holistic manner.

Common Categories

The common categories evident from interviews with Alpha College were resources, minimalize, disproportion, integration, mission shift, pathway, and student services. These categories appeared more times out of the 16 categories present in all the interviews as seen in Figure 4.1, which presents a list and graph of instances.

Figure 4.1

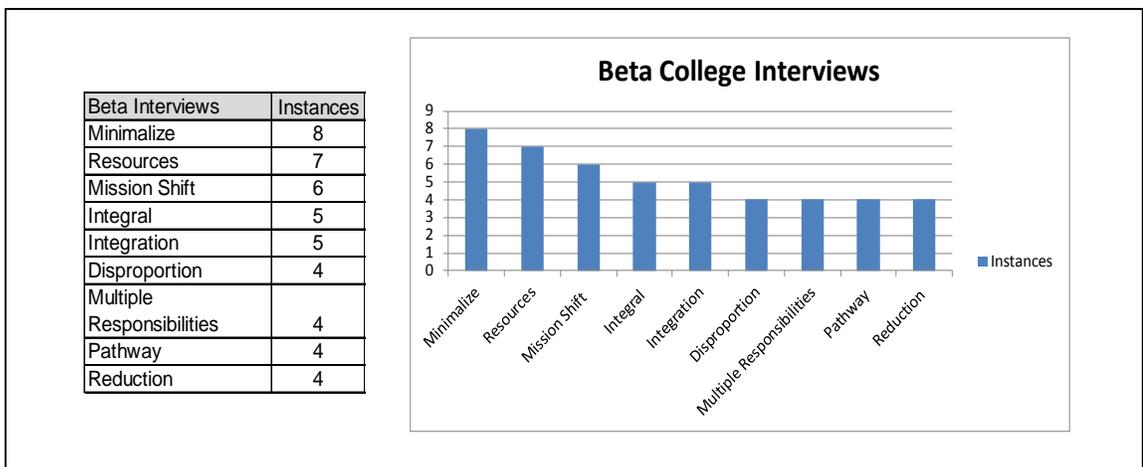
Alpha College Interview Categorical Instances



Beta College presented more instances of minimalize, resources, mission shift, integral, integration, disproportion, multiple responsibilities, pathway, and reduction as categories out of 16 identified in the interviews (Figure 4.2).

Figure 4.2

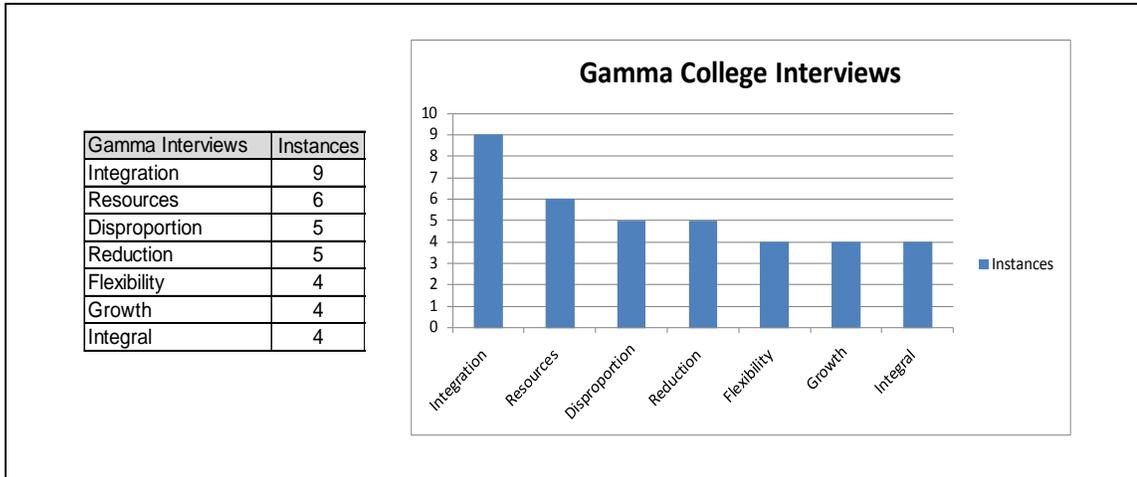
Beta College Interview Categorical Instances



Mission shift was a category that was not expressed during interviews with Gamma College. The top categories of the remaining 15 were integration, resources, disproportion, reduction, flexibility, growth, and integral as seen below in Figure 4.3.

Figure 4.3

Gamma College Interview Categorical Instances



The graphical presentations provide a quick view of categorical hierarchies at each of the colleges based on the interviews conducted.

A comparison of instances of the described categories resulting from the interview responses presented a possible relationship between the type of college structure and the focus of the answers. Instances mentioned exclusively at a single college were not included in this comparison; rather, a relationship between the colleges was examined by counting each time the instance was referred to by Alpha and Beta Colleges, Alpha and Gamma Colleges, Beta and Gamma College, and all colleges collectively. The top categories of disproportion, integration, minimalize, mission shift, pathway, and resources from interviews with Alpha College and Beta College are evident in Figure 4.4 with the total combined references of six.

Figure 4.4

Instances Occurring Multiple Times in Colleges

Categories	Alpha-Beta	Alpha-Gamma	Beta-Gamma	All
Disproportion	x	x	x	x
Integral			x	
Integration	x	x	x	x
Minimalize	x			
Mission Shift	x			
Pathway	x			
Reduction			x	
Resources	x	x	x	x
Totals	6	3	5	3

The categories Alpha College and Beta College share highlight differences between noncredit and credit, statements against noncredit, changes in policy, the transitions of noncredit students, and the importance of resources. Most of these categories are related to challenges. Interestingly, Alpha College and Beta College are both multi-district colleges which could indicate the additional challenge faced by noncredit programs working in a multi-district structure as opposed to a single college district. Gamma College is a single district college which had interview categories, namely disproportion, integration, and resources corresponding to both Alpha College and Beta College, and the categories of integral and reduction corresponding separately to Beta College.

A review of common instances was made by comparing all three colleges based on the top categories in figure 4.5 highlighting integration, resources, and disproportion as the only top categories collectively referred to by all three colleges.

Figure 4.5

Common Instances Among Colleges

Alpha Interviews	Instances	Beta Interviews	Instances	Gamma Interviews	Instances
Resources	10	Minimalize	8	Integration	9
Minimalize	6	Resources	7	Resources	6
Disproportion	4	Mission Shift	6	Disproportion	5
Integration	4	Integral	5	Reduction	5
Mission Shift	4	Integration	5	Flexibility	4
Pathway	4	Disproportion	4	Growth	4
Student Services	4	Multiple Responsibilities	4	Integral	4
		Pathway	4		
		Reduction	4		

The common instances among colleges identify a related hierarchy of issues that the colleges considered important based on all of the interviews. Noncredit administrators, their supervisors, and the academic senate presidents mentioned the instances as they relate to noncredit, helping to form the institutional cultural perspective.

During interviews, comments regarding integration with noncredit education included “work with....and...align,” “we work more closely,” “cooperative campus culture,” and “we’re much more integrated” which were statements related to the positive aspects of recognizing current collaborative work with noncredit programs. Lack of integration statements of “not sure colleges are aligned,” and “trying to build more bridges” reveal a less certain common direction of full cooperation. More focused comments were “interfaces with the chairs...and faculty,” “senate represents all faculty,” and “a unified curriculum” noting integration between noncredit and credit faculty.

Comments related to the category resources included “loads are different,” “more noncredit faculty hired,” “fewer full-time faculty,” and “hire more full-time noncredit people” which highlight the human resources needed to provide adequate representation and maintain the work responsibilities faculty are expected to do outside of the

classroom. Financial resources were evident in statements including, “funds...to be more secure,” “money...from the feds,” “pay improvement,” and “centralized budgeting funds” all pointing towards the importance of having an established source of funding required for planning. The need for physical resources was also exemplified in excerpts such as “getting room,” “allocation for classroom space,” “hard getting space,” and “we need facilities” which demonstrate a priority for noncredit administrators.

Some examples of disproportion comments include “25 hour load...as opposed to...a 12 hour load,” “fewer full-time faculty,” “release time assignment was taken,” “different minimum quals [*sic*],” “more full-time faculty,” and “pay improvement” which provide an insight to the differences in faculty responsibilities. The load difference is identifying the difference in classroom teaching as it relates to time faculty may spend outside of the classroom attending meetings and planning. Pay improvements note a tiered system in paying credit versus noncredit instructors. The need for full-time faculty points to the participation and assistance for the program planning by full-timers as support for the administrators when it comes to governance.

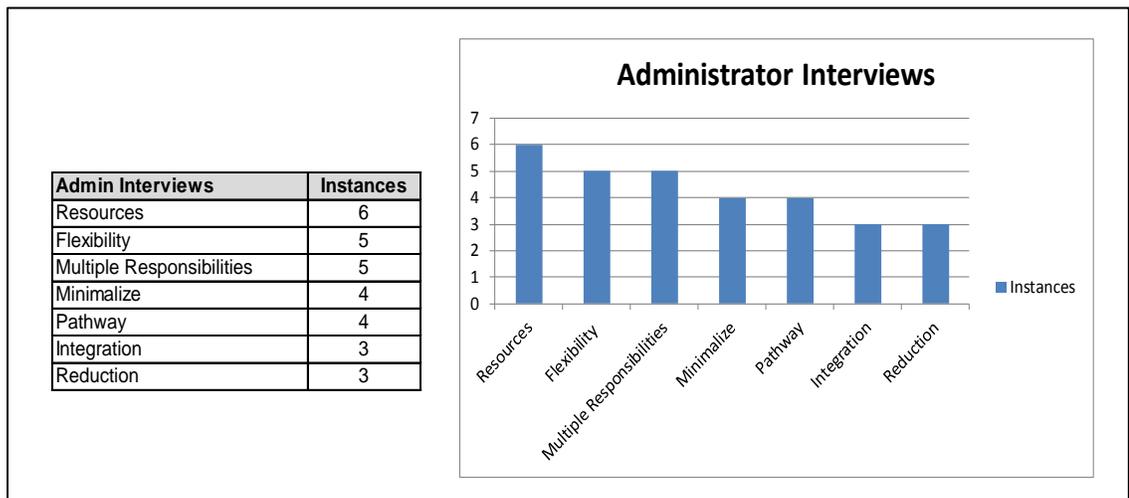
The interview data were additionally reviewed by comparing individual responses by each of the human subjects interviewed. Administrators from all three colleges, vice presidents from the three colleges, as well as the academic senate presidents from each college were grouped together to examine any relationship between the data from responses based on positions. The top instances from each group are presented individually in Figure 4.6, Figure 4.7, and Figure 4.8. The graphical presentation of the data provides a quick review of the number of instances each category was presented in the interviews by each position interviewed.

Noncredit Administrators

Administrators responded with seven top categories including; resources, flexibility, multiple responsibilities, minimalize, pathway, integration, and reduction (Figure 4.6).

Figure 4.6

Administrator Categorical Instances



Noncredit administrators discussed issues related to resources by referring to spaces as, “our biggest challenge” and “moving to centralized budgeting funds” as a goal. These statements illustrate the difficulty of securing fixed resources such as classrooms and highlight the competition of being included in general college funding. These resource issues exemplify the continuing struggles noncredit administrators must endure as they manage their programs.

Interview responses discussing flexibility included “there’s a flexibility with noncredit being positive attendance and open enrollment,” and “in noncredit our populations are very mobile” which both exemplify the constant attention required in enrollment management responsibilities.

Statements referencing the category of multiple responsibilities were stated in examples such as “I go to a lot of meetings,” and “see that faculty we hire are qualified...we are compliant with education code and Title 5” which highlight the demands and duties noncredit administrators are charged with as they sustain their programs integrity.

Noncredit administrators included statements related to the category of minimize such as “credit has first priority on the room reservation,” and “noncredit folks are basically separated entirely” which provide a clear picture of the hierarchical institutional culture present at their campuses.

The category entitled pathway was discussed by indicating “that students can move into college programs,” and “to create a link for students to bridge their gap into credit and make them successful” which provide an understanding that noncredit administrators view their programs as definite conduits for higher education.

Integration is a category represented by comments such as, “we certainly interface with the chairs of the department and faculty members,” and “I’m not sure all of the business processes that the different colleges are aligned...get noncredit practitioners really thinking” which note the work involved in working within the institution and being part of a larger educational process.

The category of reduction was presented by statements like “we had to reduce our workforce,” and “we also got rid of the kinds of classes that...appeared to be avocational” which are clearly indicative of the immediate impact imposed on noncredit programs.

In general many of the statements reflect the array of details administrators work with involving multiple issues and challenges including obtaining adequate resources to deal with the changing environment, responding to external requirements, servicing the need for students to succeed, working with staff and the community, as well as dealing with reductions to the program.

Specific responses by noncredit administrators to questions about why noncredit should be offered at community colleges included Alpha College stating, “a majority of our...students...are under-prepared in English, Math, ESL, understanding the academic language and reading...so we need to create a link for students to bridge their gap into credit and make them successful.” The response from Beta College regarding noncredit offered at community colleges was “we provide a vital service to this community...it’s an entry point for immigrants and...we are the first contact they have with any institution of a higher education...because students can make the progress to move from noncredit to credit easily.” Gamma College’s response was “because it targets adult learners...to provide opportunities for adult learners who are...not ready for college level coursework.” Noncredit administrators identified a unified response to the reason for noncredit education based on the need to provide education to the perhaps the most needy in their respective communities and prepare them for higher learning.

Responses relative to the roles in administering the noncredit programs provided the following comments from Alpha College, “we...meet students where they’re at because students are all over the place with...very low reading levels...we’re trying to figure out what pathway do they fall into.” The noncredit administrator from Beta College said, “I have worked just about under all of the academic areas in noncredit...I’m

doing counseling and facilities and...security...it's been gradually expanding.” The response from the administrator at Gamma College was “my role is to solve problems...assure there's a reasonable budget...see that faculty are qualified...that we are compliant with education code and Title 5...align with the bargaining agreement...align with the college...so it's a big list.” The responsibilities related to the position of the noncredit administrator are varied and encompasses many of the duties required of a variety of department heads and administrators of an entire campus or college.

Noncredit administrators were questioned regarding the impact of budget on enrollment management and the administrator from Alpha College replied by declaring that, “we had to reduce...the state went under a huge budget crisis...so we reduced our classes. And that did hurt...we moved to off sites...we had to go with the college allocation....They were reducing....We had to reduce as well.” The response from Beta College was,

We get funding for our programs and we're supposed to keep track of that and spend our own money. When we depend on categorical funding...[we] run the risk of one day not getting the categorical letter saying that you get the money...years ago we suffered a substantial loss of revenue....We had to reduce our workforce.

The response from Gamma College focused more on the process in saying,

The working group for enrollment management...involves the president, the vice presidents...CFO, CEO, CIO, CTO...and I'm there from noncredit....So it starts

with a sense of are we in growth mode...what was our funded base and then what do we think the growth is going to be or the cuts.

A complete level of involvement from the noncredit administrators with budget issues is revealed from the responses. The budget drives enrollment in all colleges and it appears that in a single district college, Gamma College, the inclusion to college budget matters is more evident.

Questions relating to the support from higher level administrators or authorities provided the following insight from the noncredit administrator of Alpha College, who stated,

The next administrator above me, which is the person I report to...[has] always been very supportive of how we grow and with how we manage the program...We do get money for faculty salaries, a little bit for student workers, [and] a little bit for supplies.

The discussion from Beta College revealed, "most administrators are not knowledgeable enough about noncredit...College credit it's perceived as more important than noncredit...I think district wide the culture is that when it comes down to saving programs, credit has the lead." The noncredit administrator from Gamma College indicated, "I have good support from the president....He knows that we really have done our best to operate with integrity....I think that's important to ensure that the board and the president don't ever feel vulnerable or surprised." Although two of the three responses indicated that there was support, the context of the support implied subordination how Alpha College gets "a little bit" of funds and the way Gamma College

did not want to cross lines with the board or president. Beta College expressed a volatile level of support directly related to the budget and economy.

In response to questions regarding the future of the noncredit program either specifically or in general, the noncredit administrator from Alpha College stated, “I see it growing with AB86...I think we have to create packages and pathways for them...the business of learning is changing and we have to change as well...it’s a perfect storm. It’s great time to redefine education.” Beta College’s noncredit administrator replied,

I think there’s room for growth...I think some of these areas that were taken away...that are not enhance funded need to come back because there is a population that would really benefit from those programs. And we had to get rid of them because we weren’t producing the same amount of reimbursement.

The reply from the administrator from Gamma College revealed, “I think how much it expands depends on AB86....I think noncredit will continue to grow...pretty much proportionate to the college...improve in its integration and pathways to credit...I think it’s a very positive future.”

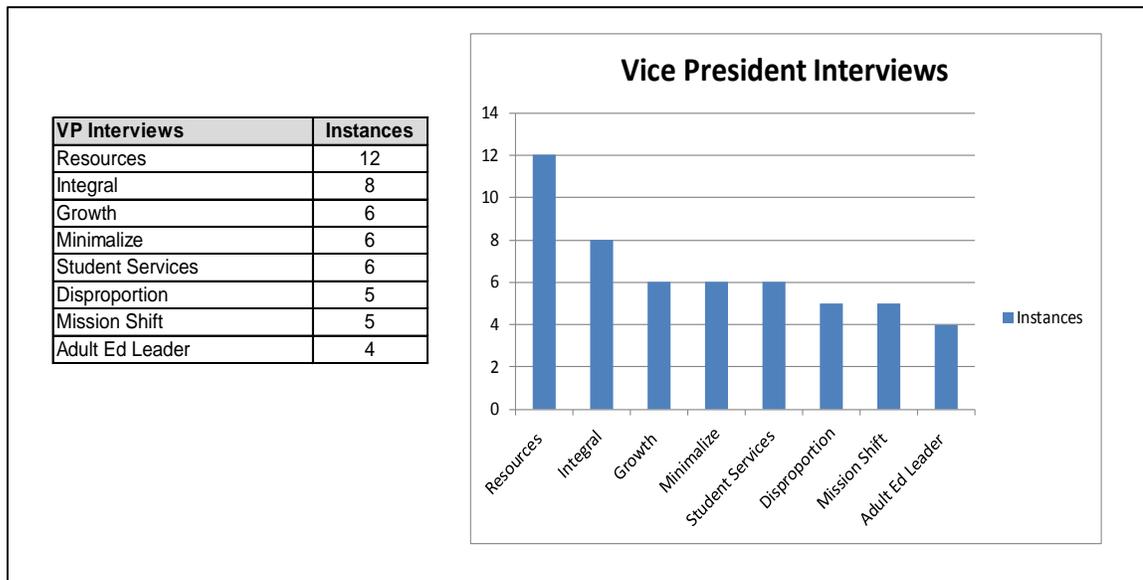
The noncredit administrators see a positive future for noncredit with growth as a common thread dependent on recent legislative movement to organize adult education through AB86, which is referring to Assembly Bill 86, a project funded by the state to coordinate planning for adult education in California.

Vice Presidents

Vice presidents referenced 16 categories, with the top eight being resources, integral, growth, minimalize, student services, disproportion, mission shift and adult ed leader (Figure 4.7).

Figure 4.7

Vice President Categorical Instances



The vice presidents provided statements referencing the resources category as it pertains to noncredit education by statements such as, “how do we allocate the FTEF in into the right areas,” and “we need more facilities” which deal with the human resources of allocating full-time equivalent faculty as well as the physical resources of space for noncredit.

Their statements in regard to integral as a category included, “it’s a point of entry in higher education,” and “we are the primary provider of adult education programs” highlighting the positive aspects of noncredit education as an integral program within the college.

The mention of growth is included in statements such as, “there’s never been a conversation about growing one over the other,” and “I see the program growing in specific areas,” which imply a commitment on the one hand to grow collectively with

other programs in the college and the other statement to look at targeted growth within the noncredit program.

References that the vice presidents made to the category of minimize included, “a lot of colleges quite honestly have avoided hiring permanent noncredit faculty...[and] often have an ‘us and them’ attitude.” Referring to hiring noncredit faculty, a vice president stated, “not prioritizing this high enough...[implies] that they didn’t value it.” These statements are examples of the hierarchy within the institution and the secondary value placed on noncredit educational programs.

Discussion of student services as they relate to noncredit was presented by statements like, “we do have robust student services in terms of counseling,” and “we had to set up a whole secondary system to support the noncredit students.” These statements emphasize the importance of student services for noncredit students which at times must be specialized to meet their specific needs.

The vice presidents made statements referencing the category of disproportion such as, “noncredit instructors have a 25 hour a week assignment as opposed to let’s say English which has a 12 hour,” and “the most obvious difference is that in noncredit we typically have much fewer full-time faculty than in credit.” The differences were discussed in terms of the work that is involved based on the increased time noncredit instructors must spend in class, which limits their support for administrative work and curricular preparation.

The category of mission shift was presented in statements such as, “the scale of noncredit will be increased...it’s gonna [*sic*] need a whole different kind of study and approach,” and “I see less of a focus on apportionment and FTES generation...and more

of a focus on completion,” which imply a structural change assigned to noncredit administrators.

The vice presidents made reference to the category adult ed leader in statements like, “we are the primary provider of adult education programs,” and “we do offer the [underprepared] students coming in and academically deficient, noncredit opportunities.” These statements reflect a level of pride that vice presidents take in their noncredit programs as it relates to the opportunities afforded to adult learners.

The statements provided by vice presidents seem to indicate a broader planning vision in working with noncredit programs to make sure services will be available and their statements highlight institutional practices that either limit or support noncredit education.

More specific responses by vice presidents expressing their opinions for the success of their noncredit programs are exemplified by statements the Alpha College vice president made noting, “we do offer...academically deficient, noncredit opportunities. We have CalWORKs programs where some of the students come in deficient and need noncredit....We also offer...learning labs...[which provide] an opportunity for students to enroll in tutoring.” The Beta College vice president said,

We take a lot of pride in our noncredit program....It’s an integral part of the college. The college supports it very strongly...it’s inherent in the college’s mission....We are a statewide leader when it comes to the career development college preparation certificate for completion.

According to the Gamma College vice president, “serving the population...is important to us....We have historically had access to adult education...we’ve been able to build that

into the curriculum and into the program.” The vice presidents recognize the service that noncredit provides the community in terms of providing education to the adults that are the most needed.

The vice presidents responded to questions regarding the difference they experienced between credit and noncredit. The vice president from Alpha College stated, When we have programs in noncredit actually on campus they’re part of the general course offerings. They go in the catalog...they have to fight for hours as well too. They have to adhere to all aspects of the contract....A lot of colleges quite honestly have avoided hiring permanent noncredit faculty, part of it is because they don’t necessarily fit...and other because there’s an inherent snobbism.

Beta College’s vice president stated,

I don’t think they realize the variety of issues that administrators in noncredit have to deal with...[because in] noncredit typically an administrator will deal with faculty issues, they’ll deal with instructional issues, they’ll deal with student discipline, they’ll deal with community sites...basically [they] deal with everything...There’s a lot more variety in the responsibilities of the noncredit administrator than in the credit administrator.

In response to differences, the Gamma College vice president indicated,

The differences aren’t in what I do but how [I] do it. The care and support it takes to get noncredit students through an increasingly automated system...because it’s all positive attendance and it all comes in later...[is] really a matter of trusting

the folks that are doing the work to target what they are going to hit and let them run.

The vice presidents note a wide array of responsibilities that are part of their planning and daily work in considering student needs, scheduling, resource availability, and other problems as they oversee noncredit programs.

A question regarding enrollment management issues with noncredit was posed to the vice presidents. Alpha College's vice president responded,

We've gone into an era now where there's more shared governance...and faculty want more to say in the distribution of hours...and that probably doesn't go well for noncredit because I could say there's an 'us and them' perception....We need to maintain our goals for noncredit as well and I pretty much handle that outside the mix.

The Beta College vice president stated,

We have a pretty substantial budget...so our enrollment management [is based on a criteria of] 20 students per class. Where our enrollment management is obviously much different from the credit side [because] everything we do in noncredit is on positive attendance...In noncredit it's pretty common to say that students vote with their feet and if they don't like the instruction that you're providing they'll stop showing up.

Gamma College's vice president stated,

I'm the one doing the allocation....I sit with the president long enough to confirm this is what I'm going to do, but there's never been a conversation about growing

one [over] the other....We're realigning a lot of things but it has not hurt or threatened noncredit at all.

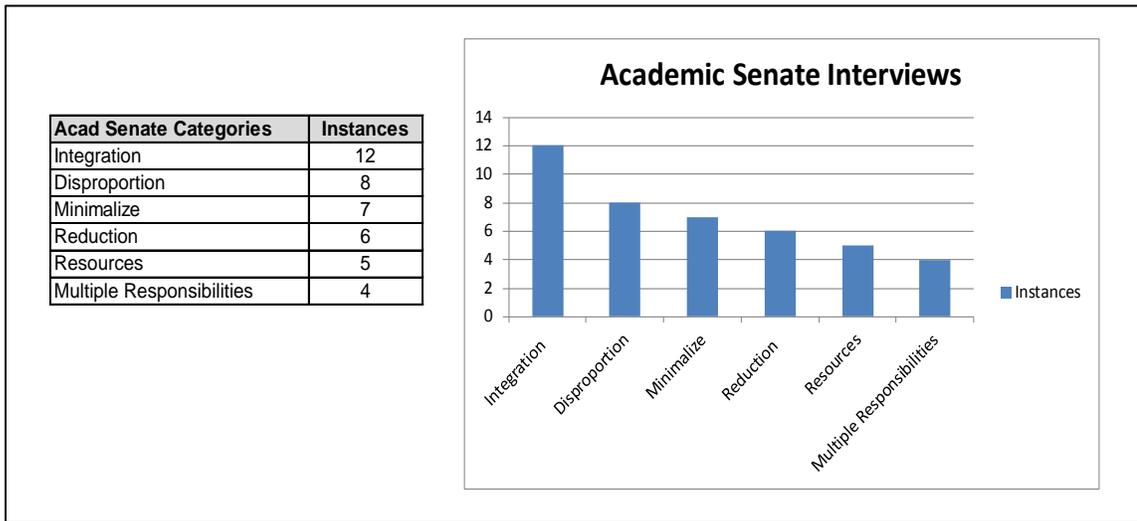
The vice presidents indicate the intricacies and differences in noncredit enrollment management which create a difficulty in aligning completely with college-wide structures. The general control of enrollment management is under the purview of the vice presidents.

Academic Senate Presidents

Interviews with the academic senate presidents revealed a breakdown of six top categories from 12 that were discussed (Figure 4.8).

Figure 4.8

Academic Senate Categorical Instances



The top categories extracted from interviews with academic senate presidents were integration, disproportion, minimalize, reduction, resources, and multiple responsibilities.

Integration was presented in the following statements, “there’s good communication with credit and noncredit,” and “we do seem to have a cooperative

campus culture.” Academic senate presidents reported good integration between noncredit and credit programs.

The references to the category of disproportion was evident in, “until this year the department chair of the noncredit program was attending senate meetings...his release time assignment was taken from him,” and “noncredit...doesn’t count against the faculty obligation number.” These provide examples of how noncredit can be reduced in various ways that would or more probably could not be done with credit programs or faculty.

Discussion regarding the category of minimize included, “I think most credit faculty don’t know or don’t appreciate or don’t understand that we even have a noncredit program here,” and “I always hear about noncredit. But...when your students don’t always self-identify themselves...you don’t always know where your students came from.” The noncredit program is at times referenced with a lack of importance.

The category of reduction was referred to in statements like, “it was the state saying this is no longer going to be funded,” and “having the older adult program for one being removed from what could be funded,” which showed how immediately impacted noncredit programs were when budget cuts were imposed.

The discussion regarding the category of resources was noted by the academic senate presidents in their statements, “we’d like to hire more full-time noncredit people,” and “reducing the number of hours that are required for a noncredit instructor.” Their emphasis on resource issues were more focused on the faculty side of human resources.

The academic senate presidents provided examples of references to multiple responsibilities including, “if faculty is teaching a 24 hour load...if you’re non-teaching

how are you supposed to manage curriculum, supervise or support students,” and “enrollment management for noncredit is handled by the dean.”

These statements provide examples of the amount of work that is funneled to the noncredit administrator which is different from credit responsibilities.

The direction of the academic senate presidents seemed to focus on faculty issues, including the amount of work that was being put on adjunct faculty and a need to decrease work load and increase the amount of full-time faculty. The lack of awareness of noncredit programs in the faculty arena appeared to be evident as well.

The responses to questions regarding the influence of noncredit programs as expressed by the academic senate presidents are presented by each individual college.

The Alpha College academic senate president stated,

The specifics of the noncredit program, the process they do serving their students, what courses they offer, are not readily available to me....the noncredit program is broad....they're not the major focus in their programs and what they do are not announced or clear....we don't really know the specifics and the courses of another program...I don't really see the sequence of the math courses. I hear of them. I'm more familiar with my own department's sequence of courses.

The response made by the senate president of Beta College was,

I can't see where they...have a direct effect...You can be a faculty member here and not really see a lot of the effects of noncredit....I always hear about noncredit....I do hear more about some of the things that are going on with noncredit...how many students are coming through, how we're trying to build more bridges...matriculating to the credit level.

The response from Gamma College's senate president was, "Noncredit can give you a flexibility that credit may not give you. You can respond more quickly to the needs of people in your area...as a faculty member, I can tailor the solution to what's necessary."

The question regarding noncredit was difficult to answer for the academic senate presidents based on their conceived lack of knowledge of the program, although all of the academic senate presidents indicated working for their colleges over 15 years each. This can be interpreted as a lack of visibility of the noncredit programs, or a lack of motivation to learn about noncredit by faculty at their colleges.

Questions related to improvements, change, or the future of noncredit programs provided the following response from the senate president of Alpha College who stated, "There's going to be such a tremendous need to shift some of the credit courses to noncredit...especially in math and possibly in English." Additionally, Alpha College's senate president shared, "We have to work on implementing some you know, change...we're already looking into how we transition students from noncredit to credit." Beta College's senate president stated,

We teach algebra here for credit, there is also Algebra taught on the noncredit side, so I think that's probably something the state will start looking at in the future because the apportionment that's paid by the state is different.

Further, Beta's senate president noted,

Basic skills, transfer, and job training is what our mission is and so we had to, that's kinda where we are moving...so there has been a little bit of a shift of our mission with budget cuts and forcing us to run a little more efficiently.

The response to questions regarding change or the future of noncredit by the Gamma College academic senate president was,

We hope it's robust. We hope that it continues to provide services and offerings that fit on the noncredit side...I think the full-time hire is one area...[where] we work more closely with noncredit than we used to...We do seem to have a cooperative campus culture.

The academic senate presidents expressed ideas related to increased collaboration between credit and noncredit when discussing improvements, change, or the future. The focus was primarily driven by budget and legislation. Either way the cooperative climate in all three colleges was noted to be shifting.

In response to questions regarding differences in credit and noncredit faculty, and general equality between credit and noncredit resulted in the following statements from the Alpha College senate president,

OK I don't understand this, if a faculty member is teaching a 24 hour load and a full-time assignment here is 30 hours teaching or 35 hours, if you're not teaching, how are you supposed to manage curriculum, supervise or support students in their program, create new curriculum, work with other departments on this transition from noncredit to credit?

The Beta College senate president stated,

When you lose a lot of faculty on that side that just means more work for them. I mean they've got a handful of full-time people and a lot of part-time people and there's a lot of work that goes on in writing curriculum and managing schedules and courses.

The Beta College senate president continued, “If the state says you need to hire ten faculty to make it to that magic faculty obligation number, that’s ten faculty on the credit side.” The senate president of Gamma College mentioned,

The economic part of it is the FON doesn’t require the college to hire full-time noncredit professors, so we have to apply that pressure...If you have a full-time person at the other end of it...we know what they’re supposed to know and they’ve been doing all the paperwork for curriculum and outcomes to make it consistent.

The academic senate presidents referenced work load difference in the amount of time required to teach face-to-face in a classroom (work load) which is significantly more for noncredit faculty than credit faculty. The faculty obligation number (FON) is the legislatively required minimum number of full-time faculty members that a community college is required to have staffed (noncredit faculty do not count towards this requirement). This was an important aspect to academic senate presidents in noting the amount of work and support that is required to manage, create, and maintain curriculum, all of which is done outside of the classroom.

All Interviewees

A review of common top categories that were discussed by all of the interviewees compared by positions (see Figure 4.9) or by interviewees.

Figure 4.9

Common Instances Among Interviewees

Admin Categories	Instances	VP Categories	Instances	Acad Senate Categories	Instances
Resources	6	Resources	12	Integration	12
Flexibility	5	Integral	8	Disproportion	8
Multiple Responsibilities	5	Growth	6	Minimalize	7
Minimalize	4	Minimalize	6	Reduction	6
Pathway	4	Student Services	6	Resources	5
Integration	3	Disproportion	5	Multiple Responsibilities	4
Reduction	3	Mission Shift	5		
		Adult Ed Leader	4		

The common instances among interviewees revealed minimalize and resources as the only two categories referenced across all three interview groups. References to the categories by the interview subjects broken down by position and category provide a more individual perspective.

References made regarding the category minimalize by the noncredit administrator included, “we’re part of the college, [and] we even suffer negatively even more because the interests of the credit side come first.” The vice president referred to the category of minimalize by saying, “[our college is] tempted to grow in credit only and let noncredit languish...I don’t feel like the priority has changed.” The academic senate president discussed minimalize by saying, “noncredit...doesn’t count against the faculty obligation number. Which means the institution is being generous” in the context of hiring noncredit faculty.

Examples of instances of resources include the noncredit administrator saying, “getting room. That’s our biggest challenge.” The vice president stated, “the most obvious difference is that in noncredit we typically have much fewer full-time faculty than in credit,” when discussing resources. The academic senate president focused on the

category of resources by referring to, “reducing the number of hours that are required for a noncredit instructor,” as a way to free up time or resources to assist with general faculty responsibilities.

All interviewees expressed an understanding of the challenges that noncredit must navigate through. The administrators seemed more focused on immediate challenges, vice presidents on global changes, and academic senate presidents on faculty issues.

Instances occurring multiple times with interviewees were reviewed to investigate any possible relationship between the interviewees based on their answers. The top categories of disproportion, integration, minimalize, multiple responsibilities, reduction, and resources were referred to in all of the interviews noted in the last column of Figure 4.10. Any of the top categories referenced by only one of the positions was not included.

Figure 4.10

Instances Occurring Multiple Times with Interviewees

Categories	Ad & VP	Ad & AS	VP & AS	All
Disproportion			x	
Integration		x		
Minimalize	x	x	x	x
Multiple Responsibilities		x		
Reduction		x		
Resources	x	x	x	x
Totals	2	5	3	2

The categories discussed by both the administrators (Ad) and the academic senate presidents (AS) had more common occurrences with five categories in common. The categories that were shared by administrators and academic senate presidents were integration, minimalize, multiple responsibilities, reduction, and resources. The focus of these categories as previously noted in Table 4.1 discuss the relationship between

noncredit and credit to cooperate, increase full-time faculty involvement, provide awareness of noncredit, and recognize a need for adequate resources.

Self-Study Data

Each community college prepares a Self-Study report for accreditation purposes which provides an in-depth presentation and review of all of the colleges' functions, spanning college budget processing, student services, facilities, curriculum and more. The information included in the Self-Study incorporates aspects of college's relationship with the community, their flexibility in providing educational services, the integral resources they offer, the multiple responsibilities each department owns, the description of services and resources, the pathways of education available to the community, the integration of their efforts, and the evidence for all of their statements. This information is vital to establishing a comprehensive presentation of the college environment. A review of the Self-Study was limited to the inclusion of noncredit programs in the context of the statement made or references made within the body of the report. A Self-Study report is prepared by all community colleges as preparation for accreditation visits. The most recent Self-Study report for each college was reviewed for this report with references excluded to maintain confidentiality of the colleges and subjects that participated in this study.

Each of the three colleges' Self-Study reports revealed information that was compiled and classified utilizing ATLAS.ti qualitative analysis and research software as well as Microsoft Excel tables using the same categorical instance descriptions used in Table 4.1 to provide consistency. The specific compilation of categories is displayed in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3

Categorical Self-Study Instances by College

	Alpha	Beta	Gamma
Community Relationship	4	5	0
Disproportion	1	1	0
Evidence	0	2	10
Flexibility	6	2	0
Growth	0	0	0
Integral	9	13	12
Integration	8	29	5
Minimalize	0	0	0
Mission Shift	0	0	0
Multiple Responsibilities	1	3	3
Pathway	0	3	10
Reduction	0	0	0
Resources	2	7	0
Student Services	4	2	3
Supportive	0	0	11

The data was coded by descriptive categories to provide a number of instances these categories appeared in the Self-Study reports based on references to noncredit programs primarily.

Self-Study Review

The Self-Study report is developed with the goal of including “reference to evidence of achieved results, evaluation of the results, and examples of improvements

which are integrated into the planning process rather than only describing processes and/or intentions which are not supported by evidence of achievement” (Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges [ACCJC], 2013, p. 84). These reports provide a comprehensive view of the institutional mission and an evaluation of the accomplishments made by institutions in response to their internal goals and the requirements placed upon them by the ACCJC. These reports provide an environmental overview based on the fact that these reports are comprehensive, institutional, and require college-wide constituency collaboration.

Alpha College

The results of a review of the Alpha College Self-Study report reveal seven categories referenced in total which identify a relationship with noncredit. Of those seven categories, the top three categories are integral (highlighting important or vital points of noncredit education), integration (highlighting working together, inclusion, collaboration, or cooperation with noncredit), and flexibility (highlighting uncertainty and flexibility in noncredit) (Table 4.1 and Table 4.3). Alpha College noted how noncredit was integral with the statement that “noncredit courses that provide adults with skills that are critical to their ability to succeed in college or on the job.” An example of the integration of noncredit is described in the statement, “noncredit courses are offered on the main campus and at offsite locations.” The flexibility of noncredit programs is evidenced in the variety of possibilities including the way that “contracts are developed...for business and industry training utilizing the following formats as appropriate: noncredit, credit, and fee-based not-for-credit.” Similar statements were

included within the Self-Study report as evidence to describe the institutional culture noncredit education encompasses at Alpha College.

The various statements in the Self-Study report identify the importance of noncredit education as it relates to the needs of the students in the community to achieve success through the education and services. These integral services are provided by the integration of the noncredit education as an institutionalized program within the college. Flexibility of noncredit is referenced by the variety of programs offered within the umbrella of noncredit as well as the flexibility to allow education to expand from the campus to the community.

Beta College

The top three categories described in the Beta College Self-Study were integration, integral, and resources (highlighting physical resources or human resources, and budgetary resources that impact noncredit) (Table 4.1 and Table 4.3). An example of the reference to integration within the Self-Study report is how the “college serves...students in both the credit and non-credit programs at all campuses and sites.” Beta College adds “the program provides a full spectrum of non-credit courses to address the needs of a growing population of adult learners” as an example of a reference to the integral category. A reference to resources includes “most noncredit classes are taught by adjunct instructors.”

The integration of the noncredit program within the college structure is described in the Self-Study report noting how policies and contracts delineate functions of noncredit which are also included in various processes and committees that have direct influence on college actions and functions. The recognition of noncredit is noted by

board president quotes, references to the mission statement and noting the budget contribution noncredit makes because of its size. The reference to resources in Beta College's Self-Study report is primarily focused on human resources and the lack of full-time faculty with the associated difficulty in relying on adjunct faculty to teach and assist with program management.

Gamma College

Gamma College has four top categories because the third and fourth categories have 10 instances each. The categories most frequently occurring in Gamma College's Self-Study are integral, student services (highlighting student services with respect to noncredit), evidence (highlighting data collection), and pathway (highlighting transitions or movements from noncredit to credit or workforce) (Table 4.1 and Table 4.3). An example of the integral part noncredit plays in Gamma College is represented in the statement, "the noncredit ESL Program infuses English Literacy and Civic Participation (EL Civics) and computer literacy into the curriculum...in order to facilitate students' acculturation in a new homeland." Student services are referenced by the statement, "co-curricular student activities are a routine part of the noncredit curriculum and support services." An example of evidence is "the noncredit Adult Basic Education (ABE) program tracks needs, types of support services, and progress of students." Pathway is a category that is exemplified by the statement, "in order to prepare and facilitate the process of noncredit student advancement into credit programs, VESL Career Paths provides a structure and curriculum that mirrors credit."

The category referencing the issues making noncredit integral primarily address student needs for their success in education. Statements considered integral also focus on

career preparation, immigrants, as well as limited English speakers in the community. Student services is a recurring categorical theme that highlighted the support made available to noncredit students in Gamma College. Evidence was a category stressing the importance of self-evaluation as well as data gathering to track progress and report student learning outcomes. The references to the category of pathway at Gamma College referred to acculturation, matriculation to credit, college to career, and completion of high school as goals specific to the noncredit program.

All Colleges

The relationship between colleges is examined by comparing instances of categories appearing across college Self-Study reports. Since the reports are comprehensive internal analyses of institutions, it is important to realize and recognize there are requirements imposed by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) which colleges must identify and include in the Self-Study report. The review of data examined noncredit references to filter information for this review. Based on the instances and the categories developed, the common categories are integration, integral, and multiple responsibilities (highlights varied assignments or work performed by noncredit staff, Table 4.1).

Integration as a category included Alpha College indicating, “students with disabilities...are also referred to programs such as EOPS/CARE and Noncredit.” Reinforcing the same category, Beta College included, “currently the...district...serves...students in credit programs and...in non-credit programs.” Gamma College stated “the noncredit ESL program strives to place new students with a placement test” as a statement referencing the integration category.

These statements provide an overview of the importance that noncredit programs have within the colleges by working together with various departments and services, collaborating with policies and practices, and cooperating in general.

Instances involved with the category defined as integral include Alpha College's statement that, "noncredit courses that provide adults with skills that are critical to their ability to succeed in college or on the job." Beta College stated, "the program provides a full spectrum of non-credit courses to address the needs of a growing population of adult learners" as an example of the integral category. The statement from Gamma College revealed, "many of the students served through its noncredit programs are there because they need additional or specialized support in order to improve their chances of academic or career success."

Statements included above identify how essential the noncredit program is for the students who receive services and education through noncredit.

Alpha college described the instance of multiple responsibilities by indicating, "revision of existing courses or implementation of new courses in a discipline is primarily the responsibility of the department...trends dictated by the surrounding business community." Multiple responsibilities was referred to by Beta College in its statement, "a faculty member, who has fifty percent released time, is the professional development coordinator for noncredit and chairs the Professional Development committee." Gamma College stated, "American Language Tutoring employs noncredit faculty to tutor in the same building that houses American Language...classes" as an example of the multiple responsibilities category.

The category multiple responsibilities makes reference to the varied work assignments and responsibilities noncredit staff must be accountable for to maintain the noncredit programs at their colleges.

Educational Master Plan Data

Each college develops an Educational Master Plan (EMP) which colleges use for their overall planning. The colleges utilize their Educational Master Plans as maps for resource requests and budgetary planning. The EMP describes each area's integral need for the college which usually corresponds to the necessity of resources. Student services, community relationships, and departments multiple responsibilities are usually highlighted to substantiate growth and resource requests. The EMP is approved by all college constituencies and provides an overview of the vision and priorities of the college. The information extracted for this study from the EMP was limited to any reference made to noncredit students or the program in general.

The three colleges' Educational Master Plan reports revealed information that was compiled and classified utilizing ATLAS.ti qualitative analysis and research software as well as Microsoft Excel tables using the same categorical instance descriptions used in Table 4.1 to provide consistency. The specific compilation of categories is displayed in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4

Categorical Educational Master Plan Instances by College

	Alpha	Beta	Gamma
Community Relationship	4	1	1
Disproportion	0	0	0
Evidence	1	4	0
Flexibility	0	0	0
Growth	0	0	3
Integral	2	8	4
Integration	1	10	0
Minimalize	0	0	0
Mission Shift	0	0	0
Multiple Responsibilities	0	1	1
Pathway	2	5	0
Reduction	0	0	0
Resources	5	3	8
Student Services	0	0	1
Supportive	0	0	0

The data was coded by descriptive categories to provide the number of instances these categories appeared in the Educational Master Plan reports.

Educational Master Plan Review

The EMPs developed by most community colleges are essentially maps the colleges refer to as a guide toward success based on their environments and resources.

The mission, vision, and goals of the college are clearly stated followed by ideas and strategies to achieve these objectives collectively.

Alpha College

Alpha College's EMP presented six categories with the top three noted to be resources, community relationships (highlighting work with the community), and integral (Table 4.1 and Table 4.2). A statement in the EMP related to the category of resources includes, "budget reductions requiring a need for efficient scalability." In presenting community relationships, Alpha College indicates "sustaining community centered access, participation, and preparation that improves the college's presence in the community, maximizes access to higher education." The expression of integral as a category is presented by the statement of how Alpha College, "represents the promise of new opportunities to the community and a gateway to success for many students."

Beta College

The EMP written by Beta College identifies integration, integral, and pathway as the top three categories out of seven identified. An example of integration is made with the statement, "enhance cooperative efforts between credit and non-credit to encourage success in workforce preparation, transfer, and basic skill." Integral is exemplified by, "the college enrolls...full and part-time credit students...and...non-credit students, including inmate education classes." The EMP describes pathway by "continuing education transition work is coordinated across outreach departments in both divisions with ongoing activities calendared throughout the academic year."

Gamma College

Categories presented in Gamma College's EMP are resources, integral, and growth, which are the top three out of six categories referenced. The college discusses resources for noncredit by indicating, "ultimately the program needs permanent classrooms to replace portables." Integral is exemplified by, "the District has continually shown its ability to adapt to opportunities....Many of these opportunities will have a greater effect on non-credit programs." Growth is a category Gamma College describes by, "non-credit ESL has experienced steady growth in the past few years."

All Colleges

A review of the common instances found in all three colleges within their EMPs demonstrates that resources, community relationship, and integral are the three common categories.

An example of the instance regarding the category of resources as they relate to noncredit from Alpha College included, "budget reductions requiring a need for efficient scalability" implying the lack of funds as a resources requires noncredit programs to adjust immediately. Beta College stated, "State budget has resulted in a significantly reduced budget allocation," which emphasized reaction to cuts must be made in noncredit. Gamma College included, "increased enrollment will entail offering more classes, hiring and paying more faculty and staff, and finding classroom space dedicated primarily to non-credit use" as a response to increasing resources in the future.

The statements identify budget considerations as a primary driving force to planning. The colleges look to meet needs of the community and the college by relying

on funding sources, while conversely determining what services to limit when budget cuts are experienced.

The category of community relationship instances is exemplified by Alpha College's statement that noncredit, "represents the promise of new opportunities to the community and a gateway to success for many students." Beta College described the noncredit program as "a responsive community leader and partner dedicated to empowering students to become productive citizens, workers, family members." The statement by Gamma College noted "in addition, a large number of non-credit classes are offered at off-campus sites" implying that community outreach and relationship building is a priority.

Reaching out to the community and responding to their needs is presented in these statements by looking to be responsible to bringing education to the community.

An example regarding the category of integral was posed by Alpha College in stating, "Hispanic/Latino and Asian/Pacific Islander student body reflects its service area population and is indicative of the college's dedication to increasing access and success in higher education for underrepresented populations." The integral category is stated by Beta College by saying how the "college as always endorsed the state of California's open door policy to higher education...by offering both credit and non-credit instruction." Gamma College discussed how integral the noncredit program is by stating, "the District has continually shown its ability to adapt to opportunities....Many of these opportunities will have a greater effect on non-credit programs."

The statements presented in the integral category identify the defined response to serve the community as a specific requirement met by the noncredit programs at community colleges.

Summary

The overarching factors that noncredit administrators encounter are highlighted in the interview data as well as from information obtained from Self-Study reports and the Educational Master Plans developed by Alpha College, Beta College, and Gamma College. Budget is the driving force for noncredit programs, as evidenced by the data gleaned from interviews and reports, which is possibly a factor that impacts all college programs. The state budget cuts California community colleges experienced within the last five years were directly responsible for the reductions in noncredit programs. The disproportional cuts affecting noncredit more than credit are attributed to the fact that a noncredit full-time equivalent student (FTES) does not bring as much funding to the college compared to a credit FTES. Decreases in noncredit faculty are presented in terms of the count of college faculty towards the community college faculty obligation number (FON) which translates to the fact that the colleges would have to spend more of their allocated funds to hire or keep noncredit faculty.

The students and their needs represent the other major factor noncredit administrators are cognizant of when managing their programs. The goals expressed by noncredit administrators are to provide access to the educational opportunities noncredit education affords and respond to varied community needs specific to their service area. When budget times are positive, vice presidents perceive growth as a goal and strive for increased interaction with the community with their noncredit programs. Resource

distribution and scheduling are functions within the vice presidents' purview which directly impact noncredit programs.

The information presented in Table 4.1 provides a breakdown of the categories extracted from interviews which were then utilized as guides in further analysis of the Self-Study reports and the Educational Master Plan reports. The categories highlight factors that noncredit administrators must manage and present descriptions of the environment forming their cultural setting within their colleges. The challenges noncredit administrators must overcome are countered by their involvement in all college processes including committee involvement and collaboration with administrators and faculty. Noncredit administrators note they are involved in budget issues with the suggestion that Gamma College, being a single college district, describes more inclusion in the budget decision making process based on noncredit administrators' descriptions. Administrators recognize their responsibilities and their status within their respective institutional structures. They accept decisions even when adversely affecting their programs and continue to advocate for their programs by meeting multiple responsibilities which is one of the categories listed.

It was evident that vice presidents attend to broader issues of planning and college vision while recognizing the role noncredit plays within the community. With the major responsibility of overseeing enrollment management, vice presidents look to their noncredit administrators to carry out the plans formulated by strategic overview and budget flows. The academic senate presidents were somewhat disengaged from noncredit in regard to specific services and classes but were well aware of discrepancies in faculty involvement of noncredit compared to credit.

CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

The following is a summary of my study exploring the institutional culture and its relationship to noncredit administrators and their enrollment management decisions based on an ethnographic study of three California community colleges. I will review the research problem as a background of this study and the purpose statement as the guide for my research. The research questions I will discuss provide a framework to organize a holistic cultural portrait (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012) through my ethnographic study. I will highlight the literature I reviewed related to the context of my study. Limitations of this research study will be discussed and reviewed in relation with the findings of my report. Recommendations for change along with suggestions for future research will be a part of this final chapter. A concluding statement with final thoughts and personal viewpoints will be added at the end of this report.

Overview

Description

Noncredit administrators are responsible for six percent of the total California community college students (CCCCO, 2013). This fact provides a mediocre explanation of the scope of responsibility and effort expended on assuring this group of learners is provided with educational opportunities, access, services, and consistency. Budget cuts in California during the years from 2008 through 2010 exemplified the disproportionate decrease in noncredit class offerings compared to credit. The focus on basic skills and new success measures have provided additional strain from legislators to noncredit administrators by challenging them to respond to newly designed measures of

accountability. The goal of this study was to highlight and analyze challenges noncredit administrators must handle.

Purpose Statement

This ethnographic study of three colleges examined the cultural setting creating the institutional environment of the college where noncredit administrators work. The purpose of the study was to focus on issues affecting their enrollment management decisions, describing internal relationships, exploring their roles, and highlighting best practices for future planning and leadership.

Research Questions

What are the key factors that create the institutional cultural setting of community colleges and how do these factors influence enrollment management decisions in noncredit education? How do noncredit administrators contend with these factors in their decision making process? How are the roles of noncredit administrators perceived within their institutional environment?

Methodology

My realist ethnographic case study targeted three specific colleges based on their location for convenience and on their size as a purposeful examination of extreme samples providing more complex and potentially successful noncredit programs for review. Along with noncredit administrators from each college, their supervising administrators were chosen to obtain information relating to the overall college administration. Academic senate presidents were identified and interviewed at each college to gain insight to the curricular environment from a credit leadership perspective. The interviews provided categorical data themes, which were reviewed with the Self-

Study reports and the Educational Master Plan reports to triangulate the data to develop synthesized meaning to the analysis (Rossman & Rallis, 2012).

Findings

The interviews identified all colleges' concern with the issue of resources including physical, human, or monetary and usually in the context of lacking or advocating for resources for noncredit programs. Budget is the core issue influencing noncredit administrators' decision making process. Additionally as a consequence of choices related to budget, the colleges grouped together identified evident issues of disproportionality between credit and noncredit, from space allocation and class scheduling, to faculty hiring practices and workload assignments. Meeting the needs of the community and the diverse students served, noncredit administrators are recognized as leaders who own and accept those multiple responsibilities. The category of integration was mentioned by all colleges implying the importance of cooperation and relationship building to leverage limited resources. The findings from the Self-Study reports identified the manner in which noncredit programs are integrated into the institution by providing access to students with disabilities, students looking to transition to credit, and new college students. The versatility of the noncredit program was included in comments made by Gamma College's vice president, "there's a flexibility in noncredit education that we don't have in the credit program." Significant findings from the Educational Master Plan reports provided a view of the community needs that noncredit programs are adept in addressing. Reaching out to community is the responsibility of noncredit administrators. The responsibility noncredit administrators face is not limited to on campus issues, "in addition, a large number of non-credit classes

are offered at off-campus sites” as noted within the Gamma College EMP. Finding space, identifying community resources, and responding to community concerns take administrators off campus.

The cultural setting that noncredit administrators work in is best described by the multiple responsibilities they are charged with in working with the community needs and with the college requirements. Noncredit administrators recognize their roles within the college as service providers and as second in line for college allocations of resources. Information from interviews reveal that multi-college districts, compared to the single-college district in this study, present added levels of bureaucracy and more lines of communication to cross. A noncredit administrator’s response to her environment given her limited roles is guided by advocacy, multi-tasking and commitment. The administrator for Gamma College provides an example of commitment by declaring, “if people don’t volunteer in a statewide role... there’s really nobody else to do that advocacy and work.” Although noncredit is obviously not a first priority when it comes to budget allocation, it is the first priority for those students seeking but who may not always be ready for higher education.

Discussion

The cultural setting gathered from interviews and reports reviewed in this study describe a dynamic and volatile environment for noncredit administrators based on the flexibility expected from them to respond to legislative actions, especially those tied to budget. Additionally evident is their role within the institution which is universally accepted as secondary to credit. Vice presidents expect noncredit administrators to work within the culture of change by maintaining the excellent services to their students and

the community with limited support and resources. The degree of cuts during difficult budget times was disproportionate to noncredit programs, but growth is a proportionate goal across colleges requiring aggressive responses by noncredit administrators.

Academic senate presidents noted how noncredit administrators have to respond to the demands of curricular responsibilities with limited workloads adding to their secondary status in colleges. The lack of staffing combined with the many meetings, committees, and projects noncredit administrators are assigned to were aspects highlighted by the academic senate presidents. The responsibility to students with increased needs and lack of academic preparation along with the vast array of programs offered through noncredit was highlighted in the Self-Study reports. Answering the calls from the community in terms of immigration trends as well as socio-economic changes as they relate to noncredit education was discussed in the Educational Master Plan reports.

Gathering data from interviews and cross-referencing results by college and by positions of the interviewees provided additional insights. The examination of cultural knowledge by identifying domains from interview data (Spradley, 1979) inspired a methodical investigation of the interview data. From this data, themes were presented which followed a symbolic interactionist evaluative process. The attention on overarching or global priorities was discussed by the vice presidents compared to the focus that noncredit administrators had on multiple issues and relationships within the institutions. Academic senate presidents expressed more interest on curricular related relationships such as limited representation of noncredit faculty on committees due to a lack of release time and increased workloads, inhibiting their participation in non-classroom activities. The difference between multi-district colleges (Alpha College and

Beta College) and the single district college (Gamma College) appeared to be more evident in acquisition of resources, building relationships, and participation in higher level institutional discussions. This aspect evolved from a manipulation and examination of categories identified in the analysis of interviews.

During the scheduling process of interviews it was interesting to note an observation I made of the academic senate presidents who all expressed a cautious curiosity regarding their involvement in this research study. These discussions provided rich context to the domains created by credit faculty and their discussions regarding noncredit issues. They collectively wondered what input they would have in a study focused on noncredit because all of them were credit faculty members. The role of noncredit education was not automatically considered in the scope of academic senate functions. As the interviews continued, each one of the academic senate presidents contributed their views on noncredit, which provided a significant perspective of noncredit participation in curricular and governance issues.

The viewpoint similarly expressed across all interviewees, revealed categories related to minimalizing noncredit programs based on cuts, lack of significance, or lack of inclusion within the college (categorized as minimize). Statements were consistent in placing noncredit as second in priority creating an environment of uncertainty, especially with scarce resources which was the other major category arising from interviews. Evaluating and comparing the context of statements like “will ever get supported” when discussing resources, was analyzed in the context of the domain which describes a cultural passivity in waiting for resources to be provided. The category of resources includes physical, human, and financial related to noncredit and primarily in reference to

the lack of or pursuit of resources. Resources as a category is significant since it implies the attention noncredit administrators must direct to posturing during governance and planning within the college, searching for grants or locations outside the college, and operating with limited or diminishing resources.

The Self-Study reports which are comprehensive assessments of all college programs, services, and processes created for accreditation purposes provided an all-encompassing perspective of the noncredit program and its relation to the whole college. A symbolic interaction process in analysis by using themes arising from previous examination of interview data was appropriately utilized in examining the information in the Self-Study reports. The integration category which covered statements regarding inclusion, collaboration, and cooperation with noncredit was a category referred to consistently across all colleges. This category emphasizes the impact noncredit programs have on various programs within the college and explains why the noncredit administrator must understand and work with various departments across campus especially those providing student services, such as disabled students programs, assessment departments, CalWORKs programs, and EOPs departments. The other category with the most instances across all colleges noted in the Self-Study reports was integral, which highlights the important and vital discussions related to noncredit. Student services and support are the primary subjects in the integral category related to the importance of noncredit to the college. This is aligned with one of the major factors noncredit administrators identified with answers to reasons why noncredit education should be offered in California community colleges. The multiple responsibilities

category was examined within the Self-Study reports, focusing on the significant varied responsibilities assigned to noncredit administrators.

Examining information contained in the Educational Master Plan reports revealed consistency in the categories of resources and integral, identifying the effect of budget cuts, lack of resources, services to students, and response to opportunities. Additionally, the EMP reports presented community relationship as a category worthy of discussion in college planning which relates to specific work noncredit undertakes with and within the community at all colleges in the study. Responding to community changes and working with the community for resources and collaborations are activities under the purview of noncredit administrators.

Implications

Noncredit Education

Noncredit education within the California community college system is presented by the literature review in this study to be an important option for many students who, for a multitude of reasons, do not pursue the more traditional credit courses offered at the colleges. Noncredit education, through Education Code, became a program option as a method to offer courses in areas including parent education, basic skills, ESL, immigrant education, education for those with substantial disabilities, vocational programs, older adult education, family and consumer sciences, as well as health and safety education. Locally, the colleges offering noncredit programs determined what courses to offer primarily based on a balance of community needs and college support. The access noncredit programs pride themselves with has been touted as a major benefit to the communities as reported by the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges

(ASCCC, 2006) as well as statements in colleges Educational Master Plan reports such as “dedication to increasing access and success in higher education for underrepresented populations.” However, as indicated by the colleges in this study, programs have been eliminated, in older adult training and parent education training, not because of discontinuance of funding, but as a result of a memo from the Chancellor’s Office (B.A. Russell, personal communication, January 22, 2010). This provides an example of the flexibility noncredit programs have, the reaction time to adapt, and the implications all these factors have on the noncredit administrators. A noncredit administrator indicated, “we also got rid of the kinds of classes that...appeared to be avocational” and an academic senate president stated, “having the older adult program for one being removed from what could be funded” exemplify the quick reaction to a memo and not from a definite lack of funding. The flexibility of noncredit worked negatively in this scenario to limit access based on a statement in the form of a memo referring to a future possibility and not actual discontinuance of funding. Fortunately, adjustment and flexibility are consistent attributes ascribed to noncredit administrators who learn to develop responses and innovative strategies to gain funding and support their students.

Student Success

The work environment and culture noncredit administrators must endure is influenced by external forces related to budget and legislation. These forces are relying increasingly on data defined based on new student success measures related to degree attainment, certificates, and entry to the workforce. The development of a career development and college preparation (CDCP) progress and achievement rate to evaluate noncredit programs in terms of a newly defined student success measure has added

another focal point to the multiple responsibilities assigned to administrators. Noncredit administrators provided many instances related to the category of multiple responsibilities during the interviews. Their active role in planning, budgeting, recruiting, analyzing, and advocating was evident in the data collected as well as in the information reviewed. As stated in an EMP, the colleges deal with “budget reductions requiring a need for efficient scalability.” The scalability involved requires assessment of resources, evaluation of programs, maintenance of schedules, and assignment of staff to name a few of the consequential activities. Similarly significant is legislation that may be attributed to recommendations made by the Students Success Task Force (SSTF, 2012) to align noncredit education statewide and develop measures of data that can be compared. Implemented in 2014, Assembly Bill 86 (AB 86) requires collaborative regional planning to determine how best to provide adult education. This new bill, which has provided a sense of potential growth, along with a promise of a different way to fund adult education in the future has again created a sense of change within the institutional cultures surrounding noncredit administrators in this study.

Articulation to Credit

In preparation for the changes involved with new legislation and the requirements from recent recommendations, noncredit administrators have been engaged in dialogue centering on articulation of noncredit to credit. Transitions and pathways to credit as well as to the workforce have been the target of legislators as a way of data collection and recognition of successful programs. The category of pathway was a top instance in interviews with multi-college districts in this study as well as with administrators, and was a top category in Gamma College’s Self-Study report and in Beta College’s EMP

report. The pathways require collaboration to secure limited resources as noncredit administrators must work in an open system organization (Pfeffer, 1997; Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). The cooperation between noncredit and credit was being worked on and discussed, although there were many instances of disproportion and minimalize in the interviews identifying the challenges of these developing partnerships. This alignment between factions has been ongoing with continued effort to overcome attitudinal barriers (Fouts & Mallory, 2010), given the lack of respect given to noncredit programs (Grubb et al., 2002; and Oleksiw et al., 2007). The finding that the Self-Study reports and the EMP reports both highlighted the category of integral was encouraging because this category emphasized the vital points of noncredit education within the institutions researched.

Planning

The enrollment management component to the planning process is critical to noncredit as well as credit programs. The noncredit administrator must coordinate services given limited parameters with the responsibility of a dynamic diverse student population. Coordinating enrollment to meet the needs of the community while considering statewide targets such as increased workforce education, increased transition to credit, completion of certificates, development of curriculum, etc., require a broad and effective planning strategy. Meeting the educational needs of students with developmental learning issues, immigration issues, socio-economic issues, and others place an emphasis on developing appropriate curriculum spanning the various educational, emotional, and cognitive levels these students present. The added responsibility of assuring adequate student services is for some administrators a primary function of their jobs and for others it is an internal institutional matter requiring

collaboration with other departments. The multiple responsibilities category referred to in this study can be primarily attributed to the various activities arising from planning and enrollment management. A statement made by a noncredit administrator was “I go to a lot of meetings” which was expressed in the context of making sure noncredit programs were represented in as many governance committees and group meetings as a responsibility to the program and its students. The commitment noncredit administrators have in planning is reflected in their responsibility to the program.

Accountability

In response to new legislation and limited budgets, the planning process has focused on data analysis and accountability. Accountability is difficult during a time of change especially when there are multiple external stakeholders involved (Shults, 2008). The changes and adjustments required of noncredit programs are linked to accountability measures lacking in most noncredit programs. Additionally, quantifiable data has been sparse. A deficiency of data restricts the argument noncredit administrators can present to support noncredit at their colleges as well as statewide. Oleksiw et al. (2007) noted a lack of data available to track adult learners at community colleges. This has been addressed in recommendations made by the Student Success Task Force (SSTF), which ask for new measures of success that noncredit administrators must track. The data has been recognized as important for all but Hom (2011) cautioned that the data must be provided in consideration of the stakeholders who access the data. Evidence was a category arising from interviews, and although it was not a top category, it was discussed and more importantly implied in much of the statements referring to the “constant attention required in enrollment management.” Further, as one interviewee stated, “we

get funding for our programs and we're supposed to keep track of that and spend our own money." Combined with the references to growth in response to questions regarding the future of noncredit programs, the AB 86 grant was cited as an integral component in determining the possibility or extent of growth expected of noncredit programs. The AB 86 grant is a planning grant requiring a report of data to determine gaps and provide recommendations to meet the gaps representing regional needs for adult education (AB 86 Planning website, n.d.). The data analysis and planning for this grant is a great opportunity, which lies on the shoulders of noncredit administrators who will be part of the leadership, or actual managers of the grant in their region. This is part of what is seen as a positive future for noncredit education and an opportunity for change agents to take an active role as the Alpha College noncredit administrator stated, "The way that we serve our students and our population has to change. So it's a great, you know, it's a perfect storm. It's a great time to redefine education."

Contribution to the Field

The institutional culture presented from literature, interviews, and data analysis is consistent with a loosely coupled system (Kezar, 2001) with consistent change and a reliance on interdependence or resource dependence (Pfeffer, 1997; Pfeffer & Slancik, 1978) whereby noncredit administrators are expected to respond to dramatic changes quickly and seek resources to maintain their programs. The success to their response was notably attributed to a vast array of skills in relationship building to collaborate with colleagues and connect to their communities. Administrators must be able to work within the shared governance system that drives community college decision making. They need to seek community resources and support to maintain their programs when college

resources diminish. Noncredit administrators must be adept at forecasting budget and legislative issues, which may impact their programs. All of these skills require a keen sense of managing, budgeting, collaborating, and positioning to make sure their program is successful. The reason for accepting the responsibility and meeting the challenges of being a noncredit administrator is made evident by an administrator who stated, “My heart is in it. I think it’s something we should continue doing for the community because everybody benefits from it.” The information and data presented in this study provide an inside view of noncredit administration which has had limited literature describing their work, the impact they have on education in general and their communities specifically.

Limitations

This research study is limited in scope based on the convenience sampling of three community colleges in the Southern California area. The demographics of the colleges provided diverse student populations, with all colleges reporting approximately 50% Hispanic enrollment. However, this student base may be particular to the region and not representative of other colleges in the state.

The colleges were within the top 15 in terms of full-time equivalent student (FTES) count, which provided another limitation by not including 85% of the community colleges reporting noncredit FTES. This purposeful sample permitted the review of established noncredit programs considered successful based on their high enrollment. Although smaller programs may have provided interesting aspects of how noncredit administrators deal with small, growing, or diminishing programs by targeting colleges with less FTES, the data presented in this study provides important insight to more complex programs.

A focus on vice presidents, noncredit administrators, and academic senate presidents limited the perspective to the work and impact of decisions noncredit administrators make as they plan enrollment management. These human subjects were chosen to develop a cultural perspective that could be combined with the research and document analysis; however, the choice limited a broader viewpoint.

Future Implications

Through this research, noncredit administrators and their programs have been presented as ancillary educational alternatives within the community college educational system. The colleges in this study reported how integral their programs are to their communities and to their respective missions and plans. Noncredit program development through mandated support as provided in Education Code, agreements with other educational entities (local high school districts), and continued integration in their respective colleges, provide a fair testimonial of the significance community college noncredit education presents. The two tiered funding system which provides colleges less state allocation for noncredit students compared to credit students at either \$3,092, or \$2,626 for noncredit FTES and \$4,367 for credit FTES (ASCCC, 2006) signifies the subordinate status of noncredit students in community colleges. Equalization of funding would provide colleges with additional funds generated by noncredit and immediately increase attention within the institutional culture for this group of students. The noncredit administrators charged with overseeing their programs would most likely gain more institutional clout as well. If allocation for noncredit FTES was equal to credit, the income generated per noncredit student would be equal. This change would lead to more detailed and equitable evaluations of program reductions.

The interview data provided extensive reference to the support noncredit administrators were lacking due to structural inadequacies in faculty contracts for noncredit. Administrators representing their noncredit programs are required to “go to a lot of meetings” where “noncredit has a defined seat at the table” to assure active participation in college decisions. However, the faculty obligation number (FON), which mandates through Education Code that from the total full and part-time faculty members hired, community colleges must hire 75% full-time credit faculty. Since noncredit faculty members are not counted in the 75%, hiring them is not required nor does it fiscally benefit the college doing so. Noncredit curriculum as well as noncredit certificate approval follows the same process as credit, locally and at the state level. Student learning outcomes are required for noncredit classes. Course outlines must also be completed and updated within the same parameters as credit. Noncredit full-time faculty members are scarce, making meeting some of these accountability demands more difficult. This inequity provides added responsibility to the noncredit administrator in securing funding support to meet these requirements. Advocates have been looking to amend Education Code to find some way to provide incentive for colleges to support full-time noncredit faculty in the obligation number to relieve the stress in complying with college standards, and allow for innovative ideas to be implemented.

Noncredit administrators are responsible for reporting their data and the most important report they provide is positive attendance, which is how the program is funded. Students are counted as they come in and, based on a formula, are counted as a full-time equivalent student. Positive attendance is based on daily attendance in class throughout the time they attend and within the term they attend. Administrators are required to

maintain records of attendance throughout the year. Credit funding is based on the enrollment and attendance counted at a certain date, called a census date. This fixed date is typically two weeks into the term, which provides more freedom in maintaining records of attendance and meeting enrollment requirements. This responsibility creates increased documentation and tracking for noncredit administrators. A formula may be created to allow for a way to alleviate the amount of data collection and paperwork required to track positive attendance. Some ideas have surfaced throughout the years but action has not been taken.

The three community colleges in this study shared the similarity of belonging to the top 15% colleges reporting noncredit FTES in California. Their demographics were also comparable in student ages served, which was reportedly between 20 to 49 years of age. All three colleges were Hispanic serving institutions. A major difference between them was that Alpha College and Beta College were part of multi-college districts; whereas, Gamma College was a single college district. Data provided some insight which may have been attributed to the differences. Figure 4.4 presented instances of categories occurring between colleges which revealed a relationship between Alpha College and Beta College particularly in the categories of minimize, mission shift, and pathway. Therefore, there were less instances relating to cuts, lack of recognition, or processes negatively impacting noncredit which correspond to the minimize category. There were fewer instances of statements in Gamma College referencing internal or statewide shift in mission processes corresponding to the mission shift category. The lack of references from Gamma College to the pathway category, relating to transitions or movements from noncredit to credit or workforce, could have been attributed to an

implied comfort that pathways were already established. The interview comments described the availability of direct communication with the highest level of administration at a single college district. Gamma College's administrator stated examples of direct access to the college president. Statements such as, "Just met with the president" and regarding open office hours "you can just drop in for 10 minutes and I would do that," are examples of the accessibility found at single college districts. Noncredit programs at multi college districts appear to have increased challenges to recognition and accessibility as well as resources based on the lack of connection to top administration found at single college districts. Noncredit administrators will benefit from understanding how relationships within their own college structures affect their programs and how institutional cultures are also related to organizational arrangements.

Recommendations for Future Research

The focus of this research was to examine the institutional cultural setting at three community colleges, focusing on the primary issues noncredit administrators face, identifying how they address important issue related to enrollment management and internal relationships, presenting their roles within their institutions, and highlighting best practices that will assist current and future noncredit administrators with planning and leadership.

An expanded view of colleges either geographically or by size of programs may provide added perspectives, challenges, or suggestions benefiting future and current administrators or leaders. Many colleges have specific demographics consistent with the communities they serve which may be very different from the colleges included in this study.

Noncredit education provided at community colleges is similar in some ways to adult school education provided primarily by local high schools in various communities. Colleges in this study had varying degrees of collaboration with local adult schools and others maintained an agreement to be the sole provider of adult education. Further research including adult schools and the education services students receive would be important. Their administration and their issues may provide added insight into support for noncredit or adult education.

Future research may expand on the cultural setting described in this study by providing a student perspective. Student success and student needs have been anecdotal accounts noncredit administrators and advocates have articulated easily and passionately. However, further research may qualitatively or quantitatively organize the student perspective and their position in the institutional cultural environment.

Concluding Statement

The future of noncredit is generally considered to be positive following years of budget cuts and reductions in staff and programs. Growth is a discussion common across colleges and across interviewees. The additional component to the growth aspect is the need for increased transition to credit and workforce. A focus on noncredit transition and collaboration with credit along with equivalent compensation and work assignments is discussed in an effort to create bridges, close gaps, and prepare the underserved, immigrant, and remedial students for higher education. Ultimately, noncredit administrators have adapted to change, advocated for their programs, and accepted multiple responsibilities for their ultimate goal of serving the students because they would all agree with Beta Colleges noncredit administrator's statement, "I think

noncredit is vital.” Real stories can easily be shared that sound like these: Estella never completed high school and is now proud to complete her GED to start credit classes in the fall; Paul, who was homeless at seventeen, in jail for five years soon after, and has now turned his life around, just completed an adult basic education noncredit certificate so he can enroll in college and pursue a counseling program because he wants to give back to the community; Dee, who is a single mom working part-time in a new company, is finishing a noncredit computer class which will prepare her for the full-time job her employer is offering; and Ali, who just arrived in the United States six months ago as a refugee and was an engineer in his country, is now taking noncredit ESL classes so he can find a job quickly to support his family. Common stories, such as the preceding ones, provide noncredit administrators, a group I proudly am a member of, with the inspiration, motivation, and dedication to serve and advocate for noncredit education.

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Appendix A

INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Email Sample:

Hello _____,

As you know, I am working to improve the work we all do in providing the best educational experience for our noncredit students. You may not know that in addition to my professional commitment, I am in a doctoral program with the goal of researching noncredit administrators and their role in enrollment management. I would like to invite you to participate in my study by allowing me to interview you. I assure you that the information will be completely confidential and I will keep your valuable time investment to a minimum. Please call me or email me with a good time to call you to discuss this or answer any questions you may have.

Thank you,

Phone Call Sample:

Hello _____,

I'm calling to ask for your help. I know how committed you are to noncredit education as you know I am as well. I'm currently working on my doctoral program at CSUN and I am working on my dissertation research to document and analyze the experiences that noncredit administrators have when making enrollment management decisions. I would like to interview you and a few other critical leaders for my study. As my program requires, all information and details will be completely confidential and I will detail how I will maintain anonymity and confidentiality in my consent forms. I would like to include observations of important meetings, conduct interviews, and include research from your institution. If you have time, we can discuss this now, or feel free to call me later or refer me to whomever you feel I should be discussing this with. I hope that I have your support with this.

Thank you,

Appendix B

INFORMED CONSENT FORM
California State University, Northridge
CONSENT TO ACT AS A HUMAN RESEARCH PARTICIPANT

**A View from Inside: An Examination of Institutional Culture on Noncredit
Administrators and Their Enrollment Management Decisions**

You are being asked to participate in a research study conducted by Alfred Ramirez as part of the requirements for the Ed.D. degree in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies. Participation in this study is completely voluntary. Please read the information below and ask questions about anything that you do not understand before deciding if you want to participate. A researcher listed below will be available to answer your questions.

RESEARCH TEAM

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PURPOSE OF STUDY

The purpose of this ethnographic study is to examine the cultural setting that is present at the three colleges, focusing on the primary issues that noncredit administrators face, identifying how they address important issues related to enrollment management and internal relationships, and highlighting best practices that will assist current and future noncredit administrators with planning and leadership.

SUBJECTS

Inclusion Requirements

You are eligible to participate in this study if you are over 18 years of age and are a full-time employee of the community college that is being researched.

Time Commitment

This study will involve approximately two hours of your time.

PROCEDURES

The following procedures will occur: You will complete a demographics intake form, then you will be interviewed with the researcher taking notes and by audio tape. You will then have the opportunity to have a follow-up meeting to review the transcribed notes of the interview.

RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

This study involves no more than minimal risk. There are no known harms or discomforts associated with this study beyond those encountered in normal daily life.

BENEFITS

Subject Benefits

You may not directly benefit from participation in this study.

Benefits to Others or Society

The California Community Colleges have been consistently recognized for their access to education. Noncredit programs are the primary portal to education for community members that are not ready, ill-prepared, or unable to proceed to credit courses. The large numbers of adult learners, immigrants, underprepared youth that utilize noncredit as their access point for education require leadership that is responsive to their needs and proactive as administrators of noncredit education.

ALTERNATIVES TO PARTICIPATION

The only alternative to participation in this study is not to participate.

COMPENSATION, COSTS AND REIMBURSEMENT

Compensation for Participation

You will not be paid for your participation in this research study.

WITHDRAWAL OR TERMINATION FROM THE STUDY AND CONSEQUENCES

You are free to withdraw from this study at any time. **If you decide to withdraw from this study you should notify the research team immediately.** The research team may also end your participation in this study if you do not follow instructions, miss scheduled visits, or if your safety and welfare are at risk.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Subject Identifiable Data

All identifiable information that will be collected about you will be removed and replaced with a code. A list linking the code and your identifiable information will be kept separate from the research data.

Data Storage

All research data will be stored on a laptop computer that is password protected. All handwritten notes will be shredded at the end of the study. The audio recordings will be downloaded and stored on a laptop computer that is password protected. The recordings

will then be erased from the recording device. The recordings from the laptop will then be transcribed and erased at the end of the study.

Data Access

The researcher and faculty advisor named on the first page of this form will have access to your study records. Any information derived from this research project that personally identifies you will not be voluntarily released or disclosed without your separate consent, except as specifically required by law. Publications and/or presentations that result from this study will not include identifiable information about you.

Data Retention

The researcher intends to keep the research data until the research is published and/or presented and then it will be destroyed.

IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS

If you have any comments, concerns, or questions regarding the conduct of this research please contact the research team listed on the first page of this form.

If you have concerns or complaints about the research study, research team, or questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact Research and Sponsored Projects, 18111 Nordhoff Street, California State University, Northridge, Northridge, CA 91330-8232, or phone 818-677-2901.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION STATEMENT

You should not sign this form unless you have read it and been given a copy of it to keep. **Participation in this study is voluntary.** You may refuse to answer any question or discontinue your involvement at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you might otherwise be entitled. Your decision will not affect your relationship with California State University, Northridge. Your signature below indicates that you have read the information in this consent form and have had a chance to ask any questions that you have about the study.

I agree to participate in the study.

- I agree to be audio recorded
- I do not wish to be audio recorded

_____	_____
Participant Signature	Date

Printed Name of Participant	
_____	_____
Researcher Signature	Date

Printed Name of Researcher	

Appendix C

PRE-INTERVIEW SESSION: INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

Welcome and introduction:

Good morning/afternoon/evening. Thank you for taking the time to talk with me today. Before we begin the interview session, I'd like to give you the opportunity to read and sign the Consent to Participate in Research.

Purpose of the interview:

As we discussed, this interview is a one-on-one interview intended to collect information for a research study that explores teacher perceptions regarding their prior student teaching experiences. During this interview, we will talk about your student teaching experiences and attitudes about your student teaching experiences.

Timing:

Today's interview will last approximately 45 to 60 minutes. Are there any questions before I get started?

Appendix D

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (Noncredit Administrator)

Main Questions:

How do you see your role within your college as an administrator of noncredit programs?
What is your experience (challenges/opportunities/key factors) in administering noncredit programs given the legislative, budgetary, and institutional influences on your noncredit programs compared to credit programs at your college?

Sub-questions:

How do your college's budget policies influence the amount and types of noncredit classes administrators schedule at your college?
What do you envision the noncredit education program will look like at your college in the next five years?
How do you advocate for the noncredit program at your college?
How can you garner support from top administrators and from credit faculty?

Additional Questions:

Warm up: How long have you worked in higher education? How long have you worked here?

Grand Tour: Tell me why you feel noncredit should be offered at CA community colleges.
What is your role in administering noncredit programs?

Follow up: Is there a difference dealing with credit programs?

How is noncredit enrollment management tied to budget influences?

Follow up: How do you feel about that?

Follow up: What other triggers to enrollment management are there besides budget?

What changes have you made in scheduling noncredit directly due to state budget issues?

Follow up: Were there alternative plans? If so, what were they?

How do you perceive your decisions were viewed by noncredit faculty/staff and credit faculty/staff?

Follow up: How do you respond to their views?

Follow up: How did that make you feel about your role?

Tell me about some challenging decisions you've had to make in scheduling noncredit classes?

Follow up: In hindsight, would you have done something different?

Have you taken any steps to advocate for noncredit education?

Follow up: Could you walk me through the steps you took?

What has been your experience in garnering support from credit staff for noncredit?

Follow up: Why do you think it has been like this?

Follow up: What can create more support?

How would you describe the support noncredit has from the superintendent/president or Board of Trustees?

Follow up: If you were superintendent/president, what would influence your support?

Follow up: Are there options for change?

How would you describe the future of noncredit programs here at the college?

Follow up: Is there potential for growth or decline? Why?

What changes would you like to see made in the long term?

Follow up: What about short term changes?

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (Superintendent/President, Vice-President, or Dean)

Main Questions:

How do you see the role of noncredit education within your institution now and in the future?
How do you feel community colleges and in particular your college respond to success measures and remain accessible to noncredit students?

Sub-questions:

How do budget policies influence the amount and types of noncredit classes offered at your college?
How do noncredit programs fit into the mission of your college before, now, and in the future?
How are noncredit programs integrated into your college culture and with credit in particular?
How do you feel noncredit faculty compare with credit faculty in terms of qualifications, work load, and participation in governance?

Additional Questions:

Warm up: Could you give me an overview of your career and how you became (president/dean etc.)?

Grand Tour: Your College is one of the top 10 colleges in noncredit FTES. What influenced that achievement and why do you think that's important?

Grand Tour: Tell me why you think noncredit is offered at CA community colleges.
What is your role in overseeing noncredit programs?

Follow up: Is there a difference overseeing credit programs?
How do you compare credit faculty with noncredit faculty in terms of qualifications, work load, and participation in governance?

Follow up: What improvements can you recommend?
How is noncredit enrollment management tied to budget influences?

Follow up: How do you see the future of noncredit education at your college?
Follow up: What other triggers to enrollment management are there besides budget?
How does noncredit fit into the mission of your college?

Follow up: Has the priority to noncredit changed, or do you see a change in the future?
What changes have you made regarding noncredit directly due to state budget issues?

Follow up: How were these changes received by administration, faculty and staff?
Follow up: In hindsight, would you have done something different?

Have you taken any steps to advocate for noncredit education?
Follow up: Could you walk me through the steps you took?
What has been your experience in working with credit and noncredit faculty and staff?

Follow up: Why do you think it has been like this?
How would you describe the support noncredit has from the Board of Trustees?

Follow up: Are there options for change?
How would you describe the future of noncredit programs here at the college?

Follow up: Is there potential for growth or decline? Why?
What changes would you like to see made in the long term?

Follow up: What about short term changes?

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS (Academic Senate Faculty)

Main Questions:

How do you see the role of noncredit education in your institution now and in the future?
How do you feel about noncredit education, in terms of student success, college budget, and community needs?

Sub-questions:

How does noncredit education fit within the mission and vision of your college in the past, currently, and in the future?
How do you feel noncredit faculty compare with credit faculty in terms of qualifications, work load, and participation in governance?
What, in your opinion, are the differences in the goals for students from a credit perspective compared to a noncredit perspective?
How can noncredit education align itself more productively with credit and the institutional mission?

Additional Questions:

Warm up: Could you give me an overview of your career as a faculty member and a senate member?

Grand Tour: Your college is one of the top 10 colleges in noncredit FTES. What influences have the noncredit program and/or noncredit faculty made to this college?

Grand Tour: Tell me why you think noncredit is offered at CA community colleges.

What is the senate's role in working with noncredit programs?

Follow up: Is there a difference with credit programs?

How do you compare credit faculty with noncredit faculty in terms of qualifications, work load, and participation in governance?

Follow up: What improvements can you recommend to combine or separate the differences or similarities?

Follow up: How is noncredit enrollment management tied to budget influences?

Follow up: What other triggers to enrollment management are there besides budget?

How does noncredit fit into the mission of your college?

Follow up: Has the priority of noncredit changed from the past?

Follow up: How do you see the future of noncredit education at your college?

What changes have you noticed regarding noncredit that may have been directly due to state budget issues?

Follow up: How were these changes received by credit and noncredit faculty?

Have you taken any steps to advocate for noncredit education?

Follow up: Could you walk me through the steps you took?

What is your opinion about the working relationship between credit and noncredit faculty?

Follow up: Why do you think it has been like this?

How would you describe the support noncredit has from administration?

Follow up: Are there options for change?

What changes would you like to see made regarding noncredit in the short term and the long term?

Follow up: How likely do you see these changes taking place?