

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, NORTHRIDGE

PROGRAM REVIEW INSTITUTIONALIZATION AS AN INDICATOR OF
INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS IN THE
CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES

A dissertation is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the Doctor of Education Degree in Educational Leadership

By

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August 2012

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DEDICATION

In memory of my father, Mishik Badalyan,
my guardian angel

To my mother, Nazely Khachatryan,
for her continuous inspiration and belief in me

To my husband, Vardan Okounian,
for his patience and support

To my beautiful daughters, Emily and Michelle Okounian,
for their unconditional love

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This journey, that went through like an inspirational flare, full of challenges and learning experiences, has finally come to an end. I could not have successfully completed this journey without the support and encouragement from numerous individuals.

The foremost gratitude goes to my husband, Vardan, and my daughters, Emily and Michelle, for their patience, unconditional love, and their supportive pride in me. I will always be indebted to them. To my mom, who implanted from my conception, till the present moment, the indefatigable drive to attain the highest level of education as a proof of success in this world. To my extended family, for their faith and confidence in me and last but not least, to my dad, whose spirit abides in me always.

Sincere appreciation is also attributed to Dr. Janice Friedel, who recruited me for the program and led the initial steps of my journey. My deepest gratitude to Dr. Nathan Durdella, my chair, who never abandoned me when I appeared to be lost; to all faculty and staff at California State University, Northridge who made this journey possible, and especially to Dr. Tom Oliver who made this program very applicable and valuable for us, practitioners, thank you very much. Special thanks to Rebecca Tillberg and Dr. Kathleen Burke-Kelly who became my career guide and mentor.

I would also like to extend my gratitude to my classmates from Community College 2009 Cohort, who through their friendship provided support and inspiration to me. And last but not least, to my colleagues and supervisors who displayed great patience, support, and understanding when I needed to take times off from work.

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ABSTRACT

PROGRAM REVIEW INSTITUTIONALIZATION AS AN INDICATOR OF INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS IN THE CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES

by

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Doctor of Education Degree

In Educational Leadership

Institutional effectiveness has become one of the central topics of discussion for community colleges nationwide. Since 2007, ACCJC identified program review institutionalization and integrated planning as two of the major sources of deficiency in the area of institutional effectiveness. This issue caused sanctioning by ACCJC for a significant number of institutions in California. Thus, the significant contribution of this study is in helping the California community colleges to better understand and manage their program review institutionalization process in order to meet accreditation requirements and more importantly, for institutional improvements.

The purpose of this study was to identify factors that influence program review institutionalization in California community colleges. In addition, this study revealed various challenges and achievements in community college practice, in regard to program review institutionalization and its impact at the individual, program, and institutional levels. The three research questions of this study are: What factors influence program

review institutionalization at California community colleges? What is the impact of program review institutionalization at individual, program, and institutional levels? What are the strengths and weaknesses of the implemented program review frameworks?

To answer these research questions, two California community colleges were selected based on maximum variation strategy. The conceptual framework of the current study was based on the synthesis of Huberman & Miles' (1984) educational innovation field-study conceptual framework and Senge's (2006) system approach. The grounded theory research tradition was utilized for this multi-site case study. The data sources from both institutions consisted of interviews, observations, and historical and current documents. In this study, program review institutionalization was defined as an institutional state where program review becomes an inseparable part of the continuous quality improvement processes established at the institution.

Results indicate that program review institutionalization is a cyclical process of continuous quality improvement that moves an institution towards becoming a learning organization. The most significant factors that influence program review institutionalization are organizational culture and structure. Other factors are the use of all program review purposes and their correct emphasis and implementation that best suited the institutional culture and structure. Another important factor is the integration of program review and other institutional processes. It is important that each institution find and carry out its own path of integration that resonates with its institutional context and culture. However, even then, it requires institutional support, leadership, and participation to carry on building the history and most importantly, a longer life-span of program review institutionalization. Program review institutionalization must be

associated with a cycle path. Each time an institution undergoes through the same cycle it makes that path deeper and more difficult to get off that track. Thus, the longer life-span of the implemented program review framework is a strong factor that influences program review institutionalization.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Historically, educational institutions have demonstrated accountability by following government regulations and complying with data submission requirements (Schmidtlein, 2004). The program evaluation was used primarily for program rejuvenation purposes, rather than for accountability (Stufflebeam & Shinkfield, 2007). In 1944, with the Servicemen's Readjustment Act, commonly known as G.I. Bill, the U.S. government made accreditation one of the requirements to be eligible for federal financial aid (Lattuca & Stark, 2009).

Further impetus to the movement to evaluate educational programs came with the Elementary & Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965 and the Higher Education Act of 2008 by requiring accreditation agencies to include assessment of institutional effectiveness in their criteria for evaluation (Ewell, 2008; Popham, 2008). Since then, the assessment of institutional effectiveness has become a fundamental concern in the reaffirmation of institutional accreditation nationwide (Nichols & Wolff, 1990). Today, higher education is undergoing a major transformation, redefining what it means to be accountable (Biswas, 2006). As a result, accrediting commissions have substantially strengthened the community college accreditation requirements, primarily in the area of institutional improvement (Biswas, 2006).

This study aspires to help the California community colleges to enhance their understanding of the program review institutionalization processes for institutional improvements. As well as, to improve their practices in meeting accreditation requirements related to program review institutionalization.

Problem Statement

Institutional effectiveness has become a critical element in the accreditation process and is now addressed in the accreditation requirements of all accreditation agencies across the country (Manning, 2009). At the same time, the level of proficiency and emphasis on the issues of improvement in institutional effectiveness vary highly among the different accreditation bodies and institutions (Biswas, 2006).

For California community colleges, the enforcement of the program evaluation, review, and planning requirements has been sporadic. The latest push began in 2007, after the reevaluation of Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges (ACCJC) by the U.S. Department of Education, when ACCJC was given several recommendations on their accreditation processes. As a result ACCJC began rigorously sanctioning institutions. A sanction can be in the form of warning, probation, or show-cause. One of the main focuses of ACCJC became the deficiencies in practices of program review and its use in institutional planning and resource allocation. From 2007 to 2009, ACCJC sanctioned twenty-one colleges due to deficiencies in planning and use of assessment results and sixteen colleges due to deficiencies in program review (ACCJC, 2009). Analyzing the sanctions given by the ACCJC from 2003 – 2009, the top two major deficiencies in the form of recommendation are: “Standard. II.A Instructional Programs” with 328 cases and “Standard. I.B. Improving Institutional Effectiveness” mentioned in 311 cases (Titterud, 2009). Consequently, ACCJC created the urgency for change in program review practices at institutions in the region. At the same time, the majority of community colleges in California felt lost due to the absence of clear

directions from ACCJC and lack of expertise on program review and planning at the institutions (Titterud, 2009).

In 2007, the ACCJC developed and published “Rubrics for Evaluating Institutional Effectiveness” (ACCJC, 2007). The rubrics include three major themes: program review, planning, and student learning outcomes. According to these rubrics, the institutions are expected to be on the sustainable continuous quality improvement level on program review and planning since 2009. But colleges are having problems identifying criteria and factors that provide evidence and support for sustainability of the program review process at their institutions. Moreover, there is a gap in the literature pertaining to this issue. The gap can be attributed to the factor that the rest of the country had gone through this program review reinforcement stage 20 years ago. Thus, most of the literature is dated from the 80’s and 90’s. In addition, most of the existing literature provides analyses of program review from a program evaluation theory perspective. The uniqueness of the current study is in its conceptual framework. The goal of this study is to identify the factors which enable success or become obstacles for program review institutionalization. Thus, the results of this study will not only add to the professional knowledge, but will also become highly useful for the community colleges in California.

Purpose and Significance of Study

The purpose of this study is to identify factors that influence program review institutionalization in California community colleges. In this study, program review institutionalization is defined as a framework where program review becomes an inseparable part of the continuous quality improvement processes established at the institution. In addition, I expect this study to reveal various challenges and achievements

in community college practice, in regard to program review institutionalization and the impact of program review institutionalization at the individual, program, and institutional levels. The identification of the factors that influence program review institutionalization will enrich the knowledge in the field and help institutions to better understand and manage the program review institutionalization process. In addition, this study aims to bring knowledge that will help California community colleges to address current accreditation requirements on the program review institutionalization.

ACCJC requires that all community colleges in the region function at the level of sustainable continuous quality improvement in regard to program review and its institutionalization. This implies that program review practice at an institution is ongoing, results of program review are used institution wide, and periodic evaluation of the program review process is executed (ACCJC, 2009). Consequently, the findings of this study will not only contribute to our limited knowledge on the subject, but, will also inform members of the larger community and professionals who work in the program review and planning fields. This study is also driven by my personal desire, as a Dean of Institutional Effectiveness at a community college, to learn more about program review and the factors that influence its institutionalization, so I can use the results of study for my own institution.

Research Questions

This study is designed to answer the following research questions:

1. What factors influence program review institutionalization at California community colleges?

2. What is the impact of program review institutionalization at individual, program, and institutional levels?
3. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the implemented program review frameworks?

Operational Definitions

This section provides definitions of main terms and concepts used in this study.

Accountability. Accountability is an obligation or willingness to accept responsibility and account for one's actions.

Assessment. Assessment in the context of an educational institution is a process that includes review and reflection on academic practices with the intention of improving student learning and fulfillment of the institution mission (Palomba & Banta, 1999; Volkwein, 2001).

Continues Quality Improvement. Continuous quality improvement is an organizational philosophy and approach that promotes organizational improvement through acceptance that the change, or striving for it, is constant (Robinson & Dalzell, 1995; Seymour, 1993).

Innovation. Innovation as a tangible process that is new to a social setting, intentional in nature, aimed at producing benefits, and public in its nature (Kezar, 2001).

Institutional Effectiveness. Institutional effectiveness is an integrated, comprehensive, ongoing process of planning and evaluation across the institution that is associated with fulfillment of the institutional mission (Hasson & Meehan, 2010; Volkwein, 2010a). In this study, the term institutional effectiveness will be used as a concept and the state of the institution.

Learning organizations. Learning organizations are the institutions which have the “capacity to adapt and innovate, based on learning from past experience and in anticipation of the future” (Cowin, 1996, p. 11).

Program Evaluation. Program evaluation is a “process of delineating, obtaining, and providing useful information for judging decision alternatives” pertaining to the implementation of a particular program (Stufflebeam, 1971, p. 3).

Program Review. Program review is a self-evaluation tool which incorporates review, assessment, and planning components that can be performed at different levels across the institution (ASCCC, 2009b; Beno, 2003; Meehan, 2010).

Program review institutionalization. Program review institutionalization is a framework where program review becomes an inseparable part of the continuous quality improvement processes established at the institution.

Theoretical/Conceptual Framework

This study uses a multi-theoretical approach and views the program review institutionalization process through the lenses of organizational change, educational innovation, and system approach theories. The process of the program review institutionalization can be classified as a holistic change within an existing institution (Levine, 1985). In order to understand organizational change, the following questions need to be answered: why, what, how, and target (Kezar, 2001). Furthermore, one of the main purposes of program review is program improvement. Thus, program review can be viewed as an educational innovation. According to Curry (1992), the three stages of educational innovation are: mobilization, implementation, and institutionalization. At the same time, institutionalization can be defined not only as the last stage or the outcome of

the innovation process, but as the process in its entirety. Furthermore, the program review institutionalization process cannot be separated and analyzed in isolation; the system view is needed in order to understand the process. As a result, the conceptual framework of the current study was developed by synthesizing Huberman & Miles' (1984) educational innovation field-study conceptual framework and Senge's (2006) system approach. The main components of the current study's conceptual framework are imputing and internal factors as well as the process of adoption, planning, implementation, change and outcomes of the innovation. Each of these elements of the conceptual framework will be discussed separately in the Literature Review Chapter 2 and analyzed per institution in the Results Chapter 4. The organization of both chapters will be around the elements of the conceptual framework. In the Literature Review Chapter 2, the literature pertaining to each element will be presented and discussed separately. In the Results Chapter 4, the themes that emerged from the results of data analysis per college and per element of the conceptual framework will be presented and discussed separately.

Overview of Methodology

This study uses a multi-site case study approach. As a research approach, the case study provides an effective means to investigating practical problems, questions, situations, or puzzling occurrences that exist in everyday practice. A case study approach is appropriate for making clear to an audience the significance of a particular occurrence, and is particularly useful in generating insight into how individuals, groups, and organizations confront problem situations (Schram, 2006).

The research tradition best suited for this multi-site case study is grounded theory. The general concept of grounded theory is that theories emerge from data, and as the data are constantly changing, the theories are also fluid and need constant reevaluation. The purpose of grounded theory is to develop models and concepts that explain processes. At the same time, grounded theory is about finding the current truth, as the factors influencing the flow of the process might change depending on the metamorphoses in the environment (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007; Creswell, 2008; Elliott & Lazenbatt, 2005).

Two California community colleges were selected for inclusion in this study using a maximum variation site selection strategy. One college is a mid-sized, urban community college that received a recommendation from ACCJC to improve the program review processes at the institution. The other college is a large, suburban community college that received a commendation from ACCJC on program review processes established at the institution.

The qualitative data utilized in this multi-site case study were obtained from historical and current documents, interviews, and observations. Based on grounded theory, theoretical sampling design was utilized for data sampling. A dynamic system approach was used as data collection strategy. A dynamic system approach to data collection is when the focus is more on processes and system dynamics due to the underlying assumption that changes are constant (Patton, 2002). The amount of data collection was driven by the data saturation concept (Elliott & Lazenbatt, 2005). Data saturation occurs when additional data do not add substantial new information (Corbin & Strauss, 1990; Creswell, 2008).

During the data analysis process, a systematic design approach was used. The systematic design in grounded theory utilizes a defined coding procedure that results in theory generation (Corbin & Strauss, 1990; Creswell, 2008). The data on program review and decision making processes were coded and grouped into main categories. The categories were grouped into sections based on conceptual framework: imputing factors; internal factors; implementation; cycle of change; and outcomes. Then, the analyses of relationships between the categories were performed to identify the characteristics of program review and organizational and human factors at a particular institution. Further refinements of categories were based on program review and organizational change literature review. In addition, a list of evidence on program review institutionalization was compiled. Next, the relationships between the list of evidence and coding categories were examined.

Delimitations

The current research is based on a study of two community colleges in California utilizing grounded theory traditions. The study is based only on qualitative data sources. The absence of statistical or survey data limit the capacity of this study to draw conclusions that would otherwise be available. The inclusion of ACCJC site visit recommendations on program review as a site selection criterion, limits the transferability of the study. In addition, the unit of analysis, including the institutional characteristics, historical and current role of program review, planning processes at the institutions, and sampling strategies of participants and observation sessions affect the ability to generalize the findings of this study to other contexts.

Limitations

In addition to the delimitation issues due to selection criteria of the site, setting, and context, the qualitative study limited to the researcher's biases, the perception of participants, and quality of documents. The topic of researcher's subjectivity was discussed earlier and will be further expanded in Chapter 3. As it has been mentioned earlier, by using multiple data sources such as interviews, observations, and document analysis, reduces researcher biases and increases the transparency of the study. At the same time each data source brings its own limitations that the researcher needs to be aware (Patton, 2002). For example, interview and observation data limitations include the participants' personal biases, political, anxiety on breach of the information or giving out incorrect information, or lack of knowledge on a particular question. In addition, observation sessions constrained by the sample of activities, focused on external factors, and might be influenced highly by the surrounding environment. The limitations of the documents may be due to the reluctance to include sensitive information in published materials.

Organization of the Dissertation

In addition to this introduction chapter, the study will consist of four more chapters. Chapter 2, Literature Review, will provide an historical context of program review, as well as the empirical and conceptual literature review. Chapter 3, Methodology, will introduce the research methodology, the research tradition, site and data selection strategies, and present the instruments utilized in the study, along with data collection and analysis procedures. Chapter 4, Results, will present the data collection

and analysis of findings. Chapter 5, Discussion and Conclusions, will summarize the study and discussion findings, implications, and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

This chapter begins with the history and current environment mandating the program review institutionalization, following by empirical and conceptual literature review pertaining to this study. The empirical literature section highlights the topics that became foundational for this study such as: institutional effectiveness, assessment and accountability, learning organizations, program review, institutionalization, program review as organizational change, and program review as an educational innovation. The conceptual literature section consists of two parts: building a conceptual framework and discussion on the elements of the conceptual framework. Finally, a short summary will conclude this chapter and its connection to the research questions of the study

Historical Context

History of the Accountability Movement in U.S. Higher Education

Since the Medieval times, the creation of and devotion to academic standards have been a central characteristic of quality in higher education. The major movements in establishment of traditions of curricular development for educational programs can be traced back to that time (Lattuca & Stark, 2009). However, until the middle of the nineteenth century, the concentration was mainly in single liberal arts fields, and program evaluation was used primarily for program rejuvenation, rather than for accountability (Stufflebeam & Shinkfield, 2007).

A major shift happened in the early 20th century, with the initiation of voluntary accrediting bodies (Biswas, 2006; Dodd, 2004). This translated into the establishment of accreditation standards at the institutional level (Biswas, 2006; Dodd, 2004). Initially,

accreditation was driven by colleges and universities as a voluntary action, and had no real power (Biswas, 2006). But in 1944, with the Servicemen's Readjustment Act, commonly known as G.I. Bill, the U.S. government made accreditation as one of requirements to be eligible for federal financial aid (Dodd, 2004; Lattuca & Stark, 2009).

Further impetus to the evaluation of educational programs movement came in 1965, with the Elementary & Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and the Higher Education Act (Popham, 2008). These acts, along with subsequent federal-level changes in regard to U.S. education system, laid ground for the mandatory program evaluation culture. As Popham (1988) noted, "American educators evaluated their programs in the post ESEA period not because they wanted to, but because they had to" (p. 4). The Higher Education Act, which was amended and re-authorized several times and most recently in 2008, regulates the accreditation for the institutions of higher education in the U.S. The fundamental principles of the U.S. accreditation process are that it is voluntary and based on self-evaluation and peer-review. However, in recent years, the assessment process in higher education has slowly been transforming from a peer-review practice to a more methodical, official mandate. The assessment of institutional effectiveness has become a fundamental concern in the reaffirmation of institutional accreditation nationwide (Nichols & Wolff, 1990). But, as Nichols & Wolff (1990) note, regional accrediting agencies around the country vary highly in their rigor of these mandates.

Half of the states in U.S. have adopted different models of performance-based funding, but half of those who adopted eliminated it later, the other half changed it from and content substantially over the years. The current debates are about whether these models can be adopted across the nation (Dougherty, Natow, Hare, Jones, & Vega,

2011). In 2007, in response to the growing demand for accountability, the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU), in partnership with the Association of State Colleges and Universities (ASCU), began building a voluntary system of accountability for community colleges (Middaugh, 2010).

The Accountability Movement in the History of California Community Colleges

In 1907, California was the first state in the nation to pass the amendment on establishment of junior colleges, prototypes of community colleges. In 1960, the California Higher Education Master Plan was adopted, which established a three-tier system: University of California, California State University, and California Community College. In 1973, based on AB 770, the California Postsecondary Education Commission (CPEC) was established with a mandate of planning and reviewing the California higher education master plan. Unfortunately, due to state financial difficulties, CPEC was abolished in November 2011, some of its functions have been transferred to the CCCCCO (Humphrey, 2011). In 1978, Proposition 13 capped the property tax, which limited availability of local funds for schools, including community colleges (ASCCC, 2009a, 2009b).

In 1988, with the passing of the AB 1725, several changes pertaining to community colleges were established including such changes as: a faculty representative from California community colleges was added to the Board of Governors; participatory governance as a decision-making mechanism became mandated; the teaching credentials mandates for faculty were removed; the funding base changed from daily attendance to full time equivalence (FTE); a proposed ratio of full-time to part-time faculty to be 75 to 25 percent was presented. The importance of AB 1725 is that it separated the community

college system from K-12 and aligned it to the higher education institutions. But in the same year, Proposition 98 tied community college and K-12 systems financially. According to Proposition 98 and its amendment, Proposition 111 (1990), it is guaranteed that 39% of the state spending to be allocated to K-14. Proposition 98 is also called “Classroom Instructional Improvement and Accountability Act” (ASCCC, 2009a). For example, Proposition 98 has the following language that highlights its accountability nature: “it is the intent of the People of California to ensure that our schools spend money where it is most needed. Therefore, this Act will require every local school board to prepare a School Accountability Report Card to guarantee accountability for the dollars spent” (as cited in ASCCC, 1996).

In response to the accountability mandates, and under pressure from the California Academic Senate, the Title 5 Article 2 § 53200 was adapted in 1994 by the Board of Governors for California Community Colleges. This article is known as the ‘10 plus 1’ regulation, which requires that all academic and professional matters be consulted collegially with the institution’s academic senate (ASCCC, 1996). Program review and evaluation is listed among the eleven items of this article. According to this regulation, any academic and professional matter should be developed relying “upon the advice and judgment of the academic senate”; or the district “and the academic senate shall have the obligation to reach mutual agreement” (Title 5, p. 325). Thus, this regulation legally enforces the central role of academic senates in all academic and professional matters, in particular for the program review and evaluation processes, which adds to the complexity of the accountability movement at California community colleges.

In 2004, AB 1417 charged the Board of Governors to lead the efforts in developing a performance framework for California community colleges. The Accountability Reporting for the Community Colleges (ARCC) was developed to address the mandates in AB 1417. The ARCC report, published on an annual basis, includes system-wide and college-level indicators. The college-level indicators are presented for all California community colleges separately and comparatively by peer-groups for comparison. The first ARCC report was published in 2007. These legislative actions initiated a process enabling development of a funding allocation formula linked to performance-based indicators. The ARCC indicators and the processes around its reporting has been developed in consultation with all constituency groups, including, but not limited, to the academic senate and the Research and Planning Group of California community colleges (CCCCO, 2005).

Empirical Literature Review

This section begins with an introduction of the institutional effectiveness topic as an umbrella concept. Assessment is an integral part of institutional effectiveness, so it is presented as a second topic. At the same time, assessment not only supports the culture of accountability, but, more importantly, it enables continuous quality improvement. Program review, the fourth topic of discussion, is a tool that is used by learning organizations to support continuous quality improvement. Institutionalization, which is a main topic of this study, will be introduced as a fifth topic of this section. The shift to learning organization and institutionalizing program review practices are such deep processes that it will change the organization substantially. Thus, organizational change will be the sixth topic of the discussion in this section. And finally, program review as an

educational innovation topic will lay the foundation in developing the conceptual framework of this study.

Institutional Effectiveness

Institutional effectiveness has been a critical element in the accreditation process for the past several decades. Thus, it is addressed in the accreditation requirements of all accreditation agencies across the country. Today, under the pressure of tax payers and government, higher education is undergoing a significant transformation, redefining institutional effectiveness and accountability. As an impact, accrediting commissions have substantially strengthened the accreditation requirements, primarily in the area of program review, planning, assessment and using the results of evaluations for continuous quality improvement (Biswas, 2006).

As Cistone and Bashford (2002) indicated, there are as many definitions of institutional effectiveness as there are institutions exist. The concept of institutional effectiveness is not new; it is aligned with such models in management literature as Total Quality Management (TQM) and Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) (Sheldon, Golub, Langevin, St. Ours, & Swartzlander, 2008). Wilkinson (1989) defines institutional effectiveness as an integrated, comprehensive, ongoing process that is composed of several layers of planning and evaluation. Hasson and Meehan (2010) and Collins (2008) define institutional effectiveness as an extent to which an institution achieves its mission through the goals and objectives identified in the strategic and/or educational master plan of an institution. Sheldon et al. expand that definition to the processes of collecting and analyzing the evidence of similarity between mission, vision, goals, objectives, activities, and outcomes at all levels (Sheldon, et al., 2008).

The complexity of the institutional effectiveness culture is that it should be established at all levels of the institution: institutional, program, and courses (Hasson & Meehan, 2010; Volkwein, 2010a). Institutional effectiveness is the commitment to the continuous quality improvement of all aspects associated with fulfilling the institutional mission. This commitment should be ongoing, broad-based, and embedded within the robust culture of an organization (Welsh & Metcalf, 2003).

An important aspect of institutional effectiveness is that it should drive the planning, assessment, evaluation, decision making; support for curriculum and budget issues, as well as external reporting and funding. Secondly, it is seen as a facilitator in the integrated process of institutional planning, evaluation, and research. Furthermore, it encourages continuous assessment and improvement of the academic programs, student and administrative services (Cistone & Bashford, 2002).

While there is no doubt that institutional effectiveness improves institutional outcomes, its implementation is not an easy or straightforward process. There are a variety of factors that may affect the success of the institutional effectiveness implementation and establishment. Welsh & Metcalf (2003) indicate the following activities that will support the establishment of an institutional effectiveness culture: promoting internal motivation, rather than relying solely on external motivation and pressure; increasing the depth of implementation by promoting the importance and value of institutional effectiveness; providing clear definitions for quality of expected outcomes, availability and validity of assessment tools, and implementation and use of outcome-based assessments; and increasing and expanding the involvement of all constituency groups, especially faculty. Sheldon et al. (2008) also mentioned the

common definition of quality as an important factor in successful implementation of institutional effectiveness.

Assessment

Assessment, in the context of an educational institution, is a process that includes review and reflection on academic practices and is intended to improve student learning; and it is essential that assessment be linked to institutional mission (Palomba & Banta, 1999). Assessment for accountability and assessment for continuous improvement are two main paradigms of the assessment practices (Ewell, 2008; Volkwein, 2001). In addition, assessment creates an evidence-based culture of accountability, learning, and continuous quality improvement (Bresciani, 2006). For improvement purposes, it is not only important to do the assessment, but also to use the assessment results for improvement. An effective assessment process should be performed at all three levels: classroom, program, and institution (Hasson & Meehan, 2010; Palomba & Banta, 1999; Volkwein, 2001).

A comprehensive assessment model for institutional effectiveness should include the following components: institutional characteristics that include socio-demographic traits, academic preparation and performance; organizational context that includes organizational and academic structures, policies, and practices, as well as faculty culture; student experience that include curricular, classroom, and out-of-classroom experiences; and finally outcomes that include learning, development, change, and persistence (Volkwein, 2010b).

According to Hasson and Meehan (2010), planning the strategies, reporting the outcomes, and communicating along the way are the main components in building an

evidence-based institutional effectiveness infrastructure. At an institutional level, planning and assessment should incorporate such steps as environmental scanning, mission and vision establishment, strategic directions development, action plans, development and implementation, and the assessment and evaluation of actions and outcomes. At a program and service level, a well-established program review process is the institutional effectiveness commitment. At a course level, the use of the student learning outcome assessment results in the institutional effectiveness commitment (Hasson & Meehan, 2010).

Program Review

There are many different definitions for program review. Conrad and Wilson (1985) define program review as “the process of defining, collecting, and analyzing information about an existing program or non-instructional unit to arrive at a judgment about the continuation, modification, enhancement, or termination of the program or unit” (p. 10). Barak and Breier (1990) define program review as a type of evaluation that reviews a program against a standard set of criteria. Barak (2007) also specifies that the term program review relates only to existing programs. The California Postsecondary Education Commission (CPEC) uses the term program review for newly establishing programs, as well.

Bresciani’s (2008) definition is directed more towards institutional improvement. She defines outcome-based assessment program review as a:

Systematic process in which program faculty or professionals articulate the intended results of the cumulative contribution of their program.... This

systematic process of evaluation is then repeated at a later date to determine whether the program improvements contribute to the intended outcome. (p. 971)

Although, the ASCCC (2009a) finds program review as a mechanism for internal improvement, it defines it as “the process through which constituencies on a campus take stock of their successes and shortcomings and seek to identify ways in which they can meet their goals more effectively” (p. 8). Finally, the ACCJC (2003) defines program review as a “360-degree” self-evaluation on effectiveness from “all angles and over time” (p. 1). Consequently, program review is an integral part of institutional effectiveness. The program review process and institutional effectiveness are so tied together, that several authors use these terms interchangeably (Welsh & Metcalf, 2003; Cistone & Bashford, 2002).

Institutionalization

There are several definitions of institutionalization. Some authors view it as a process taking place over time, while others define it as an outcome with set structures and social arrangements (Scott, 2008). In the current study, institutionalization is defined as the outcome of that process.

In her book *‘Instituting Enduring Innovations: Achieving Continuity of Change in Higher Education,’* Barbara Curry (1992) provides a very thorough analysis of the institutionalization process. Curry (1992) presented institutionalization as the “final phase of the change process that an innovation or program is fully integrated into an organization’s structure” or “the way the organization’s structure and life have been changed” by the innovation (pp. 8-9). Achieving the stated goals of an innovation does not automatically lead to its institutionalization. In many cases, successful innovation

just stays as an add-on and does not become an integral part of an organization. In these cases, an innovation is not institutionalized. Consequently, it will not have a far-reaching and lasting influence on the organization, and its eventual separation or discontinuation is the most possible outcome (Curry, 1992). Thus, in order to identify factors that influence program review, institutionalization is essential to analyzing the flow of the innovation process in an organization. The innovation must be valued and become an essential part of the culture. Continuous quality improvement and program review must become a part of standardized operating procedures of the organization.

Kezar (2001) defines institutionalization as a process that includes all three phases: mobilization, implementation, and institutionalization. According to Scott (1995), “institutions consist of culture-cognitive, normative, and regulative structures and activities that provide stability and meaning to social behavior” (p.33). Thus, the institutionalization process also can be viewed as combination of regulative, normative, and culture-cognitive factors (Colbeck, 2002; Scott, 1995). Regulative factors are external and internal rules and regulations imposed on institutions. An example is the accreditation standards or Title 5 regulations on program review and curriculum update. Normative factors are institutional norms and values. However, cognitive factors refer to organizational culture and belief (Colbeck, 2002). In order for an innovation to become institutionalized, it must be valued and become part of the culture. Program review is an inseparable part of the continuous quality improvement process that should become part of the standardized operating procedure at institutions. Jacobs, Russ-Elf, and Zidan (2001) highlighted Cumming and Worley’s system-based framework on institutionalizing organizational change. The main components of the framework are: organizational

characteristics, innovation or intervention characteristics, institutionalization process, and outcome of institutionalization (Jacobs, Russ-Elf, & Zidan, 2001).

Daniel Stufflebeam (1971) offers an evaluation model which can be used for post implementation evaluation and accountability purposes. The main components of the Stufflebeam' evaluation model are: context, input, process, and product (CIPP). The works of Daniel Stufflebeam and his group are very valued in the field of program evaluation. The CIPP evaluation model is one of the most widespread models used for program evaluation in educational and non-profit institutions as well as in the corporate world. Based on the CIPP evaluation model, Stufflebeam (2002) developed a series of evaluation checklists including institutionalization and meta-analysis.

Program Review as an Organizational Change

According to Kezar (2001), defining organizational change is not easy, as there are a large variety of organizational change models. At the same time, any organizational change can be analyzed using four questions: (a) Why is the change occurring? - external and internal forces; (b) What are the characteristics of this change? – degree, timing, scale, focus, responsiveness; (c) How is the change happening? – intentionality, response time, participation; and (d) What is the target of the change? – process, outcome (Kezar, 2001).

The teleological model of change, as both adaptive and purposeful, will best describe the colleges' current change strategy (Kezar, 2001). The Greek word telos means end or goal. Teleological means end- or goal-directed (Kezar, 2001). Thus, the program review implementation process is a complex and non-linear change, with emphasis on teleological model. Although the evidence regarding the efficiency of the

teleological model in explaining and facilitating the changes in higher education is mixed, the teleological model seems to implicitly recognize that change must originate with individuals within the institution acting as both agents and motivators of change, directly involved in the activities of explaining, motivating, and coalition-building (Kezar, 2001). Thus, in order to better understand the organizational change processes at the institutions selected for this study, it will be valuable to analyze the institutional changes resulting from program review institutionalization by using Kezar's (2001) points of emphasis.

Program Review as an Educational Innovation

The topic of innovation, particularly educational innovation, has a long history and has been discussed in a large number of research works and publications. The works of several well-known and heavily-cited authors have been reviewed in detail. For example, Kezar (2001) defines innovation as a tangible process that is new to a social setting, intentional in its nature, aimed at producing benefits, and public in its nature. The analysis of key words of this definition demonstrates that the current program review process at California community colleges may be considered as an educational innovation. First of all, it is obvious that program review is a tangible process. Even more, paper or electronic documents evidencing its implementation and use have to be presented to the ACCJC site-visiting team (ACCJC, 2009). Second, program review is intentional in its nature as it is not a byproduct of other institutional processes. By institutionalizing program review, it is expected that it will become second-nature to an institution by blending into everyday operations. The main purpose of program review is to improve program quality and student success; thus, it is producing benefits. It is

completely public in its nature as campus-wide participation is required, serves public needs, and the outcomes of program review have to be publicly available, according to accreditation requirements.

The only key word that remained for verification is whether program review is “new” to California community colleges. For that purpose, it is important to answer the question: how new is the program review concept to the current social setting of California community colleges? It is important to emphasize that program review as an essential process for institutional renewal, and quality improvement is not new to community colleges in United States and California community colleges in particular. The TQM and CQI processes, initially developed by Japanese manufacturing sections, were introduced to the US higher education system in the beginning of the 1980’s. Good evidence of that was the Malcolm Baldrige award of the institutional quality excellence expansion to include educational organizations. But at the same time, according to Roger (2001), “if the idea seems new to the individual, it is an innovation” (p. 18). Even if the concept of program review is not new to the community colleges in California, it is new in its current form of ACCJC sustainability expectations. Thus, we can classify the program review process that is currently taking place at California community Colleges as an educational innovation.

Innovations can be in different types and scopes. In the case of program review at California community colleges, we can classify it as a holistic change within an existing college as it “involves the adoption of a major institutional innovation characterized by a unified and coherent purpose” (Levin, 1980, p. 5). Regardless of its type, any innovation goes through sequential stages. Different organizational studies identify a variety of

stages. For example, Smelser (as cited by Levin, 1980) uses seven stages, whereas Curry (1992) simplified it to three main stages of the innovation process. The three stages of innovation by Curry (1992) are: (a) mobilization – whereby the system is prepared for change, (b) implementation – whereby the change is introduced into the system, and (c) institutionalization – whereby the system is stabilized in its changed state.

Implementation is a process when the change is introduced at an organization. The implementation stage is the actual adoption of innovation and transformation of the organization. And finally, the institutionalization is the outcome of the introduced innovation (Curry, 1992).

Implementation is an extremely critical stage for the institutionalization of an innovation. Sheldon et al. (2008) argue that the implementation climate and innovation-value fit are the two main variables on which the success of the innovation depends. Implementation climate includes such components as training that is timely, continuous support and availability of follow-up assistance, and the provision of sufficient time to learn and implement the practices. The innovation-value fit covers motivation for the innovation, integration of the innovation with the other processes at the institution, and the common definition of quality (Sheldon, et al., 2008).

According to Huberman and Mills (1984), institutions “assimilate[s] the innovation as a function of its demographics; its prior history of innovative practice; its [organizational culture]; ... implementing the innovation also changes users’ perceptions and practices” (p. 10).

Conceptual Framework

The overall conceptual framework of this study is based on Senge's (2006) Cycle of Causality system diagram and steps from Huberman and Mills (1984) field-study conceptual flowchart.

Huberman and Mills field-study conceptual flowchart. One of the classical and heavily-cited models in the literature that presents a visualization of an educational innovation process is the Field-Study Conceptual Flowchart, developed by Huberman and Mills (1984). The flowchart was the result of a comprehensive study of 146 schools across the nation. The main steps in this flowchart are: (a) Imputing factors that include external context, assistance, and the innovation context; (b) Internal Context as 'host' that includes demographics, history with innovation, organizational culture, and user context; (c) Adoption decision that includes the decision to adopt, and plan and support for implementation; (d) Cycle of transformations with several cycles (2 to N) that includes changes in innovation, in organization, and users; and (e) Outcomes as the final stage includes degree of institutionalization, perceived gain and loss, and side effects (Huberman & Mills, 1984, p.11). In the Huberman and Mills (1984) flowchart, an innovation is presented as a linear process which may take several cycles of transformation but has an end point. This is in contrast to the principle of program review which is continuous quality improvement which is a cyclical process that does not have an end point.

Cycle of Causality. As it is highlighted by Senge (2006) "system thinking lies in a shift of mind: seeing interrelationships rather than linear cause-effect chains; and seeing processes of change rather than snapshots" (p. 73). In addition, the arrows between the

stages are not just one-sided effects; it is a flow of “influence” that is both a cause and effect. The program review process cannot be separated and analyzed in isolation; the system view is needed in order to understand the process. Program review institutionalization process can be presented using Senge’s Cycle of Causality system diagram (Senge, 2006, p. 76). The entire process began with imputing factors, which become a starting force for the cyclical process. In this cycle, the institutionalization can be viewed as an outcome, but at the same time, it is in the entire process, as program review institutionalization is the process of continually moving through the progression cycle that results in continuous quality improvement.

Imputing factors: external context. Historically, educational institutions have demonstrated accountability by following government regulations and complying with data submission requirements. Today, higher education is undergoing a significant transformation: redefining what it means to be accountable. Accountability pressure from the Federal government, state agencies, and communities can be viewed as external pressures.

In April 1965, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), Title I, initiated the evaluation of the educational programs movement (Popham, 1988). This act laid the foundation for the mandatory program evaluation culture in the United States. Also in November 1965, the Higher Education Act was passed, which mandates program review and evaluation. The Higher Education Act has been amended several times and was last renewed in fall of 2008. Based on the act, the U.S. Department of Education reaffirms the accreditation commission’s status every six years. This gives the Department of Education legislative power to regulate the accreditation bodies.

State Level. At the state level, program review is mandated based on the Title 5 § 55130. The California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office (CCCCO) is authorized to periodically review and evaluate established programs and to terminate approval, if appropriate. In addition, according to Title 5, § 51022, the Chancellor's office collects the processes and results of locally-conducted program reviews. Although, there is no one standard model recommended for California Community Colleges, it is imperative that all programs undergo program review on a regular basis (CCCCO, 2009). In addition, according to the California Education Code, § 78016, "every vocational or occupational training program offered by a community college district shall be reviewed every two years." In addition, Assembly Bill (AB) 1417 passed in 2004, requested the construction of an accountability measure for the California community college system overall, as well as college level indicators. As a result, an annual Accountability Reporting for Community Colleges, known as the ARCC report, was developed.

In 2007, Dr. Robert Barak published a comprehensive study on the history of academic program review and its approval by state agencies (Barak, 2007). In his latest study, he tracked the roles of state-level structures, coordinating and governing boards on academic program review and approval process for over thirty years. There are several interesting findings highlighted in his study. First of all, Barak defines two separate terms: program approval for newly proposed and program review for existing academic programs. According to his study in 2006, there were 45 states that conducted program approval of new academic programs, and this number has not changed since 1991. At the same time, the number of states that conduct program review of existing programs is forty-one which has increased by seven states since 1991. In addition, relatively large

numbers of states were considering changes in their policies; eighteen states were planning to change their program approval processes and twenty-five states planning to change their program review processes. The general trends for changes were towards strengthening, but simplifying, the policies and procedures.

California is one of the few states where the state board only conducts the program approval process (Barak, 2007). The review and approval of new programs in California is conducted by the California Postsecondary Education Commission's (CPEC) Program Review Committee. This statutory responsibility of the committee is expressed in California Education Code §§ 66903-66904 (California Postsecondary Education, 2008). However, the name of the committee is Program Review; the committee only reviews new programs for approval. Once the program is approved, it is up to the college to review and evaluate the program currency, performance, and effectiveness. For California community colleges, only the programs that meet the following criteria are subject for approval: (a) The program is the first of its type; (b) The program involves intersystem collaboration; (c) New facilities, major renovation, or expenditure is required for the program; (d) The program requires joint-use facilities; and (e) The program involves more than one district, or may impact enrollment levels of neighboring districts. The committee evaluates the proposed programs according to the following seven criteria: student demand, societal needs, appropriateness of the program for institutional and system missions, the number of existing and proposed programs in the field, the total costs of the program, the plan of program quality improvement and maintenance (California State Postsecondary Education Commission, 2006). In addition, the commission developed guiding principles for program review: "(a) safeguard the state

against inefficiencies in the allocation of program resources; (b) help ensure that new programs will meet student and societal needs; and (c) ensure that programs are well conceived and that they will have desired educational and social consequences” (Wilson, 2009).

Accreditation. As it has been mentioned earlier, a campus-wide program review process that is administered on a regular basis is mandated by the accreditation standards of the ACCJC of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC).

The accrediting bodies, educational associations of regional or national scope, are the main agencies that accredit educational institutions. Accrediting agencies develop evaluation standards and conduct reviews to assess whether or not identified standards have been met. The goal of accreditation is to ensure that quality education is provided by the institution to students and the community, facilitate transfers across the institutions, and ensure the value of credentials. In addition, accreditation provides access to federal funds, as attainment of accreditation is one of the requirements to qualify for federal financial funds (Biswas, 2006).

There are six regional accreditation agencies serving different clusters of states. The majority of commissions are responsible for both two- and four-year institutions. California, Hawaii and the Pacific territories belong to the same region, which is the only one that has different agencies, WASC for four-year institutions and ACCJC for two-year institutions. Although the accreditation bodies work independently, they are all accountable to the Secretary of Education’s National Advisory Committee on Institutional Quality. As it has been mentioned earlier, this committee reviews and approves the association’s policies every six years. This approval is required in order for

a student from an institution to receive federal financial aid. In addition to the Secretary of Education, there is a non-governmental organization, the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA), which coordinates the work of accreditation agencies as higher education institutions strive to keep the peer-review ideology as a fundamental aspect of accreditation (Biswas, 2006).

Accreditation process. The fundamental principle of the current accreditation process is peer-review and self-evaluation. The evaluators are self-selected, experienced staff and faculty from member institutions. Certain procedures are followed to avoid conflicts of interest in the selection of assessment teams at specific institutions. Accrediting bodies publish guidelines and provide training for evaluators, as well as a handbook of criteria, standards, and required documentation for institutions to follow. Publication is mandated by the U.S. Department of Education. The handbook is used by member institutions as a guideline in the process of self-review and assessment to prepare the self-evaluation document. It is very important to have all the stakeholders at the institution involved in this process of self-evaluation. Based on the self-analysis, a self-evaluation is published and delivered to the accreditation visiting team before the site-visit evaluation. After the review team visit, preliminary findings are presented by the visiting team at the exit interview. The site visit team's report is reviewed by the elected commission of an accrediting agency and the final outcome and recommendations are published. There are different categories of accreditation outcomes which can be grouped into three major results:

1. The institution is accredited or reaffirmed its accreditation, with suggested recommendations to be reviewed according to the schedule requested by the

commission.

2. The institution is put on sanction until certain acute issues are addressed within the time period requested by the commission.
3. The institution loses its accreditation.

It is essential for the member institutions to follow the guidelines on accreditation standards and criteria set by the accrediting agencies (Biswas, 2006).

If a college receives a recommendation for correcting a deficiency, it is subject to the *two-year rule*. The two-year rule is a federally mandated rule “that requires accrediting agencies to place a two-year deadline on correction of all recommendations that relate to deficiencies” (Fulks, 2008, p. 15). Although this rule has been in place for several years, ACCJC was not implementing it rigorously. In fall 2007, during ACCJC re-authorization process, federal reviewers discovered that this rule had not been enforced and since then, ACCJC has been following the rule attentively (Fulks, 2008).

ACCJC publications. In 2002, the ACCJC published new accreditation standards for community colleges, which emphasized several key themes. The “Evaluation, Planning, and Improvement” (EPI) component was one of the key themes established by ACCJC. The EPI should be a cyclical process with the following steps: set goals, plans, and improvements; allocate needed resources; implement plans; evaluate student needs, college programs and services. The EPI provides the foundation for the ACCJC program review requirements.

ACCJC also included Institutional Planning and Evaluation as one of its 21 eligibility requirements: systematically evaluate and publish the accomplishments of institution purposes; provide evidence of planning for institutional improvement; assess

progress towards stated goals with systematic cycle of evaluation; integrate planning and resource allocations, implementations, and re-evaluations (ACCJC, n.d.).

The ACCJC accreditation Standard I. Institutional Mission and Effectiveness consists of two sections: Standard I.A. Mission and Standard I.B. Improving Institutional Effectiveness. To meet the Standard I.B., the institution should provide evidence that it:

1. Collects and uses student achievement and student learning outcomes data
2. Conducts program review and other ongoing, systematic evaluation
3. Uses systematic assessment and planning to improve educational effectiveness and institutional quality (ACCJC, n.d.)

In 2007, the Commission developed and published, “Rubrics for Evaluating Institutional Effectiveness.” These Rubrics highlight three major themes: Part I - Program Review, Part II - Planning, and Part III - Student Learning Outcomes. These rubrics are helpful in assessing an institution’s needs to achieve full compliance with the current accreditation standards. Each Rubric has four levels of Implementation: Awareness, Development, Proficiency, and Sustainable Continuous Quality Improvement. For Part I- Program Review and Part II- Planning, it is expected that an institution should be at the fourth level of implementation. For Part III- Student Learning Outcomes, the ACCJC established that colleges should reach the proficiency level of implementation by 2012 (ACCJC, 2007).

Consequently, if a college fails to establish a program review process that is data-driven, sustainable, and with campus-wide participation the institution will most likely receive a recommendation on program review (ACCJC, 2009).

Communities and the press. In the early 1980's, to respond to the growing concern related to the U.S. public education system, the Department of Education founded the National Commission on Excellence in Education (NCEE). In 1983, the commission published the "A Nation at Risk" report. The report highlighted several fundamental issues of the U.S. education system which triggered significant reaction in the community and the press. The next wave of accountability pressure was initiated after the report titled "A Test of Leadership: Charting the Future of U.S. Higher Education", which was published in 2006 by the Federal Commission on the Future of Higher Education. The report is better known as the "Spellings Report," as it has been frequently cited by Margaret Spellings, the Secretary of U.S. Department of Education. Despite the controversies and criticism against the report, it had a strong impact in triggering nationwide attention and focus on accountability in higher education (Ewell, 2008). In the same 2006, National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education published "Measuring Up", a collective and individual states' report card on higher education with international comparison.

In California, several controversial and high profile reports have been published by the Institute for Higher Education Leadership and Policy (IHELP) located at California State University, Sacramento. In 2006, the Institute published "The Grades are In: Is California Higher Education Measuring Up," which attempted to highlight the issues that resulted in low achievement on the "Measuring Up" indicators. In 2007, the IHELP published "Rules of the Game: How State Policy Creates Barriers to Degree Completion and Impedes Student Success in the California Community Colleges" and "Beyond the Open Doors Increasing Student Success in the California Community

Colleges”, reports that marked a new accountability era in California. In October 2010, the IHELP published the “Divided We Fail” and “Divided We Fail in LA” reports, which resonated in the community and several round table discussions, were organized with Los Angeles community members to address the issues presented in the report.

Imputing factors: program review context. In the framework of the current study, program review is the innovation. The following topics will seek to cover the program review context: program review studies and publications; purpose of program review; characteristics of the successful program review.

Program review studies and publications. Large numbers of research studies on program review have been published in the late twentieth century. Reading research studies and articles from the early nineties, it is shocking to find such a high correlation between the issues that higher education was facing twenty-five years ago and now.

There were several early publications covering institutional effectiveness, educational innovation, organizational change, and program review in depth, which laid the foundation for this study. These are the research studies by: Arthur Levine (1980), “Why Innovation Fails”; Michael Huberman and Matthew Mills (1984), “Innovation Up Close”; Clifton Conrad and Richard Wilson (1985), “Institutional Approaches, Expectations, and Controversies”; Barbara Curry (1992), “Instituting Enduring Innovations: Achieving Continuity of Change in Higher Education”; Robert Barak and Barbara Breier (1995), “Successful Program Review”; Nichols et al. (1996), “Institutional Effectiveness Practical Guide”; Peter Senge (1996), “The Fifth Discipline”; Trudy Banta (1999), “Assessment in Community Colleges”; Adrianna Kezar (2001), “Understanding and Facilitating Organizational Change in the 21st Century.”

Unfortunately, there have been only a few recent research-publications on program review. Majority of these publications are California-related or examples of a program review process implemented at a specific institution. In addition, in the search for dissertation abstracts, I was able to locate only five doctorate-level studies on the program review topic since 2000. Three out of five were studies done in California.

In response to increased attention on accountability and results of program review for community colleges, the ASCCC charged the Educational Policies Committee to create a special workgroup on program review (ASCCC, 2009b). In spring of 2009, the ASCCC (2009b) adopted a new white paper by the Educational Policies Committee, “Program Review: Setting a Standard.” This paper was an update of the white paper adopted in spring 1996. Several drafts of this paper have been presented at numerous venues, including, but not limited to, ASCCC plenary sessions, Accreditation, SLO, and Curriculum Institutes of ASCCC, as well as the Student Success Conferences (ASCCC, 2009b). Taking into account the amount of work and number of people that shaped these two publications, these white papers have been extensively cited in this chapter.

Another white paper on program review was published in 2010 by the Research and Planning Group for California Community Colleges (RP Group). The RP Group is a nonprofit professional organization run mainly by institutional researchers for California community colleges. It is one of the most influential and well-respected organizations in the California community college system. The paper was published in the Inquiry Guide series of Bridging Research Information and Culture (BRIC) Technical Assistance Program (Meehan, 2010). The goal of this paper was to provide guidance for California community colleges on how to develop and implement a program review. In addition,

the paper provides examples of key performance indicators for instructional, student services, and administrative services program review

Purpose of program review. As there are many definitions of program review, it is not surprising that the purpose of program review is seen differently by researchers and practitioners. For example, Hendricks and Cooney identify the purpose of program review into three categories: accountability, program improvement, and information dissemination (Hendricks & Cooney, 1992). According to the national study of 452 institutions, lead by Barak and Sweeney, the main purpose of program review is program improvement (1995). Another nation-wide study on program review was done by Joseph Hoey in 1993. His study targeted single community college districts across the nation. It was a quantitative study focused on the use of program review results. One hundred and fifty-two (152) community colleges across the nation participated in this study. The results of the study highlighted that program review is widely used by community colleges and it has two main purposes: accountability and program improvement (Hoey, 1995a).

According to Gentemann et al., it is essential that the focus of program review be student learning outcomes and institutional improvement, rather than only using it as an accountability tool (Gentemann, Fletcher, & Potter, 1994). In fall 2000, John Welsh and Jeff Melcalf led a study which surveyed 168 institutions accredited by Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS). The focus of the study was to identify the differences in attitude of faculty and administrator towards institutional effectiveness activities. Based on the findings, the first recommendation of these authors was that, in

order to get faculty involvement in institutional processes, the primary focus should be program and institutional improvement, rather than accountability.

Communication that includes dialogue and information sharing, is a critical component of institutional effectiveness and a valuable purpose of program review (Hasson & Meehan, 2010). For example, program review can help with networking with peers involved in program review, as well as lobbying and promoting a particular program (Hendricks & Cooney, 1992; Welsh & Metcalf, 2003).

Table 1 summarizes the literature on program review purposes that could be classified into 5 themes: (a) Accountability - in general, to meet state- and federal-level mandates, to demonstrate institutional responsiveness to the community, in using state resources, to meet accreditation requirements; (b) Improvement - in general, to improve the quality of teaching and learning, to foster continuous quality improvement, to increase institutional aspirations, to improve the quality of instruction and services, to update programs and services; (c) Communication - information dissemination, dialogue, and acknowledgement of accomplishments and academic excellence; (d) Decision making - for allocation and reallocation of resources, program discontinuance, to develop new programs and theory generation; and (e) Evaluation and Assessment - assess and evaluate program quality, analyze program direction and content, performance assessment, and quality assurance.

Table 1 provides a visual analysis of the literature on the purposes of program review. Please note that for the simplicity of reading the table, it will use the following marking convention: “Y” indicates that the author or authors mentioned the indicated purpose in their work.

Table 1

Program Review Purpose

Source	Account-ability	Improv-ement	Communi-cation	Decision-making	Evalua-tion
Conrad & Wilson, 1985	Y	Y		Y	
Barak & Breier, 1990	Y	Y		Y	Y
Hendricks & Cooney, 1992	Y	Y	Y	Y	
Hoey, 1995a	Y	Y			
Gentemann et al., 1994	Y	Y		Y	
Welsh & Metcalf, 2003	Y	Y	Y		
CPEC 2006&2008	Y			Y	
Pitter, 2007		Y		Y	Y
Bresciani, 2006	Y	Y			
ASCCC, 2006 & 2009		Y	Y		Y
ACCJC, 2003 & 2009	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Hasson & Meehan, 2010	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

Imputing factors: characteristics of successful program review. Based on reviewed literature, a successful and effective program review has several characteristics. For example, Joseph Hoey, in his article “Organizational Factors in Program Review,” highlighted the following factors that are involved in the use of program review results: purpose of program review; stakeholders’ involvement; leadership support for program review; organizational communication; organizational centralization; locus of evaluation

function; institutional size; accreditation agency (ASCCC, 2009b; Barak & Breier, 1990; Hendricks & Cooney, 1992; Hoey, 1995b).

Stakeholders. According to DiMaggio, the success of institutionalization highly depends on the “relative power of the actors who support, oppose,” or influence it (Scott, 2008). Thus, the stakeholders play a central role in institutionalization of the program review process.

In their presentation “Changing the Future: Program Review and Evaluation as Tools for Growth,” Hendricks and Cooney highlighted three main factors that will affect the outcome of a program review: the purpose of the particular program review; who was involved in the program review process; and who and when will the results of the program review be used (Hendricks & Cooney, 1992).

Leadership and institutional support. Successful development and implementation of a program review process is impossible without strong leadership and support. Faculty leadership and institutional support for time, materials, and support staff are vital to demonstrating commitment (ACCJC, 2009). Thus, a separate budget must be allocated for program review management (ASCCC, 1996). Institutional research is another administrative support that must be allocated in the program review process. Leadership support from the institution’s top management is essential for the success of the program review process, but even more critical for its institutionalization. Otherwise, it will become an futility exercise without practical application and use (Cistone & Bashford, 2002). At the same time, academic administrators are in the middle of the battle between external pressure for change and resistance to change (Welsh & Metcalf, 2003). Thus, the administration is essential in ensuring that program review becomes

integrated in the institution. It is imperative that the college administration believes and follows the program review processes and its recommendations (ASCCC, 2009a).

Faculty-led process. Faculty involvement is critical to making program review an integrated part of institutional assessment (Gentemann, et al., 1994; Welsh & Metcalf, 2003). Involving faculty in program review is a challenge that many institutions face. In many cases, many faculty members see it as an administrative, hierarchical process of extra work. Even more, they fear that program review is threatening their control over curriculum. At the same time, faculty involvement in this process increases faculty support (Welsh & Metcalf, 2003).

To address these issues and to emphasize the importance and leading role of faculty in the program review process, in spring 1996 the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges adopted the Educational Policies Committee's white paper, "Program Review: Developing a Faculty-Driven Process" (ASCCC, 1996). The paper was the outcome of several years of work and input from a large number of faculty and research leaders in the state. The paper provides the history and regulations related to program review in the U.S. and California, in particular. Although the role of the academic senates and the faculty is the main focus of the paper, it provides a very detailed analysis of the purpose, linkages, and considerations in developing and implementing the program review process in California community colleges.

As it is indicated in the 2009 ASCCC paper, *Program Review: Setting a Standard*, "program review must be a faculty-led process, motivated by professionalism and the desire to make community college programs relevant, effective, and exemplary" (p. 8). Although program review has gained high attention in recent years, it has a long

history and several evolutionary stages. Historically, faculty expressed high interest in program review, due to the several critical roles program review may play at an institution. One of these roles is the connection of program review to program elimination (ASCCC, 1996). To address this concern, in 1998, a paper on program discontinuance was developed by the state Academic Senate. The paper highly recommended the creation of documented institutional policies on program discontinuance that is separate from the program review process.

Another factor driving high interest of faculty in program review was the response to new legislative mandates, such as Senate Bill 645 and the School Accountability Report Card. For example, Proposition 98 (1988) explains that “it is the intent of the People of California to ensure that our schools spend money where it is most needed. Therefore, this Act will require every local school board to prepare a School Accountability Report Card to guarantee accountability for the dollars spent.”

These legislative actions initiated a process in enabling development of a funding allocation formula that will be linked to performance-based indicators. In response to these mandates, Title 5, Article 2, § 53200 was adopted by the Board of Governors for California Community Colleges (ASCCC, 1996). This article is known as the ‘10 plus 1’ regulation, which requires that all academic and professional matters should be consulted collegially with the institution’s academic senate. Program review is listed among the eleven items of this article. According to this regulation, any academic and professional matter should be (a) developed “relying primarily upon the advice and judgment of the academic senate”; or (b) the district “and the academic senate shall have the obligation to reach mutual agreement” (Title 5, p. 325). Thus, this regulation is legally enforcing the

central role of the academic senate in the program review process at a community college in California.

Constantly updated and foster self-renewal. Program review should serve as a mechanism for program performance assessment, recognition, and acknowledgment. Through the program review process, a program is evaluated based on its ability to allow students to obtain transfer-ready status or prepare for employment. Program review may highlight the need for additional resources, reorganization of the program, or development of a new program. The outcome of program review should lead to an improved quality of instruction and services (ASCCC, 1996, 2009b).

There is no single model for program review that will fit all colleges. A program review process should be locally developed and driven by institutional culture and philosophy (ASCCC, 1996, 2009b). At the same time, it should be constantly reviewed and updated in order to meet the current needs of an institution (Barak & Breier, 1990; Cistone & Bashford, 2002).

Linked to planning and budgeting. Integrated planning is a holistic approach that connects institutional mission and vision to its priorities and resource allocation through participatory governance process (ACCJC, 2009). In addition, program review should be linked to campus planning for better utilization of resources and increased quality. Recommendations developed through a program review process should be considered when resources are allocated or prioritized. At the same time, the connection could be two-sided, which means that in order to establish legitimate goals, budget constraints should be taken into account (ASCCC, 2009a; ASCCC, 1996; ACCJC, 2003).

A comprehensive, nation-wide study including public and private, two- and four-year higher education institutions was done on program review from 1993 – to 1994. Robert J. Barak was the leading researcher on this study. Four-hundred-fifty-two (452) institutions participated in phase one, completion of the survey instrument; thirty-two (32) institutions participated in phase two, which consisted of a telephone interview. The study was focused on the use of program review and its integration with institutional planning, budgeting, and assessment. In particular, the study focused on whether the implemented program review practices are integrated with institutional planning, budgeting, and assessment. If they are, is this integration successful? The results of the study showed that the majority of institutions found program review useful in the budget reduction processes; eighty-five percent (85%) use program review in institutional planning; among the institutions that use program review in planning, only 4% reported that it doesn't work well; seventy-seven percent (77%) of all institutions reported that program review and budgetary processes are integrated; sixty-three percent (63%) indicated integration of program review and student learning outcomes. Leadership and communication were identified as the most critical factors in successful integration of the processes. The other important factors of success were the quality of the planning, budgeting, and assessment processes at an institution. The factors that contribute to successful program review are the same as the factors that contribute to the budgeting and assessment processes at an institution (Barak & Sweeney, 1995).

The University of Maryland System (UMS) provides a good example of the integration of program review in planning and budgeting (Eaton & Miyares, 1995). The impetus for change in the UMS program review process came from the Maryland Higher

Education Commission in the form of an accountability mandate. An accountability team, including faculty, researchers, and administrators, collaborated on the development of a new process for two years. At the beginning, there was significant resistance from the faculty, but the diligent work of the accountability team, with strong support from the administration, enabled the implementation of the important changes that resulted in a new, coherent and integrated program review (Eaton & Miyares, 1995).

According to Thomas Henry (2007), connecting program review and budgeting at non-profit institutions can be used as a tool for resource allocation decisions to meet market needs.

Linked to learning outcomes. In 2005, Marille Bresciani led a comprehensive study, *Good Practices in Outcomes-Based Assessment Program Review*, involving 43 institutions across the nation. The findings and analysis of the study is described in her book, *Outcomes-based academic and co-curricular program review* (Bresciani, 2006). The purpose of the book is to synthesize the best practices on program review frameworks that utilize a single outcome-based assessment process that informs and integrates with other processes at the institution. Bresciani's book became an invaluable source for my research study.

Using the wealth of knowledge obtained from the study above, in 2008 Bresciani conducted a research study at a community college district in California (Bresciani, 2008). Bresciani concluded that for the district in its then-existent form, the implementation of a systemic outcome-based program review process may not be feasible. She proposed six recommendations to transform the district: (a) clarify the purpose and audience for program review results, (b) align all reporting processes, (c)

emphasize communication and use of program review results, (d) provide professional development, (e) provide technical support, and (f) allocate time for program review implementation (Bresciani, 2008).

According to Gentemann, Fletcher, and Potter, the five stages that are critical in building an assessment-based program review process are: (a) developing student learning goals for each program, (b) connecting the goals and curriculum, (c) establishing direct and indirect student learning measures per goal, (d) documenting achievement per goal, and (e) faculty reflecting on the impact of the program review on curriculum (Gentemann, et al., 1994). It is important to coordinate and synchronize curriculum and program review processes (ASCCC, 1996).

Linked to student equity. Based on Title 5, § 54200, there is a set of indicators that are recommended to use as measures in student equity plans. According to the regulation, a set of goals and appropriate activities should be developed to close the gaps that exist between populations of different race, gender, age, disability, or economic circumstances - in regard to access, retention, degree and certificate completion, ESL and basic skills completion, and transfer. There should be parallel between data indicators used in the program review and in the college's equity plan, in order to match the institutional efforts (ASCCC, 1996).

Data-driven. It is important that program review incorporates both qualitative and quantitative data. Quantitative data allows for the development of measurable outcomes. For example, such numbers as enrollment, course success, persistence, transfer, and graduation might be good indicators of student success. However, it is important to qualify the analysis. As qualitative data help to better and deeper analyze the data. Due

to the complexity of the community college student body, the diversity of their educational goals and attainment, the use of qualitative analysis in program review is essential (ASCCC, 1996).

Several research articles highlight the large discrepancy in the use of data between administrators and faculty. Data quality and timeliness are critical factors that increase data usability (Skolits & Graybeal, 2007). Availability of data does, however, not imply that it has been used for decision-making. Building a culture of inquiry and an evidence-based infrastructure takes time, effort, and support. The five critical components that are essential in building a data-driven culture are: processes and procedures that facilitate the use of data; developing and following a research agenda; data usage for decision making; open communication and information sharing; and closing the information dissemination loop by reporting the outcomes (BRIC, 2010b).

Self-evaluation validation, fairness and credibility. In this study, program review validation refers to the process of review and evaluation of a completed program review document. Validation team memberships vary greatly, depending on the purpose of validation processes at a particular institution. For example, it can be for a peer review, require administrative approval, or seek industry expert opinion. Validation processes may play several roles. They can be used as an opportunity to share the wealth of knowledge and experience of a program and at the same time gain feedback on the comprehensive analysis that has been provided in the self-evaluation. Some colleges have developed a comprehensive validation process with a self-evaluation evaluation rubrics and scores. In some colleges, the validation teams create summaries of commendations and recommendations to move plans further to the appropriate committees. It is clear

that although sometimes this process can be very time and labor intensive, it contributes greatly to the wider participation and cross-campus acknowledgments and recognition (ASCCC, 2009b).

In order for a program review process to be successful, it is vital that the process is perceived to be fair and credible. In order for faculty to be involved and dedicate their valuable time, there should be trust in the process and its outcome (ASCCC, 1996).

Linked to accreditation process. Accreditation is based on the concept of institutional self-evaluation and peer review. Program review is based on the concept of self-evaluation on a program level. More importantly, the purposes of accreditation and program review are similar, as they both should result in self-evaluation and self-improvement, and in both cases faculty involvement is critical (ASCCC, 2009b). Thus, it is important to align and coordinate the efforts and timelines of program review and accreditation (Cistone & Bashford, 2002). In addition, as a result of accreditation self-evaluation, an institution develops institutional goals that should become an institutional priority. For this reason, these goals should be addressed in the next program review cycle (ASCCC, 1996).

Currently, the ACCJC has set high expectations for the program review process and its links to other institutional processes at the community colleges in its region. According to the ACCJC's 2009 news release, the two major deficiencies causing sanction are: Planning and Use of Assessment Results (21 colleges) and Program Review (16 colleges) (ACCJC, 2009). Through these sanctions, the ACCJC has become a major force in the current attention to program review at community colleges in California (ASCCC, 2009a). Program review is a good example of an unsupported,

transformational mandate within the California community college system. Program review practices were established across the nation more than twenty years ago. Despite this, it languished in California community colleges, until the ACCJC adopted this concept and used it as an evaluation tool forcing the change. This force can be classified as creating the urgency for change (Kotter, 1995). Currently, ACCJC's threat of probation, and ultimately the loss of accreditation, is giving to the administration and faculty the impetus they need to establish program review and planning processes campus-wide.

Internal Context. The institutional internal context can be divided into structural and functional properties (Huberman & Mills, 1984). The structural properties will refer to the institutional characteristics that are unique to the institution, but are not under the immediate control of an organization, and require change in the external environment. For the purpose of this study, the functional properties will denote the organizational culture in the context of regulative, normative, and cognitive characteristics (Scott, 2008).

Structural characteristics. The structural institutional characteristics of size, location, and demographics may have great impact on the implementation and outcome of an innovation (Huberman & Mills, 1984). The annual Full Time Equivalence Student (FTES) count is one of the most common ways to define size for community colleges; this measure is standardized across the state. For the purpose of this study, the FTES will be used to define the size. Location characteristic will refer to the institutional setting: urban versus suburban (Huberman & Mills, 1984). Another important institutional characteristic that may have an impact on the program review implementation and institutionalization is the primary emphasis of a school: transfer-directed versus primarily

career technical education (CTE) which will be based on the distribution of students' educational goal. There is a Title 5 regulation for CTE programs that requires program review and evaluation every two years, in order to be eligible for Perkins funding. One may argue that CTE versus non-CTE is a functional, rather than structural property of an institution. For the purpose of this study, it will be classified as structural, as it can be identified prior to the data collection and analysis.

Functional characteristics and organizational culture. As Barak and Breier (1990) indicate, the institutional culture was recognized as one of the main factors for success in all institutional processes. Schneiberg and Soule (2005) discuss institutionalization in the context of sociological process and define it as “the activities and mechanisms by which structures, models, rules, and problem-solving routines become established as a taken-for-granted part of everyday social reality” (p.122).

It is a well known fact that organizations are complex social structures “in which individuals and groups are engaged in dynamic interactions influenced by interrelated events” (Curry, 1992, p.2). Organizational culture plays a significant role in institutionalization. The norms and values play an important role in an organizational culture. As they strongly influence the outcome of innovation and its institutionalization (Levin, 1980). Organizational culture is a catalyst that shapes a change. The main functions of culture in an organization are survival and adaptation to environmental changes and internal process integration for survival and adaptation purposes (Schein, 2004). In every organization, the implementation process and institutionalization of an innovation is unique. Another term introduced by Levin (1980) is the compatibility of an innovation for a particular organization. Levin (1980) defines compatibility as “the

degree to which an innovation is harmonious with the organization's norm, values, and goals" (p. 17). According to Levin, participants complain little about the innovation if the elements of innovation are highly compatible with organizational norms, values, and goals. Senge (1999) also indicates that many innovation strategies fail, because they do not take into consideration the organizational culture, structure, and norms (P. Senge et al., 1999).

Program review adoption and planning step. The following considerations should be taken into account when designing and implementing a program review process at a community college: defining what a program is; selecting indicators; identifying a cycle/model; selecting forms/questions; setting timelines; and training (BRIC, 2010; ASCCC, 2009a).

Defining what a program is. In order to select programs for program review the following two questions must be addressed: What is a program? Who should undergo a program review process? The decision on which programs should undergo program review should be driven by a college structure and culture. At the same time, as the purpose of any entity in a community college is to promote educational excellence and better serve students, no function of the college should be excluded from the program review process (ASCCC, 1996). Even more, introducing a campus-wide program review process will break isolated working environments and will synchronize the work efforts of the entire campus.

One of the major challenges for many community colleges is defining what a "program" is. At first glance, it seems like an easy question, but in reality, it is very complicated one. For example, Title 5, § 55000, defines an academic program as "an

organized sequence of courses leading to a defined objective, a degree, a certificate, a diploma, a license, or transfer to another institution of higher education.” According to the ACCJC, it is up to the institution to define its programs, but “the program ought to be coherent enough that its goals and purposes can be defined, and its effectiveness evaluated” (ACCJC, 2003). Furthermore, for academia, the ACCJC requires that a course sequence, certificate, degree, coherent education experience, and even an academic discipline, should be evaluated as a program. To help ease this procedure, the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges in its recently published paper, *Program Review: Setting a Standard*, addressed this issue by listing potential concepts for defining programs, such as: discipline, department, academic major area of emphasis, student educational or service pathways such as basic skill and general education or Extended Opportunity Programs and Services (EOPS), planning units, cost centers, governance structures, and the administrative reporting structure (2009). Thus, there is no single definition for all institutions. More importantly, it should be driven by the current structure and needs of the entire campus.

Selecting indicators. The U.S. Department of Education requires that institutions report on several indicators. This federal mandate is enforced through the regional accreditation commissions. The list includes the following indicators: course completion, retention, sequence progression, program completion, transfer rate, and licensure exam pass rate. Evidence of student learning outcome, which are determined locally, is another set of data required by federal mandate (ASCCC, 2009a). Different colleges use different indicators in their program review process. Most commonly, the indicators cover the

following topics: enrollment, success and retention, completions and awards, demographic, and delivery method data.

An interesting program review model called Efficiency and Effectiveness Program Review Model (EEPRM) is implemented at Mohave Community College (MCC), in Arizona; it won a Bellwether Award in 2006. EEPRM is a very business-like model that is administered on an annual basis (Henry, 2007). The model is based on the balance of two tenets: efficiency and effectiveness. For program efficiency, the following indicators are used: Full-Time Equivalent Faculty (FTEF), enrollment trends, Full-Time Equivalent Student (FTES), and Return on Investment (ROI). The effectiveness indicators are: student success, failure, and withdrawal rates, student feedback on instruction, tutoring and early warning results.

Identifying cycle /model. Regardless of a particular program review model implemented at a community college, the process should be cyclical, or, better yet, spiral. It should be reviewed and improved for every new cycle (Cistone & Bashford, 2002).

During 2009 and 2010 the ACCJC offered several workshops and presentation on program review, in order to meet the California community colleges' high need for guidance on the ACCJC's expectations on program review processes established at institutions. The ACCJC views program review as a mechanism that should drive the cycle of institutional effectiveness and consists of the following steps: Institutional Mission; Learning Outcomes; Measurable Performance Criteria; Educational Practices/Strategies; Assessment: Collection, Analysis of Evidence; Evaluation: Interpretation of Evidence; Feedback for Continuous Improvement; Back to Learning

Outcomes and Institutional Mission (Beno & Maradian, 2009; Beno, Clifford, & Kristoffersen, 2010).

Several interesting program review models were shared at a conference organized by the accrediting commission, Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC), Outcomes-Based Program Review (2010). In particular, I would like to mention the program review model implemented at John F. Kennedy University. This model has been also cited by Barbara Beno, the president of ACCJC, as a best practice. Their process starts at the self-evaluation, which is reviewed externally by industry/discipline experts. After the external review, the program review committee and the provost of the university write a feedback report. Based on the collected evaluation and feedback, the program's quality improvement plan (QIP) is created. The QIP gets vetted by the academic senate and signed by the program chair, dean, and provost (WASC, 2010).

Another valuable publication on outcome-based program review is a book by Bresciani, Gardner-Moore, and Hickmott (2009), *Demonstrating Student Success*. In this book, an entire chapter three is devoted to the outcome-based assessment plan. A nine-step process to establish a data-driven and outcome-based assessment plan is introduced. In addition, it includes a detailed list of the most common assessment plan and report components (Bresciani, Gardner, & Hickmott, 2009).

An interesting program review model was presented by "Changing the Future: Program Review and Evaluation as Tools for Growth", at an international conference in Canada (Hendricks & Cooney, 1992). The simplified version of their program review model included the following components: establish terms of reference, gather data,

develop interim report, develop action plan, present final report, implement action plan, and finally, follow up, which leads to the next cycle of program review.

As it has been mentioned earlier there are only a few recent publications on program review. For example, the Association of Institutional Research (AIR) Professional Files publicize two articles related to program review implementation examples, by Gita Wijesinghe Pitter and Dina Brown. Pitter presents and discusses the program review process recently adopted by Florida A and M University (Pitter, 2007). Brown analyzes the program review framework implemented at Argosy University (Brown, 2008).

Selecting forms/questions. Program review forms and questions are unique to each institution and to the purpose of a particular program review. At the same time, for successful program review, it is important to keep it simple, useful, and for it to make sense for the users at an institution (Cistone & Bashford, 2002). According to the ACCJC (2003), a program review form should state the mission and purpose of the program, program goals, and what has been and will be done to achieve these goals. The Academic Senate lists the following important questions that must be included in a program review: program demand, program resources, program efficiency, and program outcomes (ASCCC, 2009a). Other topics that are most frequently found in program review forms are: linkage and alignment of program mission to the institutional mission; program achievements; internal and external factors that influence the program; statutory, regulatory, and/or professional compliances of the program. Program review forms for career technical programs usually include questions pertaining to the labor market

demand, professional certification and licensing exams, and job placements (BRIC, 2010).

Setting timelines. There are several timeline considerations in the program review process. First, it is the frequency at which program review is being administered at the institution. This differs widely, from an annual process to once every 10 years (Henry, 2007). Also, some institutions use a staggered process, when a certain percent of programs undergo program review each year, others do all programs at the same time (Sheldon, et al., 2008). Next consideration should be on the allocation of the appropriate time for the completion of a program review process. Lack of time to complete the program review document was mentioned as one of the main challenges for faculty and staff (Skolits & Graybeal, 2007).

Training. Staff and faculty development is another essential aspect that is critical for the success of the program review implementation and institutionalization (Jacobs, et al., 2001; Sheldon, et al., 2008). Lack of professional development activities can become a barrier to institutional effectiveness (Skolits & Graybeal, 2007). The results of Bresciani (2006) study demonstrated that all forty-three (43) institutions reported that it is either very or somewhat important to offer program review training for faculty and staff on annual basis. In addition, 88% of institutions find that the financing of the training should be centralized and 87% of institutions find it either important or somewhat important to provide professional development to administrators (Bresciani, 2008).

Implementation step. The program review implementation stage is a cyclical process. Using Senge's terminology, the implementation cycle is one of the "reinforcing" powers that may amplify or delay the flow of the program review institutionalization

process (Senge, 2006; Seymour, 2004). This transformation and implementation process is discussed in several studies, and different steps are stressed by different authors. For example, Seymour, in his book *On Q: Causing Quality in Higher Education* discussed the Shewhart Cycle of continuous quality improvement through four steps: Plan – Do – Check – Act (Seymour, 1993). Deming, the father of modern quality control, modified it to Plan – Do – Study – Act (Queen & Rezin, 1997). Later, in his article *Linking Planning, Quality Improvement, and Institutional Research*, Seymour describes three stage of the reinforcing loop as: plan, act, and check (Seymour, 2004). The Nichols model describes the *Institutional Effectiveness Paradigm* using the following steps and activities: establishment of the statement of purpose; resource allocation; planning; implementation of plans; assessment; feedback of assessment results; use of results; adjustments (Nichols, 2002).

The ACCJC describes the program review cycle as: description of current program condition; evaluation of current condition; planning for needed improvement; implementation of plans; evaluation of the implemented changes (ACCJC, 2003). At the same time, the commission evaluates the institutional effectiveness based on the three components of institutional processes: (a) planning, (b) program review, and (c) learning outcome (ACCJC, 2003; Nichols, 2002). The ultimate goal is that the institutions should eventually reach sustainable continuous quality improvement in all areas (ACCJC, 2003).

Outcome Step. In the outcome step of the conceptual framework for the current study is the current status of program review institutionalization at a given institution. The current status includes degree of program review institutionalization and its impact at an individual, program, and institutional levels.

Degree of program review institutionalization. The degree of institutionalization is the degree to which the innovation is internalized – incorporated into the ordinary structures and procedures of the institution (Curry, 1992). In order to evaluate the level of internalization of program review, it is empirical to evaluate the impact of program review at individual, program, and institutional levels (Cowin, 1996).

Perceived gain, losses, and side effects. This is the identification of anticipated and unanticipated gains and losses on an individual, program, and institutional levels that are innovation specific (Huberman & Mills, 1984). For example, a loss can be in the form of a program discontinuation as a result of program review or when a program receives additional funding due to the evidence presented in their program review; this would be an example of a gain for the program. Administering a program review on an annual basis might allow better connection with the institutional processes, but at the same time, it is a very time consuming practice which might over burden faculty and staff. A mix-method case study led by Skolits and Graybel (2007), discusses several challenges and the complexity of institutional effectiveness efforts in the community college setting. One of the findings of the study is that a well-established institutional effectiveness system creates a rigorous demand on involvement, effort, time, and professional development on all employees across the institution (Skolits & Graybeal, 2007).

Another important component of a study on program review institutionalization is the identification of the positive and negative side-effects of an anticipated or unanticipated nature that are not program review process-specific (Huberman & Mills, 1984). For example, a cross-divisional program review validation process might be

a time consuming practice but at the same time it may break the divisional isolations; learning about each other may help to increase appreciation of each other's work and result in a better work environment and higher morale.

Summary

In 1965, ESEA Title I, initiated the evaluation of educational programs movement. This act laid the foundation for the mandatory program evaluation culture. The assessment process in higher education has been slowly shifting from a peer-review practice to an officially-mandated process. The assessment of institutional effectiveness has become a fundamental concern in the accreditation reaffirmation for educational institutions nationwide (Popham, 1988). A successful program review practice is an essential component of the institutional effectiveness assessment process.

Over the last few decades, many research studies have been done on examining how educational institutions have mobilized, implemented, and used the results of program review. There are also many publications on institutional effectiveness, continuous quality improvement and the need for educational institutions to become learning organizations. At the same time, very little research has discussed how to move from the mobilization and implementation of program review to its institutionalization stage.

In this research study, institutionalization refers to the sustainable continuous quality improvement stage of program review. The study will aim to fill the gap in research by focusing on the factors that influence the institutionalization of program review at California community colleges. In order to identify these factors, the study will

use the Senge's system approach and elements of Huberman and Mills conceptual framework on dissemination of educational innovation.

In addition, identification of perceived-gain and loss together with side-effects of program review institutionalization will help to highlight the strengths and weaknesses of the implemented program review models. Moreover, by analyzing the impact of the program review process at individual, program, and institutional levels, together with identification of the degree of program review, institutionalization will support the self-evaluation efforts for the institutions of study, as well as update and enrich the knowledge on the program review process at community colleges in California.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to identify factors that influence program review institutionalization in California community colleges. In addition, I expect this study to reveal various challenges and achievements in the community college practice in regard to program review institutionalization as well as the impact of program review institutionalization at the individual, program, and institutional levels.

This study is designed to answer the following research questions:

1. What factors influence program review institutionalization at California community colleges?
2. What is the impact of program review institutionalization at individual, program, and institutional levels?
3. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the implemented program review frameworks?

This chapter will discuss the research tradition behind this study, the research setting and context selection, the data source and sample, instruments and procedures, data collection, data analysis, and the role of the researcher.

Research Design and Tradition

The current study follows the rules of a multi-site case study, as it is to be based on the analysis of two community colleges in California. Case studies are very complex, profound, and form a bounded system. As Merriam (2009) stated, the “case study has proven particularly useful for studying educational innovations, evaluating programs, and informing policy” (p. 51). As a research approach, the case study provides an effective

means to investigate practical problems, questions, situations, or puzzling occurrences that exist in everyday practice. Case studies are a great means of making clear to an audience the significance of a particular happening and are particularly useful in generating insight into how individuals, groups, and organizations confront problem situations (Merriam, 2009). They break down and assess broad topics or ideas into more precise studies that ultimately benefit a larger community.

Bogdan and Biklen (2003) defined three types of case studies: historical organizational, observational, and life history. The current study can be classified as a mix of historical organizational and observational at the same time. It is a historical organizational case study which describes the history of program review institutionalization at the selected institutions. At the same time, it is an observational case study, as the majority of data have been collected from the current observation sessions, interviews, and documents. In addition, as Merriam (2009) indicated “the more cases included in a study, and the greater the variation across the cases, the more compelling an interpretation is likely to be” (p. 49). Thus, including multiple cases increase the persuasiveness and transferability of the study. In this spirit, an observational multi-case study design provided the appropriate blueprint to investigate the research questions driving this study.

The research tradition best suited for this study is grounded theory. Sociologists Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss considered as the founders of grounded theory. Their first book, “Awareness of Dying,” was published in 1967 (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007). According to Creswell (2005) the focus of grounded theory is to answer the questions: What is going on? What is the main problem? How are groups trying to solve this

problem? The uniqueness in grounded theory methods is that “data collection and analysis proceed simultaneously and each inform and streamlines the other” (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007, p. 1). According to Elliott and Lazenbatt (2005) in addition to concurrent data collection and analysis, the theoretical sampling and memo writing are the other essential components of grounded theory. These components of the study will be discussed later in this chapter.

Grounded theory may include the products from inductive or deductive reasoning. The data is analyzed, coded, and categorized until a typology of the problem the investigator is studying becomes apparent. As this process of clarification continues, the investigator begins to create ideas about solutions to problems. The purpose of grounded theory is to develop models and concepts that explain the situation. At the same time, grounded theory is about finding the ‘current truth’, as the factors influencing the flow of the process might change depending on the metamorphoses in the environment (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007; Creswell, 2005; Schwandt, 2007). The general concept of grounded theory is that the theories emerge from data, and as the data is constantly changing, the theories are also fluid and need constant reevaluation. Schram (2006) argues that, the basic assumptions of the grounded are:

- The theory emerged from the constant comparative process of data collection and analysis, which explains major variations in the data;
- People’s actions are based on meanings that are formed under internal and external conditions:
 - People’s actions are responsive rather than reactionary
 - Reality is negotiable and constantly changing;

- Theory is not obsolete; thus, it needs constant reevaluation;
- Awareness of interrelationships is central to understanding the process; and
- Social research and theory generating are parts of the same process

There are three major forms of grounded theory: systematic design, emerging design, and constructive approach (Creswell, 2005). This study utilized combination of systematic design and constructive approach forms of grounded theory. The fundamental idea of systematic design is in grouping data into categories and subcategories, then examining the behavior and relationship between categories takes place (Creswell, 2005). In order to answer the first research question of this study, identification of factors influencing program review institutionalization, the systematic design approach was utilized. First, data obtained from different sources were coded thematically and then grouped into main categories. Then, the analysis of relationships between the categories was performed. Next, the elements of the program review frameworks were analyzed, as well as the relationship between the frameworks and the degree of program review institutionalization reviewed. At the same time, the constructive approach was utilized to highlight the impact of a program review institutionalization process. The constructive approach focuses more on participants and explains the feelings of individuals involved in the process (Creswell, 2005). In this case, the analysis was based primarily on the participants' point of view regarding the program review framework implemented at their institution.

In order for a research study to use a ground theory it is imperative that it follows the procedures and canons of the tradition. According to Corbin and Strauss (1990) grounded theory has eleven canons (pp. 6-11):

1. Processes of data collection and analysis has to be synchronized
2. The bases of analysis are concepts not the actual data
3. Developed conceptual categories must relate to each other to form a theory
4. Theoretical sampling is the central sampling strategy of the study
5. Analysis is driven by constant comparison of concepts
6. All occurrences, regular and irregular, should be integrated and accounted for
7. Analysis of the processes is an essential component of the theory
8. Memo recording through the entire study and using them as a data source
9. Research process includes building and verifying categories as well as hypothesis on their relationship
10. To collaborate with other researchers to test concepts and their relationships
11. Broaden the structural conditions while keeping the relationships in the theory

These canons became guiding principles for this study.

Research Setting and Context

For research settings selection a maximum variations sampling strategy was utilized. Based on this strategy two California community colleges were selected for inclusion in this study. Maximum variation sampling strategy is when a researcher initially identifies the factors according to which the selected sites should differ (Creswell, 2008; Patton, 2002). For that purpose, two lists with names of institutions were constructed. The selection criteria were based on external and internal factors identified in the conceptual framework for this study. The external factors were based on the ACCJC accreditation site visit time line and outcome report: recommendation versus commendation on program review processes implemented at the institution. The internal

factors were based on the following characteristics: small or medium versus large institution based on annual full-time equivalent students (FTES); urban versus suburban location of the campus; primarily career technical versus transfer emphases of the institution.

After identifying institutions that met the selection criteria, I contacted the Office of Institutional Research (IR) to identify the gatekeepers and lead people in the program review process at an institution. Since the IR office is the main source of data, it is also often a gatekeeper for research activities at an institution. Invitation letters for each institution were sent to the identified gatekeepers inviting them to participate in this study. Letters of support were obtained from three institutions and were submitted to the CSUN Human Subjects Committee. Upon CSUN Human Subjects Committee approval, a memorandum of understanding was mutually signed by me and one of the institutions. The memorandum of understanding delineated the rights and responsibilities of the researcher and the institution. The other institution had an internal Institutional Review Board that required completion of a Social/Behavioral Research Course. Upon completion of the requested online course the Institutional Review Board of the college approved my research application.

Data Sources and Research Sample

The qualitative data utilized in this multi-site case study were obtained using theoretical sampling strategy. Glaser and Strauss (1967) define theoretical sampling as “the process of data collection for generating theory whereby the analyst jointly collects, codes, and analyses his data and decides what data to collect next and where to find them, in order to develop his theory as it emerges” (as cited in Elliott, 2005, p. 50). Theoretical

sampling is an intentional sampling that is based on theoretical concepts and sub-concepts derived from data analysis with a purpose to develop a theory (Creswell, 2008). Consequently, theoretical sampling is a continuous cycle of data sampling, collection, coding, and analysis.

Historical and current documents, observations, and interviews, and researcher's memos were the data sources of this study. The amount of data collection was driven by grounded theory design. According to Creswell (2005) "a characteristic of grounded theory research is that the inquirer collects data ... until the categories are saturated and the theory is fully developed" (p. 449). Thus, the data were collected and analyzed until the data saturation occurred. Data saturation means that additional data did not generate substantially new information and the same topics keep reappearing. The sampling of documents, participants, and meetings, as well as data collection elements from these sources, were driven by the factors identified in the conceptual framework introduced in the literature review chapter, and CIPP (Stufflebeam, 2007) evaluation model (context, input, process, and product).

Documentation

As it is defined by Creswell (2005), "documents consist of public and private records that qualitative researchers obtain about a site or participants of a study" (p. 230). Documentation required for this study embraced all available accreditation documents, including: self-evaluation, follow-up and midterm reports; action letters from the ACCJC; and the evaluation report prepared by the ACCJC visiting team. Evidentiary material prepared by the college used to support reports were also subject for inspection and study. Additional documentation that were examined included institutional

handbooks, records on budget and planning integration, documentation on governance, planning, prioritization, and Student Learning Outcome (SLO) processes. In addition, valuable data were retrieved from the staff survey related program review and planning processes administered at both institutions. Different committee meeting minutes from several meetings were reviewed, in which topics related to program review process were discussed. In addition, actual program review templates and examples of completed reports were analyzed, as well as, the data and information packs that have been utilized by the programs to complete the program reviews.

Observations

As McCall and Simmons (1969) emphasize, “the most complete form of the social datum is in the form in which the participant observer gathers it” (p. 322). Thus, all data gathered during the observation are valuable sources of information. The pilot study highlighted the significance of observation as a data collection source. Thus, extra efforts were made to arrange observation sessions of the meetings for the selected committees. Theoretical sampling along with stratified purposeful sampling strategy was used to identify committee meetings to observe. Stratified purposeful sampling strategy illustrates characteristics of particular subgroups of interest, and facilitates comparisons (Patton, 1990). The main purpose of observation sessions was to learn more about program review and its role within the college’s processes as well as to gain deeper understanding of the institutional culture, environment, atmosphere, main players, and the distribution of decision making powers. Thus, it was important to observe program review training sessions, meetings of the committees that were lead by faculty and report

to Academic Senate, meetings lead by administrators, and a consultation committee meeting.

Interviews

Rossmann and Rallis (2003) define an interview as “a behavioral event – that is, verbal behavior, a verbal exchange, or pattern of verbal interaction” (p. 162). To identify interview participants, theoretical sampling along with stratified purposeful sampling strategy was used. The stratified purposeful sampling was implemented as the participants were selected from the predefined subgroups: a faculty from program review committee, a faculty from SLO committee member, an academic department chair, a staff member from the services area, a researcher, an academic dean, and a vice president. Thus, I made sure to interview at least one representative from faculty, staff, and administrators and cover both instructional and service areas at each institution. In order to identify people who have a significant role in the program review process, snowballing and networking techniques were used. I asked several people at the institution to recommend people who are involved and knowledgeable about the program review process at their college. At the same time, to focus on a particular interviewee, the theoretical sampling strategy was utilized. Thus, in every instance, the selection of a new interview participant was based on coding, recording memos, and analysis of the collected data.

Confidentiality. As program review is a very sensitive issue in accreditation, interview and observation sessions participants were ensured in the confidentiality of the study. No school wants its accreditation challenges and short-comings publicized. Thus, confidentiality of institutions and participants is essential for this study. For that purpose

no real name or identifiers are included in the final report. In addition, the value-added aspect of the study was clearly communicated, highlighting practical immediate gain the institutions may obtain as a result of this study.

Ethics. The methods for this study were approved by the California State University, Northridge Human Subjects Committee. Written agreements were obtained from both colleges, which gave permission to conduct the study at the institutions. In addition, informed consent forms were provided and co-signed by me and the interviewee at the beginning of each interview session. No real names are used in this study. Any information that may identify the institution or a participant has been removed.

Instruments and Procedures

The following instruments were utilized in this study: letters of invitation for institutions, initial letter of support, California State University Northridge Human Subjects Committee form, and a participating institution Institutional Review Board form or a mutually-signed memorandum of understanding, letter of invitation for participants, informed consent form, and interview protocol.

Letters of invitation. Invitation letters (Appendix A) inviting institutions for participation in the study included the information about my credentials; purpose and research questions of the study; value of the study for the institution and larger community; voluntary nature of study; as well as an assurance of confidentiality in the study. In addition, it included the research time frame, data collection methods, overall numbers of interviews, and observations with the list of preferred interview candidates that were desired to be included in the study.

Letters of support. A letter of support was obtained from each institution confirming the institution's agreement and support for the study. The letters of support were submitted to the CSUN Human Subjects Committee.

Memorandum of understanding (MOU). A memorandum of understanding (Appendix B) was mutually signed by me and institution of study after the CSUN Human Subjects Committee approval to ensure confidentiality of all the information obtained from the documentation gathered at the institution.

Interviews. The following instruments were utilized for the interview sessions: letter of invitation for a participant (Appendix C), informed consent form (Appendix D), and interview protocol with interview questions (Appendix E).

The letter of invitation to participants was similar to the institutional letter of invitation. The interview informed consent form included the purpose of the study, confidentiality, and right to be removed from the study. The interview protocol included interview questions.

Interview Protocol Questions

Semi-structured interview questions were designed for this study. The closed-ended questions facilitate the construction of the parallels between interviewees' responses. Open-ended questions helped to obtain deeper and more complete information of the analysis. Scaled structured questions were utilized to evaluate the degree of program review institutionalization in more quantifiable way.

The first question was designed in such a way as to open a discussion as well as to clarify and confirm information obtained from documentation analysis. This helped to demonstrate that I came prepared and did my share of homework. The second question

asked to draw a diagram for better visualization of the interviewee depth of knowledge and involvement in program review process at her/his institution. The questions were grouped into sections based on the conceptual framework of the study and the ACCJC's Institutional Effectiveness – Program Review rubric. Further refinement of questions was based on the literature review provided in Chapter 2. In addition, pilot interviews and observation were conducted to help further refine and shape the interview questions. The pilot interview sessions were conducted with a classified employee and a research analyst from two different community colleges; an observation session of a program review committee meeting was conducted at a third institution.

Data Collection

As I have mentioned earlier, the qualitative data utilized in this multi-site case study were obtained from historical and current documents, interviews, and observations.

Collecting Documents

Documents were very valuable sources of information for this study. In this era of advanced technology, the Internet has increased access to documents dramatically. It is very common for a community college to post thorough documentation on institutional plans and processes, or even meeting minutes online. Having all the documentation readily available and well organized is highly valued by accreditation visiting teams, so the majority of institutions try to keep their website updated, especially prior to the site visit. Thus, my first choice for obtaining the documents was the institutional website. I examined the web pages of different committees, such as academic senate, program review, SLO, planning, and accreditation, in order to collect documents for this study.

Community colleges are public institutions; thus, the majority of the documents should be publicly available. It is the ACCJC requirement that a copy of a Self-Evaluation, as well as all the correspondence with the ACCJC be posted at each institution's web site. Thus, I had no difficulties in locating all accreditation-related documents for both colleges.

In addition, in many institutions program review and SLO committees report to the Academic Senate as these areas according to '10+1' are under the purview of faculty (ASCCC, 2009a). Thus, these committees follow 'The Ralph M. Brown act' rule of public access for all the information: "The minutes of a meeting ... any actions taken at the meeting shall be posted for a minimum of 10 days in a public place as soon after the meeting as possible" (ASCCC, 2009b). This implies that meeting minutes are public documents and should be made available to the public. Thus, I was able to obtain large amount of documents pertaining to program review at both institutions.

Interviews

An interview is a powerful tool that allowed me to deepen my knowledge and understanding of the institution and its people. I also contacted the interviewees to ask follow-up questions and seek additional clarification. The interviews in this study were semi-structured with open-ended questions that allowed me to probe the perceptions and understanding of the interviewees. An interview protocol (Appendix E) was developed based on the review of the literature and the study's research questions. The interview questions were designed to gather clear, reflective, and insightful responses regarding the interviewees' experience and understanding of the institutional processes. An interview informed consent form (Appendix D) was signed prior to each interview session.

One-on-one interviews were conducted with administrators, faculty, and staff who have some level of responsibility and experience in program review, evaluation, planning, prioritization, and decision making processes. At each site, seven or eight half-hour interviews were conducted. All the interviews were audio recorded. The interview protocol and the informed consent forms were introduced to the participants prior to each interview, contained information about audio recording and participants right to refuse it.

Diagrams. As Huberman (2002) stated, “I believe diagrams are the least utilized tool in the analytical process. Yet they can yield great understanding of the conceptualizations being developed” (p. 337). During the interview process, each participant was asked to draw a visual representation of their college's program review and planning process. It was very interesting to see how each participant perceives the program review process. For many people, visual representation of a process helps to better understand it. This technique was tested during the pilot interview. The outcome was very successful, so it was also used during the actual interviews for every participant.

Observations

Observation sessions provided a greater insight into the college internal context and helped to understand the participants' behavior and their interactions in various settings. From the colleges' websites, and based on my observation session selection criteria described above, I constructed a list of committees that I would like to observe. Next, I contacted the research offices at the institutions and requested the meeting dates for those committees during the month of October and November. Then, I mapped the dates and meetings that would be good source of data for my study. Next, I emailed the research offices with exact committee names and meeting dates to be arranged for my site

visit and observation sessions. Using this procedure I have schedule all 15 observation sessions, seven in one college and eight in the other college. In preparation for the observation sessions, I made sure that I obtained permission to observe a meeting from the committee chair. I contacted each chair and informed them the purpose of my study and my desire to passively observe their meeting and assured them in the confidentiality of my study. During the study, meetings of major decision-making bodies, such as planning and budgeting, Academic Senate, participatory-governance meetings, as well as program review trainings were observed.

During each observation session jotting techniques were utilized. The jottings were transcribed and filed within 2 days of each observation session. While taking notes, I divide each page into two vertical sections and recorded the actual content of the meeting on the left side, descriptive notes on the right side and my reflective notes under each part in parenthesis.

The observation sessions provided great opportunities for a first-hand account of the situation and validation of the processes and campus culture described during interviews and in the documentation. In addition, the observation sessions enabled me to gain a deeper knowledge of the institutional culture, environment, atmosphere, main players, and the distribution of powers.

Memos. As it has been discussed earlier, memos are an integral part of grounded theory. “Memos are the theorizing write-up of ideas about codes and their relationships as they strike the analyst while coding” (Glaser 1978, p. 83). According to Elliott and Lazenbatt (2005) memos may play a dual purpose, as they are not only become a part in data analysis but also become documentation of the researcher’s biases; thus, increase the

researcher's awareness of his/her own subjectivity. Following grounded theory protocol, I recorded ideas that were arising during the data coding and analysis during the entire course of data collection and analysis. I used my memos to document concepts and hypothesis on their relationships as well as new ideas for theoretical sampling.

Data Analysis and Coding

Data analysis in qualitative research study involved organizing data and working with that data according to the type of analysis. The current study uses thematic analysis technique. In thematic analysis, the researcher seeks to identify themes and patterns in collected data (Glesne, 2011). This process begins with compiling data, coding the data, and finally analyzing the codes, code groups, and their relationships.

Data Compilation

The ATLAS.ti application was utilized as the main tool for compiling and analyzing data. ATLAS.ti is a computer program that helps qualitative researchers locate, code, categorize, and annotate texts and multimedia data. It enabled me to visualize complex relations and phenomena. The power of ATLAS.ti is in providing analytical tools that allows consolidating and managing large volumes of data. All the data pertaining to this study were imputed into ATLAS.ti.

Documents. Electronic documents were entered into the ATLAS.ti application automatically. Wherever needed, the initial summary or analysis was done in Microsoft Word, and then the file was entered into ATLAS.ti.

Interviews. About half of the interviews were transcribed by a professional transcription company, but I have cross-checked the transcribed data and audio records as there were many instances where specific terminology was used. For that purpose, I read

the transcribed data while listening to the corresponding audio record and make corrections in the transcription wherever necessary. Then all data was imputed into ATLAS.ti, coded, and categories. Based on the codes and categories I have recoded memos which were also imputed into ATLAS.ti.

Observations. I personally transcribed and documented my observation jottings. In addition to the content information obtained from the observation sessions I have also transcribed and entered into ATLAS.ti my descriptive, reflective notes, and memos.

Coding

I manually coded all the data using the ATLAS.ti application. The coding process was composed of three stages: open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. Open coding is when the raw data is coded line by line; axial coding is when the categories and relationships derived from open coding is tested; selective coding is when code categories are grouped into interrelated themes (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). I began the analysis with open coding. At this stage, each code category that was formed from interview transcription was compared with coded items from the documentation analysis, observation sessions. Analyses of these codes were performed and memos, which included categories, subcategories, and hypothesis on their relationships, were recorded. Based on this analysis and utilizing theoretical sampling next cycle of data was collected. Next, during the axial coding, codes from new responses were compared and verified with data obtained previous cycle of data collection and analysis and then grouped into larger categories. Finally, at the selective coding stage, all categories were grouped into interrelated themes.

Analysis

For data analysis I followed the emerging design approach. The emerging design helps to generate rather than verify theory (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). In emerging design analysis not all codes need to be derived exclusively from the conceptual framework. In fact, some concepts connected to the empirical literature review, pilot study data, and personal experience. Thus, the emerging design approach allowed me to learn factors that have not been included in the conceptual framework or fully investigated in the covered literature review.

At the same time, I utilized the systematic design approach. As Creswell (2005) stated, “a systemic design in grounded theory emphasizes the use of data analysis steps of open, axial, and selective coding, and the development of a logic paradigm or a visual picture of the theory generated” (p. 434). Thus, I reexamined my initial codes and mark all passages that provided information and a deeper understanding of the institution, its program review framework, and on all other factors identified in the conceptual framework. Next, the categories were grouped into sections based on the conceptual framework: imputing factors; internal factors; adoption and planning; implementation; and outcomes.

Then, the analysis of relationships between the categories was performed to identify the characteristics of program review, organizational/structural, and human factors at a particular institution. Further refinement of categories was based on literature review in the following subjects: program review; organizational change; and evaluation theories.

Next, a cross-case analysis was conducted on the data from two colleges. I have organized the initial coded data into categories and themes in a chart format that provide further analysis, connections to literature, and guidance. The data were compared, contrasted, and triangulated to determine the similarities and differences between the two case studies. In addition, the data triangulation included cross-comparing data obtained from interviews, observations, and historical and current documents.

The formulation and organization of data analysis was based on the CIPP evaluation model: context; input; process; and product (Oliva, 2009). Thus, I have provided data analysis using CIPP elements as themes in my coding. But there were not the only themes in my analysis. In addition, the list of evidence on program review institutionalization was compiled, as well as relationships between the factors and institutionalization examples were examined.

Role of the Researcher

To develop strategies and mitigate researcher effects, it is essential to identify the multiple roles a researcher plays in a study, since these roles shape the outcome of the study by influencing processes of data collection and analysis process.

Researcher Role and Sources of Biases

In this study, I had the following roles: researcher, active learner, and professional. A research role implies that I need to be more self-conscious and attuned to the impact of our verbal and non-verbal behavior on the site, on participants, and on the study overall. This is a very familiar role for me, as I have been working as a research analyst for the last fifteen years. On one hand, I believe my research experience was an asset to my study. On the other hand, I have played an active role rather than an observer

role most of the time during my work history. As a research analyst at work, my colleagues always seek my advice as an expert. Thus, I need to be constantly alert and be more neutral in my interactions with participants, in order to not impose my opinion.

Having a role of an active learner is the most engaging role to me. The role of a learner is very appealing to me, as I am eager to learn and expand my knowledge and expertise in the field.

Finally, the professional role that I carried on was a very important role for me. For the last four years, I have been directly involved in the development and implementation of the program review process at several community colleges. Involvement in this process has enriched my perspective in following the larger implications of the program review process. For example, I spent four months developing an online application for a community college with decades of history in program review and integrated planning. In order to develop the application, I mapped all the processes pertaining to program review and planning across the campus. After the application was launched, I hosted several training sessions for faculty, department chairs, and deans. Thus, I had a chance to witness and learn from the first-hand struggles that different groups experienced during the implementation stage.

The multiple roles a researcher plays in a study bring an issue of subjectivity. Subjectivity is always present in any research study. Sometimes researcher is not conscious of it, but it is very important for the integrity of any study to acknowledge and be aware of it. Thus, every effort should be made to be conscious of subjective pitfalls. Different types of effects may become sources of subjectivity. A source of subjectivity may be researchers or subjects. The researchers' effect may be due to his or her biases

towards research questions, subjects, setting, purpose, beliefs, and presumptions. In addition, the researcher may influence the participants and the setting. At the same time, the participants and/or environment may influence the researcher. As Peshkin (1988) indicates, the awareness of subjectivity is the key to its handling. Keeping track of subjectivity, and constantly questioning ourselves as to why we have asked a particular question or applied a particular interpretation to our study is critical. Another important point is that instead of suppressing our feelings and emotions, it is more valuable to “inquire into our own assumptions and shape new questions through re-examining of our previous perspectives” (Glesne, 2011, p 154). Reflexivity helps to discover the researcher’s self-positioning, self-perspective, and self-consciousness (Patton, 2002). Reflexivity involves reflection on mutual effects of researcher and settings, participants and procedures (Glesne, 2011).

In addition, it is important to mention that although I’m an employee at one of the participating institutions, I took every effort during the entire process including data collection and analysis to mitigate that effect.

Strategies to Mitigate Biases

I was very mindful about my biases and subjectivity as the topic has become so personal to me. There were several techniques that I used in this study in order to reduce bias and increase the transparency of the study. To reduce my bias towards the setting, participants, and institutional processes, I have triangulated my data collection methods and sources of information. I have obtained as much comprehensive information on my objects of study as feasible within the scope of the study. I have also invited my peers to review and code the most controversial sections of my data to ensure the accuracy of my

analysis. I have documented and recorded memos in great detail the coding and grouping techniques used during the analysis. Wherever it is appropriate, I have revisited participants to verify the accuracy of recorded responses and my interpretation of the obtained information. But more importantly, I have reexamined and verified or restructured the concept with further data gathering. Constantly taking notes helped me to be aware of my personal engagement and feelings in my study.

Another valuable reflective dimension is the researcher's positioning, which is not a fixed setting, but rather an evolving relationship. In order to be attuned to our intersubjectivity, it helps to take the position of a participant and try to understand their feelings and positioning. For instance, it was very important for me to take off my "lenses" as an institutional researcher, and even more so as a dean. To reduce my effect upon the participants, my main positioning was a "learner." I have introduced myself as a graduate student and as a research analyst from a community college who is eager to learn, in order to assist my college overcome the "deficiency" assigned by the ACCJC in the integration of program review and planning.

It is important to differentiate between tracking and controlling our subjective feelings. Constantly monitoring our emotions helps to learn more about our own values, beliefs, attitudes, and needs. By increasing our awareness, we turn it into our strengths and increase our insight into the emphases of our study.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

Introduction

This chapter presents results of data on program review institutionalization collected from two California community colleges. The data were collected from interviews, observations, and historical and current documents to help answer the research questions of this study, which are as follows: What factors influence program review institutionalization at California community colleges? What is the impact of program review institutionalization at individual, program, and institutional levels? What are the strengths and weaknesses of the implemented program review frameworks? These questions guided the study and produced the results reported in this chapter.

Due to issues related to confidentiality, the real names of the colleges will be substituted with College A and College B. For the same reason, the descriptive information that will make the colleges identifiable will be omitted. Only the information that is relevant to analysis will be included. The current chapter consists of two main sections that respectively represent results on each community college. The data collected from the colleges are presented separately. For each college, results will be presented by the elements of the conceptual framework. This will allow a thorough presentation of all results on factors that influenced program review institutionalization at a particular college. Within each element the results will be organized based on the themes that emerged during the data collection and data analysis of a particular college.

The results presented in this chapter pertain to the current phase of an institution in regard to the elements of the conceptual framework. The elements of the conceptual framework of this study are institutional context, external forces, program review context,

program review planning and adoption process, program review implementation process, and program review outcome at each college. The themes that emerged from data analysis relate directly to these topics. In other words, the conceptual framework directed the development of the results.

The first topic highlighted in this chapter will be the institutional context in order to better differentiate the colleges and correlate the results. The second topic will be the external driving forces of program review for a particular institution. Program review context will be the third topic, which will include two subtopics: purposes of program review and characteristics of implemented program review framework. The fourth topic will be on how program review is planned and adopted at the colleges. Finally, the program review implementation topic will be reviewed, followed by results on the output of the program review institutionalization process at each college.

College A

Institutional Context

College A is a large suburban community college in California with a long history in program review. Hence, the college has had a program review process established and implemented for many years. For example, one faculty member recalled, “Since I have been here, fourteen years, we always have had program review this way.” Based on the last accreditation site visit letters of recommendation, the college received a commendation on established program review and planning processes at the institution. Further, analyzing data related to institutional context for College A, three themes emerged: hierarchical structure of the organization, internal driving forces and participation, and confidentiality concerns.

Hierarchical structure. The college committee structure was clearly defined and separated based on reporting structure: academic senate versus administration. All committee meetings I have observed were well planned and followed the agenda in a timely manner. At the same time, the administration lead meetings were more structured. The atmosphere in all the observed meetings was very collegial. People seemed very informed in their comments and the questions they raised. For most of the meetings, materials had been emailed to the participants prior to the meeting and were not supplied at the meetings. Hence, committee members came prepared with the meeting materials and their notes. At the same time, most of the meetings were geared towards information sharing rather than decision making. Thus, there were not many debates; rather, there were requests for more information or clarification of information. Overall, it appeared to be a hierarchical, top-down management environment. Indeed, one interviewee stated: “Our program review does tend to be very hierarchical.” On another occasion, an interviewee said in response to my inquiry on strategic direction: “Oh, the overarching goals are all written by upper management and that kind of stuff.” That feeling was further reaffirmed by one of the interviewee’s comments in speaking about the program review process: “All they are doing is essentially training us as junior entrepreneurs; it is a lot of the same principals as the outside world. This is why I like it here.”

Leadership and decision making. Based on interviews, observations, and reviewed documents, it became clear that the top management was leading the program review processes with campus-wide participation. At the time there was not any campus committee that was charged with responsibilities related to the program review process. Referring to who is in charge of the program review process, one of the interviewees

stated: “The research office has been very involved in the process and in the format of the program review process for some time now.” This might be due to the fact that “it is a pretty established process. The structure of it going from the faculty, to the dean, to the CIO and the executive committee has been long established.” At the same time, the faculty member feels that there is “lack of clarity in how decisions are made.” Another faculty member stated: “Certainly the mechanism is in place in the program review to make your priorities and to pass those on to the dean for further conversations.” Then he added, “But I have never experienced it, never been part of that conversation.” He concluded: “Personally, I would like to see less of a hierarchical nature to our program review.” Another faculty member confirmed this view: “We’re very involved in the creation of the program review, but once we hit the submit button, not very.” She concluded, “I think there is a disconnect at this college about where this information goes once it’s completed.” Another faculty member remarked, “I think the senate is gaining the desire to be the driving force behind the program review, but it has not quite come together yet.”

At the same time, it is important to mention that the faculty all in a leading position in regard to SLO. The SLO section in program review gets reviewed by “SLO coordinators, who are giving peer feedback on SLOs,” said a faculty member. Even a vice president admitted that “with SLO, especially, it is hard for the dean to give input. It would have been an odd dynamic.” He concluded, “It should be faculty driven.”

Internal driving forces. Although there were variety of responses to my question “Who are the main driving forces of the program review at your institution?” almost all the respondents included management and middle management as the main

driving force of program review at their institution. It was interesting to learn from one of the faculty members that the term “middle management” stands for department chairs.

It is important to mention that there are about eighty academic departments in College A. Thus, there is a large group of faculty members who are department chairs or “middle managers.” From conversations at the college, it became clear that department chairs are the ones who are responsible for completing and submitting program review for their departments: “The department chairs are the ones that actually complete the program review.” Only department chairs can access the online program review system to enter information pertaining to their department. In summary, I find that the following quote from one of the faculty members is very descriptive of the College A institutional context on program review: “I think we were hired because we demonstrated this ability to think this way in our interview—that there’s a need for this college to do a program review.”

Participation. When I asked who participated in the program review process, the administrators answered they believed that everybody is involved. One of the managers said, “Everybody gets their input and everybody gets a piece.” Later in the conversation she remarked, “Anybody who wants to be involved gets involved.” Another manager confirmed this perception saying, “Area deans are really good about involving classified staff and faculty. Conversations on the topic of program review come up all the time.” He concluded, “Everyone gets pretty actively involved in that process.”

However, the faculty members took a different stand on this question. For example, one faculty members said frankly: “Ideally, all faculty should be involved. I don’t think that’s the case.” He continued, “I think the burden falls to the department

chairs.” Then he clarified, “I think the chairs feel a certain responsibility to this more than other faculty members might, because of their position.” At the same time, most of the faculty members admit that they “are encouraged to and [they] do get input from the rest of [their] department,” although it is not always happening as much as they would like. Another faculty member argued, “I don’t think I can sit here in my own little office and come up with everything we’re gonna need in the future and every place we need to go and what kind of curriculum I need to write.”

Several interviewees mentioned the buy-in power and importance of participation in program review. For example, one of the managers stated: “Program review helps me to get the buy-in of my staff to be able to move towards something.” One department chair shared his perspective on getting more participation from his colleagues: “Because they all participated, helped write it, and came up with our department objectives, it makes [it] very easy to get buy-in for where we need to go, for the direction of our department.” Referring to the institutional level buy-in and participation, a department chair confirmed the importance of involvement in the program review process, saying, “I feel like if you’re not going to be part of it, you can’t complain about it afterwards, so you’ve got to put your two cents in so that your voice is heard as well.”

Confidentiality concerns. Another result in the college culture that I find important to highlight is the confidentiality issue in relationship to the information that can be publicized. Most of the internal information related to the college operations and processes is on the Intranet and is not available to the public. As a vice president of College A mentioned, “All reports are on the Intranet, not Internet, because public information people want that outside people go through them asking for reports. They

want to know who is asking for information to make sure they give the right information.” Or as another interviewee responded, “I know it’s accessible, but I don’t think it’s there for public viewing.” I was even more surprised to hear from a long-term faculty member the following comment: “I’m trying to say something without getting myself in trouble.” Another interviewee quipped, “Gosh,” in response to a question on a role of external forces such as ACCJC, CCCCCO, and the federal government.

External Forces

From conversations on topics related to external forces such as ACCJC, CCCCCO, and the federal government, it became clear that currently those powers have some effects, but they are not the main forces that drive program review at College A. The following comments demonstrate the overall attitude towards this topic: “Without ACCJC or the federal government, Department of Education, or the chancellor's office pushing that, then I don't think it would have happened.” At the same time, “Although program review started as one of those mandatory documents, now it is more than that.” Nevertheless, every interviewee mentioned the importance of having program review as part of accreditation requirements to make sure that it is in place and used properly: “I think it is import that it is an accreditation requirement.” Another faculty member simply said, “Certainly, that is an important exterior factor.” One of the administrators explained, “I think they should have a role in terms of making sure that we have a good planning organization so that we have our ideas in place.” In summary, because College A received a commendation on program review in their accreditation site-visit recommendation letter, the influence of the external force on program review was not dominant.

Program Review Context

The program review context was brought through people's understanding the purposes of program review within their institution and characteristics of implemented program review framework.

Purpose of program review. This topic, purpose of program review, became a central point of conversation during every interview. Overall, the following program review purposes have been identified for College A: planning, decision making, evaluation, accountability, improvement, and dialog and communication. For example, one faculty member summarized:

I think that program review is there to try to get faculty and department chairs to slow down for a minute and look to the future and really decide what's necessary—where they have been, where they are, and where they need to go to make their programs successful. And I think we are doing a pretty good job in that at this school. At least I found it pretty helpful.

This point of view typifies almost all the interviews at College A.

It is important to mention that the three purposes of program review, planning, decision making, and evaluation, were mentioned by every person I talked with and were evident in actual program review documents I have reviewed.

Program review purpose—planning. Some of the interviewees stressed the planning purpose of program review through the entire conversation. For instance, as one interviewee explained the planning purpose of program review: “It becomes a kind of planning, guiding document.” Another interviewee said frankly, “It's so tied into overall planning and program planning that we have to do it.” Indeed, one manager stated:

“Again, it just provides kind of a roadmap of what you’re going to follow within the next year or two years or three years.” Then she continued, “It really is paving a way to a vision or a plan.”

Program review purpose—decision making. One faculty member confirmed the importance of program review in decision making, saying, “Program review has become such a central part in decision making on this campus that if you haven’t done your program review, or you haven’t taken it seriously, then it would definitely impact your department.” One department chair recalled from his experience: “In my program review for the last several years, I have indicated the need to renovate [a specific area].” He continued, “As a result of having it in our program review and showing the need consistently, that funding has been allocated to help upgrade that space.”

Program review purpose—evaluation. Evaluation as a purpose of program review was another widely shared opinion at College A. One person called program review a “self-evaluation.” Another person named it “self-reflection.” Only one person connected it to students, saying, “I think one of the primary purposes is for each department—academic and institutional—to look at what the data shows about their department in terms of the students.” In this regard, one faculty member stated: “The most important purpose is for each department to look at their program very closely and carefully.”

Program review purpose—improvement. In some cases evaluation purpose was mentioned in combination with improvement purpose of program review. One administrator explained: “At our college, program review is a vehicle for departments to reflect how they are doing and make improvements.” A faculty member added that program review involves “departments’ self-evaluation to see what their strengths are and

seeing what they can improve.” But, surprisingly, improvement was mentioned by only a few interviewees.

Program review purpose—dialog and communication. Interestingly enough, as a purpose of program review, dialog and communication were mentioned by many interviewees. One faculty member stated: “It is a formal way for us to let the rest of the campus know what we are trying to accomplish.” Another faculty member confirmed this view: “Nowhere other than in program review is that information clearly stated and on record for their division.” Another interviewee commented, “It is a great way to streamline all of the information about your program.”

Program review purpose—accountability. The accountability as a purpose of program review was mentioned by faculty members. One faculty member illustrated his concern that “if we were not doing the program review, departments might solicit the information, but they may not actively examine it and consider the implications of that information.” Another faculty member expressed his thoughts that “program review is also important for the deans of each division to look and see how their departments are doing.”

I was thrilled to hear how excited one of the faculty leaders was about program review and its role at their college: “I think what I like about program review is that it has the potential for discussion and dialog, institutional advancement and improvement, and institutional effectiveness—certainly the improvement of institutional effectiveness.”

Characteristics of program review. There were several characteristics of program review at College A that were apparent from the conversation during interviews and the review of historic and current published documents. The major theme on

program review characteristics was its linkage and integration with other institutional processes. Based on the literature review presented in Chapter 2, it was evident that linkages and integration of program review with other institutional processes become strong factors in the program review institutionalization process. The data analysis for College A showed that program review at the college was linked with institutional plans, budget and resource allocation, and student learning outcome and curriculum.

Linkage to institutional plans. The most vivid characteristic of program review at College A was the linkage between program review documents and institutional plans. One interviewee explained:

All institutional plans are extracted from our program review documents. And you know that while you're writing it; you know that it's also going to be included in the institutional plans, so that you need to write this not as an individual. So you write what you need overall, so that way it's tied into the institution and the direction the district wants to go.

Another interviewee simply stated: "Strategic Plan drew exclusively from our program review documents." Then she clarified, "Department planning goes into college-wide plans." On that note, the vice president stated: "I love that it is integrated with Strategic Plan and Education Plan and budget." Then he added proudly, "Fully integrated."

Furthermore, every interviewee included institutional plans in their diagram of the program review process at their college. Even when it was only two boxes, one of the boxes was for their department and the other one was for the institutional plans. I was amazed at how much that linkage notion was engraved in people's vision of the program review process at their institution. For example, one of the faculty members drew a

program review process diagram, and then explained: “After I submit it, it goes to institutional research, and then feeds to strategic plans, education plan, facilities, and all other institutional plans.”

Linkage to budget and resource allocation. Another characteristic of program review at College A that was mentioned by every interviewee was its linkage to budget and resource allocation. One interviewee recounted: “Every department now, whether instructional or non-instructional, has to tie their budget to their program review, so you’re justifying your budget request.” Another faculty member simply stated: “The program review includes a budget request.”

At the same time, there were differences between the administration and faculty in their perception of the functionality of this linkage. The administrators viewed it as more of an enforcement or compliance mechanism. Indeed, one administrator stated, “Most people are asking for money or staffing that triggers somebody to check if it was in program review.” Then he added, “They cannot make a request without it coming out of program review.” Another administrator said directly, “Since you could not have a budget if you do not do program review, everybody had to participate.”

However, when faculty members were asked about whether program review was linked to budget, the common response was, “Well, in theory, yes.” A faculty member said frankly, “It’s a tenuous link.” All faculty members agreed that it is necessary to include all resource requests in a program review document: “We do often get asked, if we’re asking for something, whether it’s in our program review.” Another faculty member confirmed, “If you haven’t listed it in your program review, there’s very little chance of it happening.” Thus, she concluded, “The concept’s in there, yeah.” She went

on, “But it’s not clear how budgeting decisions are made.” It was clear that faculty members expect more budgetary decisions to be based on program review. A faculty member commented:

We have had some preliminary discussion on campus about the idea of zero-based budgeting. But at this point everything was just rolling over. So if you had it last year you get it again. But you are not getting any more than you had last year, unless it's forced costs.

In conclusion, although there is evidence that program review is linked with budget and resource allocations, faculty would like to see stronger integration between these processes.

Linkage to student learning outcome and curriculum. All interviewees agreed that program review and SLOs (student learning outcomes) are linked at their college. One interviewee explained, “You have to report them within your program review, so there’s a whole area in your program review that’s in there to report your SLOs and ALOs.” Furthermore, everybody agreed that more integration has to follow. The vice president said, “Right now we have two separate systems with different SLOs.” He continued, “Someday we hope that all the SLO staff will be in one system and automatically linked to program review.” Then he concluded, “Right now, this part is not completely working for us the way we want.”

At the same time, the vision on what needs to be changed was different between administrators and faculty members. The administrators believe that “SLOs are listed in our program review, so SLO is part of the program review.” According to the administrators, the main thing that needs to be changed is the synchronization of the

actual SLO in two systems: curriculum and program review. However, faculty members argued, “In reality there isn’t a link to SLO.” Another faculty member added to this topic, “I guess we use our SLO data, but it’s not as clear of a tie to program review.” She elaborated, “I think the bigger question is how SLO information is used for funding and for institutional advancement.” Then she concluded, “I think, if anything, there is disconnect at the moment between those two things.” Another faculty member said honestly, “I think that we are just checking off when we put our SLOs in the program review.” She continued, “I think we’re checking something off on the list that the president made us do, as well as the chancellor, state chancellor, and then accreditation and the federal government agencies.” But another faculty member was more optimistic: “But that’s to be expected, due to the nature of this process; I think the faculty is still coming to terms with SLOs and how to assess them and what this means for the department.” Therefore, he believed that their college is “only a few years away from really seeing an integrated understanding of how assessment can drive decision on campus.”

A combined program review and SLO training session was a good example to demonstrate that college leaders are moving towards program review and SLO integration. The trainings were organized by the staff development coordinator and geared towards all faculty and staff. The program review section was led by the institutional research office, and the emphasis was on new features of an online program review application that the college utilized. The SLO section was led by one of the SLO coordinators who was sharing how the SLO information in the program review application will be utilized to do campus level SLO data analysis and reporting. From the

training session it became clear that the campus community is well educated in the SLO and program review processes, but more work needs to be done on the integration of these processes.

Thus, program review was integrated with institutional plans and resource requests, and was linked with SLO and curriculum. Linkage and integration of program review with other institutional processes was one of the strongest characteristics of the program review process at College A.

Planning and Adoption

For College A, the planning and adoption topic is related to the process of reviewing, planning, and adopting changes related to the “program review process that [has] been in place for over 12 years.” According to one of the administrators, program review processes get reviewed “every 2 to 3 years.” He explained that “every few years we get some people together to get feedback, do a survey of all full time employees on the campus to see if the process goes well.”

The recent substantial change in the program review process was to move to a web based application for program review. One interviewee remarked: “Switching to the online program review with full budget integration was a little dramatic change.” Another interviewee stated on this point, “With any change, there’s pain.” She added, “In order to get to the plus side of something, you kind of have to go through that extra level of pain.”

One of the administrators stated the importance and value of the online system: “Now we know when things are due, so I mean, it’s not loosely-goosey, it’s very structured.” He concluded, “We now have it online, so the process itself is much more

manageable than it used to be. It's much easier to do." However, a faculty member complained,

It's a clunky form. It's homegrown, so it's not always intuitive, and to make changes to it is a significant workload issue for the programmer ... it also makes it harder to change the process because so much programming has been invested in the current system.

At the same time, another faculty member expressed her optimism saying, "As we use it more and more, one, we will get more familiar with the technology, and two, there will be refinements made to the technology so it's easier to use." Then she added, "Probably the use of technology is great, but there's probably some growing pains right now." She was not the only one who had a positive attitude. One manager shared, "It's beautiful. I mean, it still needs a little refinement, but it works pretty well." Another faculty member commented, "I'm really looking forward to this year making—you know, sort of cleaning it out, making it what we really want it to be, and then I think it will be easier for the next couple years."

Implementation

Program review at College A is done by all instructional and non-instructional departments. There are more than 100 units that complete program reviews. A faculty member explained, "Theoretically speaking, we do one big review every three years. On year two and three it's voluntary to go back into the system and tweak little things." She concluded, "Because it's now online, it's ended up being almost every year we do it." Another faculty member confirmed it: "The overall revision of the documents is every three years, but then every year there is a minor revision. So we do it, pretty much, every

single year.” One faculty member corroborated, “We review it constantly.” Referring to flow program review process, a faculty member summarized: “We are actually beginning with departments, so departments talk among themselves, and then that goes on to the division. So that then goes on to the vice president of instruction.”

It was evident that the department chairs were planning their activities for the upcoming program review cycle. One department chair shared: “Now, this coming year we’re going to do a very big revision, so that means going back, looking at new data, coming up with new ideas, looking at staffing needs and budgetary needs.” Another department chair described the preparation process: “Right now I’m in a sort of gathering, feedback stage. So we are brainstorming, we are having discussions. Sometime around December or January I’ll put that all together into a draft.” He continued, “Then I’ll enter the draft into the form and bring the draft back to the department for feedback.” Yet another department chair confirmed the perception, saying that “even though I haven’t typed a single thing yet, we have already started the planning session at the department meeting. We will probably have meetings on this and then it will be due in February.” She continued, “So probably at our spring departmental retreat, which is when the full-time and part-time faculty are there, I’ll share the draft for them to make additional changes.” She concluded, “Then finally in February, I’ll hit the submit button and forward it to my division dean.”

Yet another department chair indicated that the dean gets involve earlier in the process, saying, “I am also simultaneously meeting with my dean to get his input about what he thinks the department should be doing or what directions we should go in or what needs we have.” She concluded that the dean would “make sure we emphasize it all

in the program review.” Another department chair shared his experience: “The dean reviews it and makes some comments, if he chooses to. Then he ranks the budget requests and kind of puts them into the context of the whole division.” Next, the dean submits program review along with prioritized budget requests to the appropriate vice president. For example, a dean explained that “then it goes on to the—in my case, because I’m working with an academic program—it then goes on to the Office of Instruction.” Each vice president presents their budget priorities to the president’s advisory committee on budget. The final decision on priorities is made by “a collegial consultation committee on budget requests.” Then “those decisions get communicated back to the division dean and ultimately to the department chairs and faculty.” However, there was a faculty member who argued, “Some chairs feel that they submit and they never hear a single thing again, neither on their program review nor on their resource requests.”

Outcome

One of the most interesting results was the analysis of data related to the outcomes of program review at College A. The analysis is based on data collected from documents, observations, and interviews about program review importance and value, as well as the impact of program review institutionalization.

Importance, value, and impact. Referring to program review documents, one interviewee simply stated: “It is a document that is definitely respected on campus.” Another said: “So it’s an extremely important process.” One faculty member claimed, “People really take these documents seriously.” Yet another interviewee confirmed the importance of program review, saying, “People understand that they have to take this

document seriously.” Although one of the interviewees claimed, “Oh, it’s easy. Writing it is a lot of fun,” it was evident that completing program review is not a simple but necessary charge. A faculty member reflected, “So it is time consuming, but I don’t think it’s a waste of time.” Other faculty members confirmed, saying: “I find it time consuming, but I don’t find that painful,” or, “It’s time consuming, but it’s worth it.” Yet another faculty member said, “Even though some department chairs and others complain about the fact that they have to do the program review, I believe there’s a tremendous benefit in it.” On this point an administrator commented: “I think it can be structured in such a way that it doesn’t feel like it’s a burden.” Then she added, “I enjoy looking at data and figuring out what good it’s doing us, so that’s why I like doing it.” In addition to the importance of the program review document, all interviewees highlighted its value in planning and accountability, as well as in creating more dialog and broadening participation by faculty and staff.

Planning. Almost all interviewees mentioned the significance of program review in planning. For example, one department chair reflected, “You do it because it is important, and then also I think the other component is that chairs recognized that this document is going to guide where their department is going.” One department chair said, “It’s a really good process because it makes you think not only about what you’re doing right now, but long term.” Indeed, one administrator acknowledged, “I like that...we are encouraged to come up with goals and objectives, and to review how our departments are functioning, and then to check in with those goals and objectives on a regular basis.” On this point, referring to program review, a faculty member explained, “It’s a tool that provides you a way of organizing your thoughts and your goals. Not that those goals

can't change, but I think it's important to actually put them down on paper and document it." The same argument was provided by another faculty member: "I can say that I take time with my program review. I write down what we need and why we need it, what our goals are, what we plan to achieve and why we want to achieve."

Accountability and evaluation. Program review was also used as an accountability and evaluation mechanism. One administrator indicated that "There's a lot of interaction that it fosters, and I think it also, from my standpoint, helps me keep on track and more abreast of what my departments are up to." She added that program review is helpful "for institutional plans, and evaluating our progress towards reaching those plans." Like this administrator, a faculty member said: "The program review process allows a department to identify the goals, show the status of the goals, and whether the goals have been completed." Another faculty member added: "Program review is that opportunity to put SLO information in, so that way we can keep track of all of them." He continued, "We're able to use it for the inventory for ACCJC." Yet another interviewee articulated this practice saying, "We as a department look at our program review from time to time just to see how we meet our benchmarks." She summarized, "We are constantly evaluating, customizing, and changing what we do."

Decision making. Based on the interviews, it was clear that most of the decisions on resource allocation were linked to program review. To illustrate the role of program review in decision making, one of the faculty members used some examples:

If there is a need for staffing, a need in regard to equipment, or a need with regard to other kinds of issues, it has to be in that document. If it's not in that document,

then people can't go and say, "We need an extra person in Psychology." Well, is it in your program review? No? Then you can't move forward.

Another faculty member stated more generally: "I think that program review is the best way to develop a solid argument when you want to advocate for your department, and for yourself, the future of the college." One of the managers described the link, saying, "So any time there's a question of 'Why are we doing this?' Oh, well, do you remember, it's in our program review." She concluded, "So on an individual basis, it makes it easier for me to implement things." In fact, another manager recounted, "Well, sometimes there are growing pains when we try to implement new things." She continued, "With our new imaging system, I was able to implement it only because we've all made the agreement when we put it in our program review." On this point an administrator claimed, "I think program review is helping people making some authentic changes." He added, "And I have lots of evidence of that. I kind of marvel sometimes [at] all the changes people are making through the program planning process." He concluded with, "It is neat to see it all working."

Dialogue and team work. Creating more dialogue and seeding a team work environment was another common topic of discussion related to program review. For instance, one department chair reflected on her experiences, "I like that it pretty much forces me, and I don't mean that in a bad way, but it prompts me to have these discussions with my department." She continued, "It's not something done in a vacuum. It brings everybody to work together, together as a team." She summarized, "I found it pretty helpful." One of the department chairs confirmed this perception saying, "It gives me, as a department chair, a direction, and I think it does help us function better as a

team.” Another interviewee concurred: “It prompts me to have these conversations with my colleagues, and I think the process of going through planning together helps us to function more as a cohesive unit.” On this point one of the faculty members shared: “We’ve gone through this process together, and we’ve identified common priorities and goals.” She also believed that “there’s a tremendous benefit for faculty to talk about their departments as they’re formulating and completing the program review.” Another faculty member concurred, “The benefit and the power of the program review is that it allows and encourages faculty conversation to occur.” He continued, “That conversation may have happened informally, but unless it’s written down and in this formal document, I think it can easily be forgotten or dismissed.” A department chair explained, “I use program review as an opportunity to dialogue and talk with my department faculty about what we’re doing successfully in terms of retention and success rate and where we might want to focus our efforts in the coming year.”

College B

Institutional Context

College B is a midsize urban community college in California. Based on the historical documentation, the college program review process has been scattered. As a result, after its last accreditation site visit, the college received a probationary sanction from ACCJC. One of the main recommendations was related to the identified deficiencies in the program review process and lack of its integration with planning and resource allocation. Further, analyzing data related to the institutional context for College B, four themes emerged: institutional history on program review, multiple power

and authority structure of the organization, internal driving forces, and transparency concerns.

Institutional history. From the conversations with participants from College B, it was evident that institutional history related to program review still had a high influence on people's position on that topic. And, in almost all cases, participants recall it with negative feelings. Here is how one of the longtime faculty members described the people's attitude towards program review at College B: "This college had a lot of not-so-good experience with program review. For example, prior to this particular process, program review was seen only as to satisfy the accreditation requirements." Later she added, "Some departments still think of program review as just a hurdle that needs to be jumped over and just something else that they have to do. When looking that particular way it becomes an honors process." Another faculty member recalled, "People do not remember good stuff, but they have very good memory of what happened badly."

Another faculty member described her past experience with program review, saying:

Historically, I thought it was a document that was just time consuming. It was a wish list of past, pie-in-the-sky, do whatever you want. And then when we did and asked for dollars it didn't make sense. And that was the problem. We just wanted, but nothing was done.

Even an interviewee who was new to the college talked negatively about the previous program review process, stating: "I think that was one of the reasons why they were on probation. They didn't think that the college had any responsibility for improvement; it was all referred [to] as students' fault."

At the same time, most of the participants believed that the situation has changed. For example, a faculty member remembered, “I have been here for over 10 years. There [has] always been program review, but there's never been a program review at this level.” Another faculty member explained, “Historically, we just throw money, and it's nice when we had some money, but today the situation is different.” In another interviewee’s opinion, “I think right now we’ve all gotten our head out of the sand and admitted that we need to do something to ensure that our programs and courses are up-to-date in all aspects.”

Loosely coupled system. The majority of educational institutions represent a loosely coupled system (Kezar, 2001). According to Kezar (2001), “Loosely coupled systems are uncoordinated and have greater differentiation among components, high degree of specialization among workers, and low predictability of future action, including change” (p.70). College B was a vivid example of an institution with a loosely couple system. The committee structure was divided by committees that report to Academic Senate (AS) and to Share Governance Committee (SGC). The membership of SGC’s committees is based on representatives from different participatory groups. Some AS committees also have constituency representative participatory structure, others have only faculty. Based on observation sessions, there was a drastic difference in the work environment between committees that consisted of faculty only and shared governance committees. In the faculty only committees there was clear absence of a support staff, lower quality of minutes, and less structured flow of the meetings. All shared governance committees had two co-chairs, one from the faulty and one from the administration. This is how a faculty member emphasized that situation:

The Program Review Committee reports to Academic Senate, but it is co-chaired by the dean of research and has VPs, deans, classified students, and faculty members. Anyway, they all have input in these committee. It is intended to pool various constituencies in the college into program review process.

The same point was highlighted by another faculty member: “We have the program review oversight committee, which is overseen by Academic Senate. It has input from the administration as well as having representation from the classified staff and students.”

That attitude was echoed by another interviewee, who said: “Program Review Committee, [as] part of Academic Senate, also reports to the SGC, so it is part of the participatory governance process.” She concluded, “By reporting to AS and by making reports to the SGC helps the share governance bodies to be informed.” This demonstrated that the committee reporting and organizational structure were very important factors for the participants. Being a loosely coupled system, it was important to have different constituency representatives on the committee to make sure that decision making and information dissemination happened through the members of the committee.

Almost every faculty member specifically mentioned the important role of the faculty in the program review process. “The faculty need to be engaged in program review. Because if faculty is not involved in program review it becomes only a mind numbing exercise,” said one faculty member. Another faculty member commented: “The administrators’ job is setting the guidelines and deadlines, but the faculty are the ones that are assessing the students on a daily basis, so it is our job to review our programs.”

In addition, due to the fact that College B had a large number of career technical programs, there was clear opposition between career technical and academic programs' faculty members. Specifically, one faculty member said, "Some departments did a better job than others. For example, vocational programs were aware of what is going on in industry and reflected in the contexts what students need to learn." Another faculty member confirmed that point of view saying, "Vocational programs were probably very up-to-date on their programs, whereas the academic side was probably lagging more." In that regard, one interview claimed that "some career technical programs get a lot of support from administration, not by the internal workings of the departments."

Furthermore, analyzing the interviewees' diagrams, it was interesting to see how different were the participants' perception of the program review process at their college. There were no two diagrams alike or even two diagrams that would emphasize the same important aspects of program review process implemented at the College B. At the same time there was one important common feature of the diagrams: none of the diagrams were a simple flow of a linear process, everyone drew it as a cyclical process.

Egalitarianism and transparency. Another theme that was emerging from the data was about egalitarianism and transparency in College B. There were very strong feelings about favoritism and transparency issues in decision making processes at the college. For example, a longtime faculty member commented: "I like that nobody is opting out or being let to opt out of doing program review. And nobody has been given any leniency for it, as far as I could see. There have not been any special cases or forgiveness." Later he added, "If there is no compliance, then there is no access to extra resources. And everything is documented." Then he concluded, "I think that is a very

good and promising thing to see at this campus.” In this regard, an administrator shared, “Most I like about program review the fact that we're forcing everybody to do it; it is very important. And I know I said force.”

Two other faculty members displayed a similar passion on the topic of transparency:

Program review exposure has been the biggest wow factor for me on our campus. Because, before, it was just something individuals did, and we never talked about it. We never uncovered any part of it and now it's so transparent, it's so visible.

We talk about it. When [it] gets funded, we know what it is and why.

The other faculty member described her feelings about program review like this: “From the institution point of view, it became a lot more transparent. Just by being on validations, you get to read everybody's program review. We never did that in the past.” She continued, “Program reviews are on the Web to read. You can read everybody's goals, read everybody's mission statement. It is a great feeling.”

Internal driving forces. There was a wide range of responses on program review driving forces at College B. An interviewee from a non-instructional area believed that the program managers are the driving force. Three interviewees who were faculty but not a department chair believed that the Program Review Committee or its co-chair, the dean of the research, is the internal driving force, whereas the department chairs claimed that the faculty members with the department chair leadership are the internal driving forces. A department chair stated: “I think the faculty and the department chairs are the main driving force of program review. The administration basically sets the guidelines and the ground rules, but the faculty's motivation to do it are the main driving.” Another

department chair expressed the same perception: “The department chairs right now pretty much know what to do and how to do. So they are the driving force for the rest of the faculty. At the discipline level, when faculty are by themselves, they are the driving force,” she said.

At the same time, several participants shared their expectation that the program review driving force will evolve into something different than it is now. A longtime faculty leader said, “The driving forces probably would become more bottom-up instead of top-down, I guess. It really should start with students. So it will go student and then faculty, staff, go up to the administration and then also go overall campus wide.” Yet another interviewee expressed the point that the more the campus sees the use of program review results in decision making, the more they will be empowered: “Everybody needs to have empowerment—experiencing a situation when campus have looked at my program review and now I'm gonna finally get funded for what I need.”

Based on the administrator’s view, the internal force is still the effect of the external enforcement. “If our college hadn't gotten placed on probation, we still wouldn't do it. So the impetus for doing it was accreditation and its leading requirements,” said one of the administrators. Then she continued:

The fact of the matter is, that's [how] humans operate. If there were not stop signs and stop lights, nobody would stop. So, if you know you would not get a ticket for speeding, you would go fast. So the fact of the matter is, we work best with parameters. Unfortunately, [the] majority of us work best when somebody says you need to do this.

Likewise, another administrator confirmed the perception that “unfortunately, they've had to legislate and regulate us to do program review because we wouldn't do it on our own.” He continued, “Well, yes, the initial driving force was accreditation. However, that's really, really changed now.” At the same time, a longtime faculty member expressed her stand saying, “I think that whenever you have people working on something, it is always carrot and a stick. The ACCJC is enough of the stick; faculty needs more carrot and resources to balance it out as well as things that will help people to understand better the meaning of program review. That is how we can make that process dynamic.”

Participation and involvement. Based on the data collection results, all units on the campus participate in the program review process. Indeed, one staff member reflected, “All departments participate. Everyone who’s involved with the institution is involved in some way in the program review, even students.” Another member confirmed this perception saying, “I think it’s good to involve all areas—even the president’s office. Everyone is involved.” He specified with an example: “For instance, our validations is done across all divisions with [a] wide range of participants from all campus areas.” Campus-wide involvement in validation and feedback was mentioned by another interviewee as well: “There are opportunities for campus-wide feedback, involving such areas as faculty, staff, student, and administration. All of these have opportunities for feedback.”

At the same time, the participation on an individual level varies depending on their role in the institution and personal interest. One faculty member commented on what she thought about campus-wide participation: “But in terms of outside of reporting

mechanism, peoples in various disciplines, programs, and departments are supposed to be involved. Some are, some are not, depending upon dynamics of their particular areas and, frankly, their level of interest.” Another interviewee said frankly,

I don't think everybody participates. I think that there is a leader in the discipline level, and I think that the leader probably does most of the work and then just sends it out to his or her colleagues to double check it. But I think that it's more of one or two people heading it.

Yet, a longtime faculty leader argued that “one of the weaknesses of our program review process is that you do not get that much faculty involvement.” Later she added: “If only the department chairs are doing the program review, then it gets done for accreditation purposes, gets no buy-in from faculty. Without that, we lose a lot of positive meaning and value of program review.”

At the same time, a couple of interviewees had very positive feeling about the level of participation in program review campus wide. One staff member said: “One thing I like about program review is that it allows for people to participate. It brings participatory culture as [a] way of doing business. Like everybody has a stake, or at least their input is valued.” Another member said frankly, “I like that people are actually doing it.”

In addition, some faculty talked about involving their advisory board’s recommendations and even members in program review, as well as seeking more involvement from industry representatives and future employers of their students. “They are part of the process as well. We want our advisory boards and employers of our students to help us with our goals and future plans. That is really important,” she said.

External forces

The idea of having an external regulative and informative body was supported by all the participants from College B with some variations in the rigidity of the regulations and extent of information. For example, a faculty member commented: “There should be some type of body in charge of making sure that the program reviews are correct and rigorous enough on what is happening in the departments.” She concluded, “So, there should be some type of input from an outside body.” Likewise, another faculty member said:

I do think that external bodies such as the ACCJC should have some type of role in reviewing the program reviews and making sure that they are okay, as well as reviewing the whole process program reviews as this is a major and critical component of institutional practice.

A support staff person saw the ACCJC role [as] more forceful: “I think we need ACCJC, as everybody will go in their separate ways. They have to set the rules for everybody to follow. Otherwise people will be lost, like sheep without anybody to drive it,” she said. In contrast, the vice president’s approach was more conceptual. She said, “We have to have a framework. Without a frame, we’re just all over the place.”

Yet, a faculty member argued that “the ACCJC role should be more informative.” She elaborated, “We need a lot more guidance and examples from them. I’ve always felt that their role should be in actually making a template and let colleges follow that template.” Like this faculty member, other faculty members believe that “the accreditation agency should clearly define to the college administration exactly what is expected of us and constantly modify that role with changing times.”

Several of interviewees stressed not only the evaluative power of the accreditation body, but also the importance of the educational institution to take the ownership of the process. A faculty member indicated that “their role is to make sure that everything is up to date and that we are meeting requirements. So, there is clarity and understanding in what our programs do and how they adhere to the global economy and transfer.” Another faculty member also argued that “there should be a process in place that ACCJC can evaluate. But we should not be doing it because of them. We should be doing it because it should help us to run the institution.” A different participant acknowledged as well that the institution is not there yet, but would like to be. She stated, “It would be nice for us to think that it's all about institutional improvement. That's the end result of what we do, not the reason we do, but we are not there yet.” In conclusion, it was confirmed over and over with almost every participant that “if the ACCJC wouldn't have placed [us] on probation, we wouldn't have done it.”

Program Review Context

The data analysis on program review context for College B revealed three major themes: the purposes of program review, characteristics of implemented program review framework, as well as the level of people's understanding and experience with program review process.

Purpose of program review. The following program review purposes have been identified for College A: planning, improvement, evaluation and self study, decision making, and accountability. For example, one faculty member described the entire program review process saying:

The purpose of the program review at my institutions is to have everybody evaluate their program. After they evaluate their programs and look at all the variables, then the processes of planning. After they implement their plans, then they assess to see whether it really helped to improve their programs.

Another faculty member summarized it: “I have been always told it is a PIE: planning, implementation, and evaluation. But I think the caveat here is the improvement, because without improvement you do not get anything. It would not make sense.” In addition, it is important to mention that the planning and improvement were mentioned by almost every interviewee. And the accountability was mention only by two participants.

Program review purpose—planning. Based on the interview sessions, planning was one of the main purposes mentioned by all participants. One of the interviewees simply stated: “I think program review is a planning tool. The main purpose that it serves is to help us to plan ahead.” Another interviewee agreed saying, “The purpose of program review is to see that shift [in] thinking by the departments in terms of future planning: What can we envision? What can we create? What can we do?” Another faculty member explained that “the purpose of program review is to plan with identification of times and dates when all things will be done.” Yet another faculty member interpreted it the following way: “From the perspective of a faculty member, we should look [at] what is input and then plan accordingly.” At the same time, an administrator believed that “the planning is the key in this process, but our people need a lot of training on it.”

Program review purpose—improvement. Improvement was another purpose of review that was overwhelmingly mentioned by the participants throughout the interview

sessions. Here, one faculty member defined the purpose: “I think the main purpose of program review is the program improvements.” However, the same faculty member thought that is not happening at College B. He said: “I don't think there has been any shift [toward improving] in the department. We really haven't seen departments being able to improve.” Still another faculty member stated: “I think the purpose of programming at our institution is to get courses, programs, and disciplines up-to-date with the way we should serve students today at the global economy.” To illustrate his point further, he gave an example of how it can help to improve student outcome. He said,

Now, [the] academic side has to connect what is going on, what are the trends with Cal State and UC. It is also how it is going to help students to overlap or take academic courses that are part of the requirements for their vocational degrees. So basically, program review is helping in getting everything up to the speed.

Referring to the purpose of program review, one interviewee simply stated, “Really, the bottom line is the students in the classroom.” This perception was confirmed by another interviewee: “The purpose of program review is basically to improve student success,” he said.

Other interviewees mentioned improvement in connection with planning and evaluation. For example, one administrator explained, “After the data has been looked at, it should be an analysis and then a plan for improvement.” Another interviewee said succinctly, “I think the most important part, it is evaluating and improving.” Like this interviewee, other members find that evaluation and improvement come together. “I

think I would say program review is an evaluation with intention. So you have a specific intent to improve when you evaluate what you're doing,” she said.

Program review purpose—analysis and evaluation. Most of the interviewees at College B mentioned analysis and evaluation as one of the purposes of program review at their institution. For example, in one faculty member’s opinion, “The purpose of the program review at my institution is to have everybody evaluate their program.” Another faculty member explained the evaluative purpose of program review, saying, “I think program review is a way for programs, services, disciplines, and departments to review what they're doing and to look at the data and just reflect on how they're doing, how they are serving students.” Another faculty member shared a similar belief that “program review for our college is an opportunity for people to look at their program to analyze it.” Another interviewee, listing the purposes of program review at their institution, said, “One of the purposes is to identify strengths and weaknesses in a department.” Yet another faculty member specified it saying, “I think it involves faculty looking at their programs and courses to ensure that they are teaching [and] students understanding from start to finish.” Then he summarized: “It is just a self evaluation.”

Program review purpose—decision making. The decision making aspect of program review was mentioned by a vast majority of the interview participants. This was also stressed throughout the college’s accreditation self study report. In particular, in the response to the recommendations related to program review and planning, it is stated that “program review provides a clear pathway for [the] college community to input to the college-wide decision making processes.” Most of the interview participants confirm that perception, especially in regard to the resource allocation decision making process.

Indeed, one faculty member stated: “The program review should give the ability to make informed decisions on resources allocations.” The same point of view was expressed by another faculty member. “One of the main purposes of program review is that it validates the resources that they need, so that resource requests that they are planning for implementation are supported by their program review,” she remarked. A different interviewee, listing the program review purposes, stated: “Another reason is allocation of resources.”

Additionally, resource allocation was not the only decision point that interviewees expected from program review. For example, an administrator argued that “the assessment results in program review should inform all the decisions on change for [the] program.” He explained further his view: “Basically, we should work backwards on making sure criteria that are part of their educational program meet the stated goals in their program review.” Another point that was made by two other interviewees was on connecting the analysis in program review with decisions on strategies for improvement. One interviewee said: “First, you need to analyze it. Based on the analysis, you decide on exactly what sort of strategies you need to do in order to improve your program.”

Program review purpose—accountability. It was interesting that the accountability purpose of program review was mentioned by only two interviewees, and both of them were longtime faculty members. For example, one of the faculty members started his conversation about program review stating: “I think, you know, one purpose it serves is compliance.” He concluded, “Unfortunately, I think we are still in sort of a compliance mode in regard to program review.” The same point of view was shared by

the second faculty member: “The main reason would be to satisfy accreditation requirements,” she said.

Characteristics of program review. The results of data analysis on the characteristics of program review at College B highlighted three main themes related to the linkage and integration of program review: institutional plans, student learning outcome, and budget and resource allocation. As one faculty member joked: “Now we have to connect program review with everything. So, we're looking at everything now.”

Linkage to institutional plans. There were mixed messages on whether program review is linked with the institutional plans or not. For example, one faculty member expressed the idea that there is a clear link between program review and institutional plans, saying, “Oh, definitely they are linked. For the past three years, the connection to how all of this comes together has [been] stated explicitly and shown on multiple presentations. There is [a] lot of information on that on the website.” In this regard, one of the faculty leaders explained in detail how that linkage is established:

At the institutional level, it's used when we are looking at the different committees which develop different institutional plans. These committees were requesting information from program review. So program review is feeding all this information back to them. They are supposed to take that information and use it in [the] development of the new plan.

Another faculty member confirmed this point of view. She described that linkage in her diagram on program review process at College B:

In the Strategic Master Plan, which is looking at all kinds of different things, you know, like focus groups, and so on, one of these areas would be program review,

and the same is true about Educational Master Plan. The idea is that all of this goes into the overall college vision. But again, above that college vision always has to be student success.

Yet, another faculty leader was very firm that there is no actual linkage between program review and institutional plans. He argued, “No, we're not connecting program review to institutional plans right now.” He continued, “There are some questions about mission and vision in our program review. Other than that, there is no connection.” The same view was shared by one of the administrators, who said: “I don't think that the link is real.” She explained her stand:

I'm not sure how they are connected, as everybody is in their separate committees working on different institutional plans. This is why we talk at our planning committee that there should be correlation between all these groups. It is not just information, it is actually correlating and on purpose linking them together. And that does not happened yet.

She concluded, “But we are getting there. There is no way we can implement our plans without connecting them back to program review.”

Linkage to student learning outcome. In general the common theme on this point was that there is a linkage between program review and student learning outcome (SLO), but better utilization of it is expected. Talking about the SLO and program review, one faculty member remarked:

Yes, our SLO and program review processes are connected, and I think that's very important because the areas really need to look at what they are doing in a classroom and how that relates to their program, their success, and retention. But

they are not yet fully doing it. I think it's needed. I believe that real connection is coming soon.

Indeed, one faculty member stated: “Yes, our program review is definitely connected to the SLOs...I think they do a fantastic job of assessing it, because the SLOs were a very intricate part of program review.” Another faculty member furthered this perspective, portraying an instructor who should use the assessment results of student learning outcome in their program review:

The SLO assessments and PLO assessments give more meat to your program review when you say, “My gosh, I just got this information from assessment of my program learning outcomes. I found out that my written examination part of the state board is really low. Now I know I need to have this particular type of teaching methodology which will help to make that improvement.”

She continued, “I think with each year, people will get better and better with their assessment and connecting their assessments with their program review and with the college competencies.” One staff member confirmed the importance of SLO in program review, saying, “The SLOs and the PLO are new at our campus. I think people will get to see how their assessments really play into what they are asking for.”

Yet another faculty member referring to this topic argued, “Yes, we are trying to connect. It is effective in some places, but not so in others. Some faculty members are seeing these as just one more thing that needs to be done.” Another faculty member added: “Unfortunately, I don’t think our students have much input into our process. Including SLO in program review creates that link, but currently it is [a] very weak type

of linkage.” Still another staff member would like to see taking the assessment results further:

Yes, we connect them, because we get the data from assessment which tells us where the weaknesses are. Data helps, but we also need to make sure that we go to the next step—how we solve that, how we address the issue, how to change. You need to give some medicine to cure the problem. Otherwise it’s just busywork.

Linkage to budget and resource allocation. Every single participant confirmed that at College B there is a strong link between program review and resource allocation. From the external linkages, the connection with resource allocation was the most perceptible. At the same time, there were significant differences in the level of enthusiasm and satisfaction among interviewees on the established processes. For example, referring to linkage between program review and resource allocation, one faculty member exclaimed, “Absolutely, these are completely tied together now.” Another faculty member described how the link is established: “The first part of program review is an analysis of what our program does and how it connects to the resources that are needed. In the second part they list the actual resource request.” A similar explanation was given by another faculty member. She said, “There are Phase 1 and Phase 2 in our program review process. The Phase 2 is being referred [to] as annual unit plan, but basically it is how a program requests additional money.” At the same time, another interviewee argued that it is not really allocation of resources that is connected to program review, but it is just some requests for budget augmentations that are included in the program review.

Referring to the link between program review and resource allocation, an administrator reflected, “I think we have the connections. I just don't think it's as clear for most of the people yet.” The same perception was shared by the second administrator:

I think it's better connected now, given that the departments are learning how program review is important in the resource allocation decisions. There still needs to be more training on the process of prioritization, but I think slowly more people [are] understanding the entire process and how that all ties in together. So, I think people are getting a better sense of that and we're getting there.

Related to resource allocation, another theme that kept coming out in many conversations was its' role as an incentive or force for different departments to do program review. Indeed, one interviewee commented, “I think that now people realize that in order to make changes in their program, they need money, and the program review is the only way to get that money.” But there are side effects of such [an] approach when “sometime people don't get funded over and over [and] they get discouraged. So they say, ‘Why should I keep doing this? It is wasted. I'm not going to get any money in any case,’” as one faculty member remembered a conversation at the departmental meeting when discussing participation in program review. Thus she believed that it is important to change the focus and explain to the campus community that “even if we do not get funded, we should still look at ourselves. It makes us look inward and say what can we do to improve and become a better educator.”

Planning and Adoption

In response to the ACCJC sanction with a strong recommendation to improve program review and its integration with other institutional processes, College B changed its entire program review process a couple of years ago. Moreover, the change came suddenly and drastically. Thus, the college was still in the process of planning, testing, and adapting the changes. One faculty member remarked:

I think the difficulties are in understanding the tools themselves, getting used to them. There has been no time to adapt. Everything is brand new. As we [are] going through the process, sort of look back or build on to compare, this is [a] whole new way of thinking.

The data analysis related to the planning and adoption stage reveals two main themes: there is a need to finalize and improve processes, and there is a need for more training due to the lack of experience and knowledge in program review.

Processes are not finalized and need improvement. Every single interviewee participant from College B had some suggestions for improving program review process at their institution. Some interviewees believed that the current template used at the institution was not a good fit for their particular area and that it should be further customized. For example, a staff member from the administrative services division complained that “the form was mostly geared to academic site, [and] in many cases does not pertain to us. The form talks about students’ competency—this is too much for us. We are different.” Even a faculty member was complaining that the form was geared towards career technical programs: “The questions on the form were not the issues or concerns for liberal arts departments. Our needs are different. Maybe we need different

questions for different departments,” he suggested. Others complained about the complexity of the forms overall. On this point, one staff member claimed, “The forms are not easy to follow; it is a complicated language, not plain English. I think that process and forms should be simplified.” Another interviewee suggested, “I wish that there were more explanations and examples on our forms.”

From the conversations it was clear that people were coping with difficulties because they knew it was a time-sensitive issue which was enforced by the accreditation agency. Thus they believed that at some point the process would be simplified and finalized. A faculty member shared her frustration: “This is the third year of things happening, but there has been new focus each year.” Likewise, another interviewee reflected, “People are asking, ‘What is the next step, so we can plan ahead?’ We find out as the things come up. I do not think that the process is very clear in people’s mind.” In her efforts to explain the current situation, a faculty leader elucidated,

I think right now, because we are on sanction, we're doing it annually, but I think it's a burden. I think after we get through with this cycle, I would rather see us moving to a simplified process. It is kind of overwhelming right now, with the SLOs and PLOs assessments, plus faculty evaluations. I just think it's been a little tough for everybody.

At the same time, people were positive and were ready to work hard for a couple of years to improve the process for a better outcome. “It is overbearing, but it is kind of helping us to see what we are doing and to plan improvement,” said one of the interviewees.

Learning curve, need for more trainings. Although only a few interviewees mentioned the need for more in-depth and ongoing training for the campus, almost all

interviewees talked about the lack of experience and more time needed to fully adapt the current processes. One longtime faculty member said directly: “I think one of the pain points in program review was learning the process.” Another interviewee added, “I think right now we are at a point when we’re still learning. I think at some point we’re gonna feel more comfortable.” He continued, “I think that probably in a couple of years the departments will understand the process better.” Likewise, another interviewee said: “I think we’re slowly getting there, but I’m not sure we’re quite there yet.” However, other interviewees believed that people were already experienced. In this regard, one faculty member remarked:

It was kind of like trial by error the first time and then the second time it is like oh, okay. It is a learning curve. It was a little confusing at the beginning. Now as it moved to the second cycle and then third I think it became clear. I think the process is adequately logical; we just need more time.

Another interviewee shared the same perception: “I think people’s knowledge has advanced dramatically in the last two years. They are ready now,” she said.

Depending on the interviewee’s perception on the level of people’s knowledge and experience in program review, he or she felt different about the need for trainings.

For example, one of the longtime faculty members felt very strong about it. She said,

You know what, I’m gonna tell you—there is absolutely need for training, training, training. That has not stopped. It has got to keep going in every level, everywhere, every part. Because the minute you don’t have the trainings people get back into their old habit of putting the paper away. They say, “I’ll get to it later, I understand it,” and so on.

Another faculty leader confirmed the importance of trainings, saying, “I think that there should be more of a dialogue and some training on how to understand the data and what the data means, because I don't think a lot of people really understand what the data means.” She continued, “A lot of the faculty really need to have more training and make the connection between the data and also teaching methods and teaching strategies. There's a big disconnect there.” In this regard, an administrator commented: “As we try to get the process improved on a regular basis, training is definitely something that needs to be done on a regular basis as well.”

Yet, another interviewee confessed honestly, “The problem is that you put training there and people do not attend.” Another interviewee shared this position: “I think people are doing pretty well now without trainings. Probably the best training has been peer to peer, faculty helping faculty, not the actual trainings that are going on.” He concluded, “Sometimes it is too overwhelming, and faculty prefer one to one.”

Implementation

Program review at College B is done not only by all instructional and non-instructional programs, but it is also done on three levels: discipline, department, and division. Overall, about 150 units participate in program review process each year. In addition, it is done in two phases: Phase 1 is analysis and Phase 2 is unit planning. All these activities are done on an annual basis. First, a discipline's faculty members do their program review Phase 1 and submit it to their department chair and the dean of the appropriate area. A department chair explained how that process works:

It is sort of just following the chain of command...I trickle it down to the disciplines, you know, Humanities, Spanish, Art, Music, and Speech. They do the

assessment and they send it back to me and then basically I forward it on to the dean and that goes into the validation chain, then to division.

The Phase 1 document represents the analysis of the programs, past and present. Second, it includes recommendations from validation of the previous year program review. And finally, it asks for proposed plans for improvement based on the provided analysis. “The Phase 1 really has to do with improvements possible in the discipline, department, and division,” one faculty member summarized. Phase 2 is a detail form with questions pertaining to the program goals, objectives, activities, and resource requests. The resource request is the section for listing the detail monetary request and supporting evidence for that request. “The Phase 1 forms are being used for resource allocation,” clarified another faculty member.

Both Phase 1 and 2 documents are undergoing a cross divisional validation process. Referring to this, an interviewee recalled: “Then, we would have other groups, [a] validation team, looking at the program review to give us their assessment of how we did and also give us commendations and recommendations.” Another interviewee shared his opinion: “I think that just having the validation actually is strength. When you have someone looking over the work that you've done and give their opinion of how you're doing, I think that is a good thing.”

Based on the institutional web site, each of the validation teams consist of the area dean, another dean appointed by the administration, a department chair or a manager from a different unit, a classified staff member appointed by the classified union, a faculty member appointed by the academic senate, and a student appointed by the student association. Thus, it is a formal group with members from all constituency groups. The

group submits a formal validation report with recommendations and commendations that need to be addressed by the program in their next year program review document.

At the time College B was using static forms to collect the program review documents. But the institution is working on the development of the online system. “I think basically online will be probably the way to go. It is going to be a lot easier than it is now,” one of the administrators shared.

Outcome

From the analysis of data collected from documents, observations, and interviews regarding the outcomes of the program review institutionalization for College B, the following major topics were constructed: importance, value, and impact of program review institutionalization.

Importance, value, and impact. To illustrate the importance of program review, a faculty member stated: “I would say that program review is in part, sort of like going through the tedious process and steps. But the pain does not overtake the outcome of what is going to be better for the students, better for our school and, believe it or not, better for our faculty, too, to have more diversification for teaching.” Like this faculty member, other interviewees found that “yes, program review process is rather overwhelming. But it is kind of helping us to see what we are doing and what we should plan to do.” Another interviewee, who was a department chair of a Liberal Arts department, illustrated how he is trying to encourage his faculty, saying:

Recently we have cut a lot of music courses due to the budget situation. The music faculty is not happy about it. But I am encouraging them to start using program review to update course outlines, request different diversification of

courses. Then, once we could get a better budget, we can implement a course or two that can A) bring in more revenue for us faculty, and B) diversify the students here on the campus.

Continuing this thought, an administrator remarked: “Program review helps department, discipline, program, and division become more dynamic and find new ways of doing what it does.”

Further, grouping the results on the value added by program review at College B, the following themes were formed: planning, decision making, dialogue and communication, accountability and evaluation, and improvement. In addition to the interview data, another major source of analysis on the importance and value of program review was a post-program review survey administered by the college’s research office in fall 2011. The survey was directed to obtain campus-wide opinions on program review. About 104 employees participated in the survey. The survey including the Likert-type scale as well as open-ended questions. The results have been posted on the Program Review Committee web site.

Planning. Based on the survey results, on rating the effectiveness of program review in helping to plan for the future of their program, 95% of survey participants find it effective or very effective. The planning aspect of program review was rated highest among all the effectiveness questions. In addition, on the helpfulness of program review, 90% indicated that it was helpful or very helpful in program planning, and 87% agreed that it was helpful or very helpful in institutional planning. One of the survey participants shared his/her observation on the value of program review in the development and establishment of an integrated planning and budgeting process:

The development and implementation of the current program review process has moved the college decisively towards the goal of integrating planning and budgeting. It has given the divisions, departments, programs, and administrative areas an opportunity to review and align their goals and metrics to the college goal of student success.

Referring to program review as a useful tool for planning, some interviewees commented on it in a broader sense, others in a more personal. For example, one interviewee put it this way: “Program review is giving a different view for planning on campus. It is providing a different way of looking at things. Before, people in this department just lived for the current day. Today, we’re looking ahead.” Another interviewee echoed this opinion saying: “Our organizational culture used to be reactive rather than proactive. The main good thing about program review is that it is making us become proactive.” A different interviewee, describing the situation at a program level, said, “Program review basically tells me that I need to look at my program in more of a global view and then provide the plan necessary to reach that goal.” Yet, another faculty took it to the personal level: “I think for me any time I have to write down what my goals are, what I’m planning to do—even for yourself—it is a good self reflection and planning exercise,” he said.

Dialogue and communication. Based on the post-program review survey, 94% of the survey participants find that program review prompted meaningful dialogue about their program and/or department, and 85% agreed that program review led to a greater understanding of their program by the campus community. In addition, 90% of the survey participants answered that program review prompted greater involvement in the

college's goals and planning process. Almost all participants talked about a great value and impact that program review had on the level of dialogue and open communication on campus. A longtime faculty member claimed, "Program review facilitates dialogue that drive to improvement." Another interviewee confirmed, "Program review helps to start intra- and inter-departmental dialogue." Likewise, a different interviewee reflected, "Program review is a positive process which has all kinds of good implications. For example, it promotes dialogue for discipline and department faculty." She added, "Even more, dialogue at the institutional level."

A separate aspect of program review that was referred to by several interviewees as a means to promote campus-wide dialogue was the validation process. Talking about the validation process, one interviewee shared:

Well, one of the strengths is that people from outside the area are brought into the validation. So otherwise it becomes very insular. And you have the same people looking at the same staff constantly, and there is no impetus to make an outside or give outside perspective.

Another faculty member substantiated it with her experience: "I did validation; I loved it from the standpoint that I got to look at the other people's program review. I learn what they are looking at and what is important for their programs." That sentiment was echoed by a different interviewee, who said, "Just by validation, you get to read everybody's program review. That was kind of fun to see what everybody else is doing on campus. I think it makes everybody more aware and opens a lot of ability for dialogue." She concluded: "That is what I really like. Just to look at somebody else, see what they're doing in their program, gives me great ideas. I give kudos to them." Yet an

administrator revealed a feedback power of the validation; he described it in the following light:

During the validation, I also look at if they have asked for something, but they don't have the data to support it. Then, I'm going to help them by pointing that out. It is a useful feedback to them; saying you should go back and really see where you missed a step.

Another administrator summarized it: "The good thing about validation is that it encourages seeing what everybody is doing and then also helping them along the way, giving support."

Accountability and evaluation. Based on the post-program review survey, 94% of the survey participants believed that program review stimulated the use of evidence in analyzing their program and/or department. One staff member explained, "Yeah, it gives you an 'Aha' moment. Because you kind of see like, 'This is where we have [a] problem, this is what people think.' Before we did not used to do that." One analysis of program review by an administrator lends insight into the use of program review as an evaluation mechanism; he simulated how a faculty might think, saying:

Program review also helps to evaluate, as one of the modules of our program review is evaluating what they did last year. So it prompts them thinking, "Oh, I guess I didn't complete that, I better act on it."

The same point was confirmed by a faculty member; she concurred: "We have to use it because it's part of what we do for our dean and advisory board, as part of our reporting out on what we did and where we want to go." She continued: "So, it's really looking at the outcome and saying, 'Did I do better than I thought? Did I do about the same? Or

did I do worse?” On this point, another faculty member said, “Through the program review we are looking, evaluating, and making sure that whatever the goals of our courses and program, support that educational goal of a student.” Another said honestly, “I like it because it keeps me on track. It has the checks and balances of what I need.” This sentiment was repeated by an administrator: “Well, I think it enforced the departments to re-look at their program and their offerings,” he said.

Decision making. The impact on decision making was another outcome of the program review institutionalization at College B. For example, a faculty member confessed: “Program review makes us to look at the most important things for our program and decide what we should do to move it forward.” An administrator said, “It allows us to focus on one or two things that we want to do in a year. I tell my people, no more than three new things in a year, plus your day-to-day work.” She concluded, “I’m trying to implement a couple of new initiatives every year.” Another administrator commented, “It does impact us as administrators in one big instance, to make sure that we understand the department’s program review and that we keep the department focused on their program decisions.” The same point was confirmed by a faculty member: “It forces us to get focused on what our goals and objectives are for that fiscal year and get it done.” Another faculty member introduced the idea that “program review information also gets used by the president in some decision making, as the president has information related to program review in ongoing administrative discussions as well.” On this point, a department chair explained that

Program review really brought us to the forefront of understanding students’ needs. Because we realize that just teaching the way we do is not working, so we

decided to make changes in our program based on what we are seeing in other departments' and programs' reviews. What students are asking for or what they are trying to assess is the student learning model.

In addition, based on the interviews and document analysis, College B used program review very heavily in resource allocation decisions. A faculty leader said: "Especially, the program review is tied to resource allocation. When a program review is not answering those specific resource allocation types of questions, then people find themselves without resources." Another faculty member expanded on it: "It is certainly having impact on the resource allocation in planning and budget. The type of data that has been and is collected in PR has been used historically and consistently in faculty hiring prioritization," she said. An administrator took it further explaining, "For example, I get staff development and technology requests out of program review. If people don't have their requests in program review, they won't get. So it becomes really important."

Yet, another interviewee argued, "Again it would depend on the program, department, and discipline. Some are using them much more effectively than others." A different faculty member shared her stand on this: "You are not gonna get everything you need, especially now. So it makes you really focus and decided on what you need right now for you students."

Improvement. Based on the post-program review survey results, 93% indicated that program review was effective in prompting faculty and staff to act in order to improve their program quality, and 92% indicated that program review was effective in focusing the program on the goals related to student success. At the same time, only 74%

agreed that program review was effective in prompting the administration to act in order to improve program quality.

To illustrate the impact of program review, a longtime faculty member stated, "Program review impacts me as far as keeping focused and making sure that I keep improving in the classroom. How do I improve moving forward? I need to change the way I teach. It impacts the way I deliver. Sometimes, it's just that simple as saying, 'I need to look at me—maybe the way I work is getting old.'"

Another faculty member, who is relatively new to the profession, echoed,

"Program review helps to start to think about things in different ways. It really does. Just one little simple example is, this summer I did my syllabus and did it on a PowerPoint. I made it interactive with pictures of students actually doing things. Now they know the information better. It was just a simple change for me. Now I want to take my SLO and put pictures and showing each assessment how they can be assessed."

Yet, another interviewee had a different stand: "Program review is the way to get money to implement the improvements that you want to make," he said.

The vice president concluded on a very positive note: "We are improving by leaps and bounds. The improvements at the college are far reaching." She added, "We need another year or so to really see the effect of what we started two years ago."

Summary

In summary, this chapter presented results of data collection and analysis by the elements of conceptual framework for two California community colleges. The elements of the conceptual framework are: external forces, institutional context, program review

context, planning/adoption process, implementation process, and the outcome of program review institutionalization. Different themes emerge for each element of conceptual framework per college. The themes for external forces coincided for both colleges: it is important to have external agencies that set standards and enforce colleges to comply; institutions would like to receive more guidance and training from external agencies.

The themes of institutional context were significantly different for selected two colleges. The College A was more hierarchical, bounded structure whereas the College B represented a loosely coupled organization with multi-power structure. The program review context consisted of two sections: program review context and characteristics. On this point, the College A was more focused on planning and linkage with institutional plans and budget, whereas, the College B were more focused on utilizing program review for decision making and improvement linkage with resource allocation.

In regard to planning/adoption and implementation elements the major difference between the colleges were due to the fact that the College A had a long history of using the same program review framework whereas the College B was only in the third year of their implementation. This difference significantly affected the participants' attitude, experience, and knowledge in regard to program review institutionalization at their college. As a result of the dissimilarities listed above the program review outcome was different for each college as well. Chapter 5 will analyze these differences and similarities in more detail in connection to the research questions of this study.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Introduction and Summary of the Study Design

The discussion and conclusions chapter will begin with a brief overview of the study and summary of major findings that address the research questions. Next, it will provide an in-depth analysis, synthesis, and interpretation of the results and discuss the patterns and themes that emerged from the analysis. In addition, it will provide recommendations for educational policy makers and practitioners in the field. It will also reflect on contributions of the study to the professional field and recommendations for future research.

According to ACCJC, institutional effectiveness, in particular institutionalization of program review, has been one of the major deficiencies that results in sanctions for California community colleges since 2007 (ACCJC, 2009). Thus, for practitioners in California community colleges, there is demand to better understand and manage the program review institutionalization process for institutional improvements in order to better meet accreditation requirements. This need drives the purpose of this study, which is to identify factors that influence program review institutionalization in California community colleges. The research questions for this inquiry are: (1) What factors influence program review institutionalization at California community colleges? (2) What is the impact of program review institutionalization at individual, program, and institutional levels? (3) What are the strengths and weaknesses of the implemented program review frameworks?

This qualitative research used a multi-site case study approach utilizing grounded theory traditions. Two community colleges were selected using a maximum variation

site selection strategy. The selection criteria was based on college size (large versus mid-size), location (suburban versus urban), and ACCJC recommendations related to program review (commendations versus sanction). The data was collected based on historical and current documents, interviews, and observation sessions. For confidentiality purposes, the colleges were named “College A” and “College B.” College A is a large, suburban community college that received commendations from ACCJC based on their last accreditation site visit. At College A, I conducted seven interviews and seven observation sessions. College B is a mid-size, urban community college that was sanctioned by ACCJC with a recommendation to institutionalize program review process. I have conducted eight observation sessions and eight interviews at College B.

Observation reflections and interview data were transcribed, combined, and coded for each college separately. Each college’s data were analyzed against the elements of the conceptual framework. Within each element of conceptual framework, different themes emerged from the analysis of data for each particular institution.

Summary of Major Findings

The summary of major findings will be synthesized and analyzed for each research question of this study.

Research Question One

To answer the first research question, “What factors influence program review institutionalization at California community colleges?” it is essential to examine the themes that emerged from the analysis of data for each element of the conceptual framework: external forces, institutional context, program review context,

planning/adoption process, implementation process, and the outcome of program review institutionalization.

External forces. Analyzing external forces for each college, it was evident that faculty and staff at the colleges would like to see ACCJC, State Chancellor Office, and Federal Department of Education as more of standards-setting agencies that also work with colleges as guides and coaches. In addition, it was clear that these external forces can become an impetus for change towards the institutionalization of program review, as it was in the case of College B. On this point, one of the interviewee participants commented: “Unfortunately they have had to legislate and regulate us; otherwise we would not do it on our own. But it would have been way more productive if they would give us better guidance.”

Institutional context. Based on the data analysis, the influence of the institutional context on program review institutionalization was enormous. The two selected colleges were significantly different in their institutional structure and culture. College A had a strong hierarchical structure with stable leadership. One of the interviewees from the college said: “Our processes tend to be very hierarchical.” The College B had loosely coupled multi-power structure with high administrative leadership turnover. This difference might explain why the interview responses of the participants from College A were somewhat similar, while the responses of participants from College B diverge widely. For example, on the questions inquiring about leadership, decision making, and internal driving forces at College A, participants all responded similarly. They reported that the college administration and department chairs were middle managers. Thus, participants at College A saw that the power of program review was in

its ability to move plans and decisions through the line of the hierarchical structure. However, at College B, there were a wide range of answers.

Another effect of the structural differences, I believe, was the difference in people's attitude towards confidentiality and transparency at the institutions. For example, at College A, there was a strong feeling of a bounded system with a notion of internal versus external; as a result, the confidentiality topic was mentioned several times. In contrast, at College B, people were striving for transparency and information sharing to enforce campus wide accountability and prevent favoritism. Furthermore, people at College B saw the power of program review was in its ability to help them to achieve that goal. For instance, one of the longtime faculty members, referring to the transparency in program review claimed: "It has been the biggest wow factor for me."

Consequently, I believe that institutional context is an important factor in program review institutionalization; each college should find the strength and utilization of program review within their structure and culture.

Program review context. Based on the above analysis, it was not surprising that there were significant difference between the interview participants from the two colleges regarding the purpose of the program review. For example, at College A, the evaluation and planning purposes of program review was mentioned by every interview participant. The accountability and decision making purposes of program review was mentioned primarily by faculty members. In addition, surprisingly for me, the improvement and communication purposes of program review were mentioned by only a few interviewee participants. At the same time, at College B, the improvement and decision making purposes of program review was overwhelmingly present in all conversations.

Further, there were considerable differences in the levels of emphases on the importance of the linkages between program review and other institutional processes. For instance, at College A, the emphases were on the linkage on program review to institutional plans; every single interviewee talked about it in a very confirmative manner. In contrast, at College B, participants were not even sure how linkage would work. On this topic, one interviewee remarked: “I’m not sure how they can be connected, when everybody does it in their separate committees.” In regard to program review linkage with the budget and resource allocation, both institutions agreed that it is a mechanism to enforce the compliance and improve participation to the program review process. Yet at College B, it was also seen as a mechanism for transparent decision making.

In summary, the emphasis on different purposes of the program review context at each college depended on the institutional structure and culture. In addition, emphasizing of the right purpose will allow more people to become involved and participate in the program review process. Thus, the appropriate emphases on the context of program review become important factors in program review institutionalization.

Planning/adoption and implementation. The institutional stage of the program review planning and adoption process was another major difference between the colleges. Due to the fact that College A had a long history of using the same program review framework, the college was more in the reevaluation and meta-analysis stage of their program review process. Yet, College B had drastically changed its program review framework, which had been recently enforced by ACCJC sanction.

On this point, all the interviewee participants at College A felt very comfortable with their level of knowledge and experience in the program review framework established at their institution. It was mentioned by majority of interviewees that it has been a learning process for them in the past, but that currently they feel that their established process is simple and manageable enough. Some improvements were expected to be implemented, but those improvements were expected to be minor changes.

In contrast, almost all the interviewees at College B found the program review process to be important but very complex. Most of them would like to see some changes, simplification, and streamlining of the process. For example, one faculty member complained: “It is such an overwhelming and convoluted process, so we have to simplify and train people more.” The need for more training and workshops was mentioned by several interviewees at College A. Everybody at College A believed that the college community needs to gain more knowledge and experience in program review. In addition, some of the interviewees (especially administrators) find that college people need more time to digest and obtain the notion that program review will be done on a regular basis from now on.

In summary, the important factors influencing program review institutionalization at the planning/adoption and implementation stages are: simplicity of the process, wider participation and involvement, linkage with other institutional processes, and the life-span of the established program review framework.

Outcome. In this study, the outcome of program review institutionalization is defined as the importance, value, and impact of program review at a particular institution, as well as integration with other institutional processes. The conversations around the

outcomes of program review institutionalization at each institution mirror the findings highlighted above.

In particular, the data collected for College A demonstrated strong evidence in the use of program review as a planning mechanism across the institution, including institutional plans. The evaluation and decision making usage of program review had very strong presence as well. In addition, it was interesting to see the significant value of program review in creating more dialogue and a stronger teamwork environment, which was not one of the main purposes of program review mentioned by the interview participants. In this regard, a faculty member shared, “I believe that there’s a tremendous benefit and bounding effect for faculty as they’re formulating and completing program review of their department.”

In analyzing data on program review institutionalization outcomes for College B, I observed an interesting phenomenon. Interviewees from College B were more skeptical on usage, value, and impact of program review institutionalization. However, there was significant evidence suggesting a strong and positive outcome of program review institutionalization at the different levels across the institution. For example, one interviewee from College B stated: “Program review helps to think about everything we do in different ways. It really does.”

Furthermore, the interviewees from College A were significantly more confident and proud of their program review process. However, based on institutional survey data, program review was more effective and valuable for employees of College B than College A. For example, based on College A survey results, only 55% of the survey participant agreed that “program review process creates greater opportunities for

departmental discussion regarding planning issues.” In contrast, over 90% of College B survey participants believed that program review was effective in helping to plan for the future of their program as well as to prompt meaningful dialog about their program.

In summary, there are many factors that influence program review institutionalization at California community colleges. One of the most important factors is the institutional structure and culture which may alleviate or aggregate the effects of the other factors such as: external forces, difference in emphasis on selected purposes of program review, integration with other institutional processes, as well as campus wide participation and involvement. Another important factor is that, the life-span of the established program review framework as a learning process for the entire institution can be costly and painful.

Research Question Two

To answer the second research question, “What is the impact of program review institutionalization at individual, program, and institutional levels?” it is essential to understand the interview participants’ perceptions in this regard.

Impact at an individual level. It is important to mention that there were no significant differences between colleges on answers in regard to impact of program review at an individual level. Here is how one faculty member described the impact of program review on her personally: “If I don’t participate in it, it would impact me worse.” She continued, “Program review has become such a central part of getting resources on this campus that if you haven’t done your program review, you haven’t taken it seriously, and then it would definitely impact you.” Later, she added, “I think it’s benefitted me greatly that I took it seriously.” To illustrate the program review impact,

one of the managers from the second institution gave an example: “So you know it impacts me in terms of the fact that I cannot just go on a Monday and decide that I’m going to take our department in a different direction.” He continued, “At the same time, it makes it easier for me to implement things that have been planned and were included in the program review document.” On this note, another administrator confessed, “On an individual basis it impacts me in terms that I need to have my finger on the pulse of what our state and plans are.” A faculty member believed that he “was hired, because of the program review that was written in previous years.” He concluded, “So it impacted me personally.”

In summary, commenting on the impact of program review institutionalization at personal level, people had the same perspective regardless of institutional structure. In some cases, it related to particular changes which were recorded in program review that impacted them personally, like hiring or changes of location. But mostly it was related to the notion that participation and involvement in program review helped them to be more informed, organized, and future oriented, but added significantly to their workload.

Impact at a program level. There was significant evidence that program review had an impact at a program level for both institutions. The responses from administrators from both colleges were somewhat similar but different from faculty’s perspective. For example, the vice president from College A claimed, “I think it is helping programs making some authentic changes. And I have lots of evidence of that.” Another administrator from the same institution confirmed the impact of program review saying, “Program review gives us an easy way to encourage people to move in the direction that we have written towards.” She summarized, “So it creates an environment where we’re

all trying to work towards these objectives because it's on the forefront of our minds all the time." At College B, the administrator believed that program review helped to improve the employee knowledge and experience in planning: "My units are better able to look at themselves and really see what they need to do, and plan accordingly," she said.

The faculty members' responses from two institutions resonated highly. It was all about improving the programs and helping students. In this regard, a department chair from one of the institutions indicated, "So it does make people reexamine their departments, what's working and what's not." A faculty member from the second institution confirmed the same idea "On a program level, it makes us as a department think. What can we do? What can we change? Because we are always thinking of ways to improve," she said.

In summary, at the program level, the impact of program review institutionalization was different depending on the role of the interviewee within the college: administrator or faculty. The administrators and managers believed that it improved the accountability and planning capacity of the programs. However faculty believed that the impact was more geared towards forcing people within the institution to think and act on changes to improve programs and student learning outcome.

Impact at an institutional level. The responses from both colleges on the impact of program review institutionalization at an institutional level defer greatly. The majority of interview participants from College A believed that there is a significant impact at the institutional level. "I think for the institution it has a great impact," one faculty member from College A simply stated. Another interviewee from the same college confirmed that

perception saying, “For the institution I think it’s incredibly important, because again, it’s providing the materials, the arguments, and the rationale of why to go forward in certain directions.”

The responses from College B were rather different. For instance, three interviewees argued that there has not been any real impact at the institutional level. At the same time, other interviewees from the College B were very enthusiastic and believed that program review institutionalization brought significant changes to their institution. On this point, an interview from College B corroborated, “It impacts students. It impacts our accreditation. It impacts the funding that the departments get, which also can affect the entire institution in a bigger picture.”

In summary, the responses on the impact at the institutional level depended greatly on the institutional context and life-span of the established program review framework. Based on the data analysis on this point, I think that people within the institution need to believe in the changes being made, have a history with program review, and be ready to accept the changes in order to admit that program review institutionalization impacted the entire institution.

Research Question Three

During the interview session, the participants shared their ideas of what are the weaknesses and strengths of the program review framework implemented at their institution. To answer the third research question, “What are the strengths and weaknesses of the implemented program review frameworks?” it is essential to discuss the responses of interview participants in this regard to each college.

Weaknesses. The weaknesses highlighted by the interviewees from College B were: a shortage of information sharing between departments; a lack of transparency on decisions regarding resource allocation; an absence of a direct link between assessment results and decision making. On the note of a shortage on information sharing, one faculty member remarked, “I think there will be a tremendous benefit in hearing what other departments are doing. We hear that there are some interesting projects. But we don’t hear the nuts and bolts or the success and the struggles that those departments are having.” Another faculty member expressed his concern to the fact that “other than their dean nobody sees their program review document.” This resulted in a lack of clarity in the flow of the program review process. On this point, one faculty member remarked: “One of the things that I’m suggesting and urging our colleagues to consider is what happens when the program review process is finished. How will we share this information with our colleagues and know what happens next?”

The points that have been identified by the interviewees from College B as weaknesses of the implemented program review process at their institution were: the form is complicated, overwhelming, and keeps changing; there is not enough time for all the processes within a year. In addition, the campus did not have a central repository or a common application that would host the program review data from different departments, they keep the printed versions of the documents in the binders and collection of files that are difficult to manage, connect, or report out, and they are easy to lose. On this point, a faculty member complained,

I would say the main weaknesses of our program review process is the complicated Acrobat forms and then the timelines for all these steps that need to

be done in those couple of months: analysis phase, planning phase, validation, prioritization, and so on.

Overall, it was evident that College B still had a long journey to simplify and finalize their forms to make it more manageable and user friendly.

Strengths. At the same time, there were many points mentioned by interviewees as the strengths of the program review framework implemented at both institutions.

At College A, the following strengths were mentioned by the interviewees related to their program review process: they said the process was structured, streamlined, and manageable; it encourages participation and intra-departmental dialogue. For example, one manager said frankly, “like that it’s very formal and very structured.” Another manager remarked: “I like it, because it is now streamlined.” In this regard a faculty member commented: “I think that the template that we have now gets to the same points that I got to in that huge paper. Now, I get to streamline it right online.” Indeed, another faculty member confirmed that point saying, “Now, the process itself is much more manageable than it used to be. It’s much easier to do.” He added, “The other thing I like about program review is that I think it creates dialog.” He concluded, “So I like the dialog that goes on, not only among the faculty but among the chairs in the division.” On this note, one interviewee notices, “There’s a lot of interaction that program review fosters.” Another interviewee confirmed this view saying, “I like how everyone is involved. I like the fact the input is really value from all players.” In this regard, a faculty member explained: “So it’s not something – that is done in a vacuum I guess is what I’m trying to say, everybody is working together.”

Another strength of College A's program review framework was its strong integration with other institutional processes. In this regard, an interviewee claimed "For everything we use program review: for staffing decisions, budget decisions, and technology decisions." She added, "And it also goes into educational master plan and strategic plan." The vice president explained further, "We are not only using it for developing the institutional plans, we actually use it to evaluate our progress towards reaching these plans." In regard to budget allocation, it was stated that, "It used to be two separate components, but now it's literally together." Another important claim was that through program review "each department ties its' planning to the institution and the direction the district wants to go."

In addition, the institution utilizes a web-based application to manage its program review process. There are several advantages to a web-based application; some examples of advantages are high accessibility, ease of information delivery, control, ability to share and increase the data report out, and usage capability. Overall, the positive remarks and enthusiasm about established program review process and its importance for College A were evident throughout all the interviews and observation sessions.

There were only two points that were identified by the interviewees at College B as strengths of the implemented program review framework at their institution. Every interview participant from College B believed that their cross divisional validation process is a big strength. For example, a faculty leader shared: "Well, one of the strengths of our program review process is that people from outside the area brought in to the validation." She continued, "I think it makes everybody more aware, opens a lot of abilities for dialogue, and promote transparency in decision making." The other strength

commonly referred to was in the same area of transparency: having all the documentation posted publicly on the Internet. It was unforeseen how important this transparency issue was for that college community.

Discussion

When connecting back the synthesized data from two institutions, it becomes evident that the overall elements of the conceptual framework of this study are central in understanding the factors that influence the program review institutionalization. At the same time, each of these elements plays a different role.

The current legislative and political structure of California community colleges is primarily formed by AB 1725 shared governance mandate. This resulted in multi-power structure which is difficult to manage and makes it problematic to institute any organizational change. Furthermore these multi-power structures function as independent entities even from the state level community college governance, the Chancellor's Office (CCCCO). This situation is further complicated due to the scarcity of funds for the state level agencies. As a result, any changes on the state level are very difficult to implement or obtain compliance on from the colleges. This interdependence leads to state wide duplication of efforts in program review institutionalization; that duplication results in an inefficient use of public funds. Moreover, it resulted in the current situation, whereby the majority of community colleges in California find themselves under the accreditation sanction due to the issues with their program review and planning processes or lack of these processes.

The fundamental principle of ACCJC is peer review, the purpose of which is to help its member institutions meet high standards and improve educational quality.

Unfortunately, this is not the current situation. ACCJC is using its sanctioning power to enforce compliance with standards, and one of those standards is institutional effectiveness, which includes program review institutionalization. In addition, due to this practice, the relationship between ACCJC and the State Chancellor's Office has become very tense. Furthermore, the State Department of Education and State Department of Finance are trying to impose more accountability measures on community colleges to increase the effectiveness of the system. Thus, the external pressure on community colleges has increased dramatically, which significantly impacts the program review institutionalization process. In summary, the external forces play the role of an impetus to start the process of program review institutionalization at a particular college.

The institutional context also significantly impacts the program review institutionalization process at a particular college. The institutional context plays a major role in formulating and adopting a particular framework with different emphases on different purposes of program review. It is essential for each institution to identify and carry forward the implementation of these program review elements in order to get greater buy-in and participation from the college community and in order to ensure that the college utilizes all the aspects of program review. In addition, it is important to realize that the institutional usage/links and life span of an established program review process are the main powers that enable program review institutionalization.

In this regard, program review institutionalization can be viewed as a process with two cycles: a long term and a short term. The long-term cycle is the fundamental cycle of meta-analysis as the development, review, and evaluation of the overall program review process takes place. The timeline of the meta-analysis cycles vary, but it is essential not

to change the entire process flow every year and give some time for learning and adaptation. If the process is drastically changed every year, the internalization of the process will be delayed, and thus the institutionalization of the program review process will be delayed. At the same time, the role of the top cycle is essential in becoming a learning organization to ensure sustainable, continuous quality improvement (P. M. Senge, 2006; Seymour, 1993). The short-term cycle is the operational side of a review and evaluation process. The length of the operational cycle depends on the scope of the review and timeline scheduled at an institution. The operational cycle becomes the force that can delay or expedite the institutionalization depending on the people's belief in the established process and acceptance of continuous change. The two cycles should work in synchrony to move an institution toward to become a learning organization. Becoming a learning organization is the goal to which every educational institution strives.

In a learning organization, continuous quality improvement is part of a culture, rather than a mandate. The concept of organizational learning was introduced in the 1970's; it gained emphasis in the 1990's with publication of Peter Senge's book, *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization* (Rebelo & Gomes, 2008). Learning organizations are the institutions which have the "capacity to adapt and innovate, based on learning from past experience and in anticipation of the future. They support continuous improvement at three levels: individuals, work groups and the organization as a whole" (Cowin, 1996, p. 10). As Senge (1999) interestingly noted, due to the ever changing world, "all organizations learn – but some organizations are faster and more effective learners. The key is to see learning as an inseparable from everyday work." (p. 8). According to O'Banion (1997), the six main principles of a learning

organization are: (1) substantive change has to happen in individual learners; (2) individuals have to be engaged in the process as full members; (3) there has to be a large variety of learning options; (4) the environment has to provide a collaborative learning environment; (5) a facilitator that meets the needs of the learners has to be involved; (6) learning experiences have to be documented and shared widely (as cited in Kelley & Kaufman, 2007).

The findings in this study resonate with ideas presented by Cowin (1996) in his paper, *'Fourth generation evaluation, program review and the institutional researcher'*. First, the author categorized different program review systems, methodologies, and types. Then, he explained the meaning of "fourth generation evaluation," which is a constructivism approach to evaluation (Cowin, 1996). The constructivism approach implies that knowledge is not an objective reality; rather, it is an individualistic interpretation of the current state. The idea of adopting the fourth-generation approach to program review helps the institution transform into a learning organization.

Implications and Recommendations

Although, the presented findings are based on case study of two out of 112 community colleges in California, it confirms the notion that every institution is unique in its history, culture, and ever-changing environment. At the same time, due to the fact that two institutions were selected based on maximum variation strategy and triangulation of data collection, findings can be applied to the broader population and other conditions.

In its totality, this qualitative multi-site case study confirms that the key to the successful outcome of any institutional change is in the system thinking through the cycle of causality. Furthermore, program review institutionalization is that cyclical process

which facilitates the transformation of an institution into a learning organization. At the same time, it is evident that community colleges are complex organizations with complicated management structures. Additionally, based on the findings of this study, the program review institutionalization is painstaking and more complicated at loosely coupled institutions with multi-power structures. Furthermore, the recommendations and implications of this study will be presented in three sections based on the audience they address: external agencies, practice, and future research.

Recommendations for External Agencies

As discussed earlier, California community colleges function in a semi-autonomous environment. The CCCCCO and ACCJC are two major external entities that may have considerable impact on an institution in regard to program review institutionalization. The next three recommendations are directed to external agencies.

Recommendation 1: Develop a state wide online application for program review and planning. The state legislature should allocate funds to CCCCCO to develop a web application for program review and planning. The CCCCCO, in cooperation with ACCJC, State Academic Senate, and California Research and Planning Group (RP Group), should develop and implement an online program review and planning application. The ACCJC role will be in making sure that the new application will cover all the essential elements of program review and planning that a community college should have in place. The State Academic Senate should ensure faculty participation, as program review is on the “ten plus one” list mandated by legislation. The RP group will make sure that the new application meets the research and planning needs of the colleges. The CCCCCO will become the entity that will be responsible for the application

management, maintenance, and improvements. The CCCCCO has this kind of practice, such as Curricunet, web application for courses. Moreover, CCCCCO already has some elements of the instructional program management, as it is the entity that approves new programs. The current federal requirements on Gainful Employment also emphasize the need to have a centralized state level program data system. The new program review and planning application should have an institutional module which can be tailored to meet the needs of each institution, but at the same time, it should be able to submit data to the central state program review and planning depository.

Recommendation 2: Develop and implement scorecard and benchmark indicators related to program evaluation, review and planning. The online application should include scorecards and benchmarks that will help institutions evaluate and compare their programs' performance and currency state wide.

It is important that the new scorecard cover different aspects of community college operations. For example, the ARCC report was a good start, but the only thing it highlights is the progression of some cohorts within the community college system. Other important aspects that should be included in the new scorecard are financial and operational efficiencies, impact and scope of student services, currency and quality of the programs, employment and quality of life improvement, and community relations and impact. Thus, the external partners of community colleges should have access to and input in these indicators. In this context, the external partners are: industry professionals, employers, K-12, four-year institutions, community and press. This process eventually will bring all interested parts into joint conversation and efforts to align the entire state education system.

Furthermore, it is important to mention that most of these data will be college driven. Additionally, the data should be not only reported by the colleges but also utilized by the colleges for dialogue generation and decision making. At each institution, these critical functions are carried out by the offices of institutional research and planning. Thus, it is important that there be a special fund allocated by the state for institutional research and planning operations at each institution.

Recommendation 3: The state should provide assistance and support to colleges in program review and planning institutionalization. In addition to the web application, it is imperative that the above mentioned partnership between CCCCCO, ACCJC, State Academic Senate, and RP Group continue in the area of providing assistance in development and implementation of program review frameworks at the college. Currently, State Academic Senate and ACCJC offer some training, but they are limited in their scope and coordination. Involvement of CCCCCO and RP Group in the organization of those efforts will make them more systematic and geared towards current needs of the colleges.

Recommendations for Practice

The drive of this study was to help California community colleges to better understand and manage the program review institutionalization process for institutional improvements and to better meet ACCJC requirements. The following recommendations are geared towards that goal.

Recommendation 1: Prioritize and utilize all purposes of program review at an institution. The current study identified seven utilization possibilities of program review for California community colleges: accountability, planning, evaluation, internal

dialogue, external communication, decision making, and improvement. Every college should make every effort to utilize all purposes of program review to maximize its effectiveness.

Recommendation 2: Link program review with other institutional processes.

In addition to utilizing the purposes of program review, integration with other institutional processes is essential for program review institutionalization. The most critical areas of integration are: institutional planning, budget and resource allocation, and student learning outcomes. The integration creates ties and a better understanding of program review, which becomes an inevitable and inseparable part of the institutional processes.

Recommendation 3: Simplify and streamline the processes. Simplification and streamlining of the process is a key to obtain better outcome of program review institutionalization. As Gleick (1987) interestingly stated, “Simple systems gives rise to complex behavior. Complex systems give rise to simple behavior.” Thus, if the goal is to have a comprehensive program review document, then the process should be simplified and streamlined. In addition, the campus administration should commit resources for process development, training, and web application to ease the process for the users.

Recommendation 4: Commit resource and ensure long life-span. In addition to the initiation funds, every institution should commit resources to ensure the consistency and use of the same program review process/framework for several years with only small modifications. This will build the history and the life-span for the established program review framework so it becomes institutionalized.

Recommendation 5: Emphasize the usage of the most valuable purposes of program review at an intuition. Although this recommendation relates to all California community colleges, it is most critical for the colleges with a loosely-coupled, multi-power structure. First of all, it is important to remember that this process takes time and should happen gradually. If the process is rushed, it will become overwhelming and convoluted. Second, as every institution's needs are unique, it is critical to identify the most valuable purposes of program review at a particular college. To do this, it is recommended to initiate campus-wide dialogue about all seven purposes of program review. The prioritization of the utilization of program review should be based on the campus response. By emphasizing the institution-specific valuable aspects of program review, campus leaders can help obtain more buy-in and participation in the program review process. In addition, obtaining small wins in the process will help further the institutionalization of program review.

For example, the dialogue and communication purpose of program review can become a powerful tool in a multi-power system. It can be used not to obtain buy-in, but more importantly to connect the nodes in a loosely-coupled system. As another example, the planning purpose of program review is imperative for a structured institution with hierarchical system.

Recommendations for Future Research

Comparative studies should be conducted to validate the interdependence between program review institutionalization, institutional structure, program review deployment focus, and life-span of the established program review framework. Comparative qualitative studies will allow researchers to further evaluate the depth of the connections

between these factors. At the same time, the quantitative studies will allow researchers to determine the correlation to quantify the relationship between these factors. In addition, the comparative studies might reveal additional factors that influence program review institutionalization that were not evident from the current study due to the selected institutions.

In addition, comparative studies can be conducted at different states where shared governance is not mandated by the legislation and/or more rigorous accountability measures for community college are in place by the state governing bodies. This will allow researchers to further evaluate the impact of institutional structure on program review institutionalization.

To enrich the program review topic, it would be valuable to conduct additional studies to identify indicators that will facilitate determination of the degree of program review institutionalization at a California community college. Further analysis can be conducted to reveal the relationship between the degree of program review institutionalization and factors influencing program review institutionalization.

Conclusion

Institutional effectiveness has become one of the central topics of discussion for community colleges nationwide. In California since 2007, it is also one of the critical elements in the accreditation process that caused sanctioning at a significant number of institutions by ACCJC. ACCJC identified program review institutionalization and integrated planning as two of the major sources of deficiency in the area of institutional effectiveness. Thus, one of the significant contributions of this study is in helping the California community colleges to better understand and manage the program review

institutionalization process to better meet ACCJC requirements and more importantly for institutional improvements.

In addition, this study confirms that program review institutionalization is not a linear process with a beginning and an end. In contrast program review should be viewed as a cyclical process of continuous quality improvement that moves an institution towards becoming a learning organization. Each institution should find and carry out its own path for integration that resonates with its institutional context and culture. However, even then, it requires institutional support, leadership, and participation to carry on to make the history and life-span of program review institutionalization.

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Appendix A: Letter of Invitation for Institutions

Invitation Letter

March 25th, 2010

Title of Study: Program Review Institutionalization as an Indicator of Institutional Effectiveness

Principal Investigator: Anna Badalyan, Community College Leadership Graduate Program, CSUN

Faculty Supervisor: Janice N. Friedel, Ph.D., Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies, CSUN

I, Anna Badalyan, a student from the Community College Leadership Graduate Program, Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies, CSUN, would like to invite your institution to participate in a research project entitled Program Review Institutionalization as an Indicator of Institutional Effectiveness.

The main purpose of this study is to identify factors that influence program review institutionalization in California community colleges. In addition, I expect this study to reveal various challenges and achievements in the community college practice in regard to the program review institutionalization as well as the impact of program review institutionalization at the individual, program, and institutional levels.

I expected the duration for this study to be one year, from July 2011 – July 2012.

This study aims to address current accreditation requirements on the program review institutionalization for California community colleges. ACCJC requires that all community colleges in the region function at the level of sustainable continuous quality improvement in regard to the program review and its institutionalization. It is anticipated that the findings of this study will contribute to the limited knowledge on the program review institutionalization subject. The findings may also inform members of the larger community and professional who work in the program review and evaluation fields.

This is a multiple site case study. If your institution elect to participate in this study, the following data source and data collection instruments will be utilized:

1. From fifteen to twenty 30-minute interview session;
2. Interview participants (6-10) will be voluntary selected from faculty, staff, and administration of the institution;
3. Collect and analyze public documentation pertaining to Program Review at LATTC;
4. Observe from three to six public meetings of different committee works including Program Review Committee, Planning and Budgeting Committee, and Academic Senate, as well as a program review training session if such one takes place.

Your institution as well as any personal participation in this research study is voluntary. To insure the confidentiality of this study all the institutional and personal identifiers will be removed from all publications. The results of this study will be shared with your institution prior to the publication.

If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, the details of this study, or any other concerns please contact the Office of Research and Sponsored Projects, (818) 677-2901, University Hall 265, Northridge, CA 91330

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Thank you

Anna Badalyan (Principal Investigator) via email at badalyananna@yahoo.com;

Janice N. Friedel (Faculty Sponsor), Ph.D. via email at Janice.Friedel@csun.edu

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

XXX employee participation in original research conducted by Anna Badalyan

Date: May 15, 2011

To: XXX, XXX

From: Anna Badalyan, California State University, Northridge

Subject: Memorandum of Understanding with XXX

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to identify factors that influence program review institutionalization in California community colleges. In addition, I expect this study to reveal various challenges and achievements in the community college practice in regard to the program review institutionalization as well as the impact of program review institutionalization at the individual, program, and institutional levels.

Research Questions

1. What factors influence program review institutionalization at California community colleges?
2. What is the impact of program review institutionalization at individual personnel, program, and institutional levels?
3. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the implemented program review frameworks?

Timeline of the Study

The planned data collection schedule will began July 1st, 2011 and end June 30th 2012

Participant of the Study

Anna Badalyan will conduct from 10 to 20 interviews with the college's employees, as well as observe the college committee meetings which are open for the public.

Understanding of Responsibilities of Participating Parties

XXX will assist Anna Badalyan in recruiting faculty and staff in the following manner:

1. Allow Anna Badalyan to post IRB approved advertisements regarding the project.
2. Allow Anna Badalyan to present information regarding the project at the committee meetings with prior approval from committee co-chairs.

XXX will assist in identifying an available room for the interviews to be conducted, but can not guarantee that rooms will be available at specific times.

The college will assist Anna Badalyan in developing the context of the economic situation on campus.

All data collection and analysis is the responsibility of Anna Badalyan.

Anna Badalyan will keep all contact information confidential and findings will be presented anonymously.

Upon completion of the project, Anna Badalyan will provide aggregate findings and results to the college for use in programmatic improvement and institutional planning.

Signatures:

Anna Badalyan

Date

XXXXXXXXXX

Date

Appendix C: Letter of Invitation for Participants

Letter of Invitation for Participants

March 25th, 2011

Title of Study: Program Review Institutionalization as an Indicator of Institutional Effectiveness

Principal Investigator: Anna Badalyan, Community College Leadership Program, CSUN

Faculty Supervisor: Nathan R. Durdella, Ph.D., Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies, CSUN

I, Anna Badalyan, a student from the Community College Leadership Graduate Program, Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies, CSUN, would like to invite you to participate in a research project entitled Program Review Institutionalization as an Indicator of Institutional Effectiveness.

The main purpose of this study is to identify factors that influence program review institutionalization in California community colleges. In addition, I expect this study to reveal various challenges and achievements in the community college practice in regard to the program review institutionalization as well as the impact of program review institutionalization at the individual, program, and institutional levels.

I expected the duration for this study to be one year, from July 2011 – July 2012.

This study aims to address current accreditation requirements on the program review institutionalization for California community colleges. ACCJC requires that all community colleges in the region function at the level of sustainable continuous quality improvement in regard to the program review and its institutionalization. It is anticipated that the findings of this study will contribute to the limited knowledge on the program

review institutionalization subject. The findings may also inform members of the larger community and professional who work in the program review and evaluation fields.

This is a multiple site case study involving 2 community colleges in Southern California.

If you elect to participate in this study, you may be asked to do the following:

1. Participate in a 30-minute interview session;
2. Complete a questionnaire; and/or
3. Draw a diagram of the processes at your institution; and/or
4. Be a participant during an observation session

Your participation in this research study is voluntary. To insure the confidentiality of this study all the institutional and personal identifiers will be removed from all publications. The results of this study will be shared with your institution prior to the publication.

If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, the details of this study, or any other concerns please contact the Office of Research and Sponsored Projects, (818) 677-2901, University Hall 265, Northridge, CA 91330

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Thank you

Anna Badalyan (Principal Investigator) via email at badalyananna@yahoo.com;

Nathan R. Durdella, Ph.D. (Faculty Sponsor), via email at nathan.durdella@csun.edu.

**Consent to Participate in Research
Community College Programs
Interview Participant Informed Consent Form**

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by Anna Badalyan (Principal Investigator), and Nathan R. Durdella, Ph.D. (Faculty Sponsor) from the Community College Leadership Graduate Program, Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies, CSUN. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you are (1) full time employee at XXX, (2) your department participated in Program Review process at XXX, (3) XXX has been selected and confirmed as an institution for this study, and (3) you are willing to share your experiences. Your participation in this research study is voluntary.

This consent form includes sections that explain (1) the purpose of the study, (2) procedures, (3) potential risks and discomforts for subjects, (4) potential benefits to subjects, (5) payment to subjects for participation, (6) confidentiality, (7) participation and withdrawal, (8) identification of investigator, (9) rights of research subjects, and (10) signature of research subjects.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to identify factors that influence program review institutionalization in California community colleges. In addition, I expect this study to reveal various challenges and achievements in the community college practice in regard to the program review institutionalization as well as the impact of program review institutionalization at the individual, program, and institutional levels.

Procedures

If you elect to participate in this study, you may be asked to do the following:

1. Participate in a 30-minute interview session;
2. Complete a questionnaire; and/or
3. Draw a diagram of the processes at XXX; and/or
4. Be a participant during an observation session

Potential Risks and Discomforts to Subjects

Because Program Review institutionalization is a sensitive topic, some interview questions may involve issues of a professional and/or personal nature, including experiences with and/or perceptions of colleagues, projects, and/or the students that are served by the institution. You may feel uneasy about answering some of these interview

questions. **You may elect not to answer any of the questions with which you feel uneasy and still remain as a participant in the study.**

Potential Benefits to Subjects

You may not benefit personally from your participation in this study. However, this study addresses accreditation requirements for California Community Colleges. In particular identifying evaluating program review level at an institutional to insure sustainable continuous quality improvement. Thus, the findings of this study may contribute to our limited knowledge on the subject. The findings may also inform members of the larger community and professional who work in the program review and evaluation fields.

Payment to Subjects for Participation

Interviewees and/or research subjects will not be paid for their participation in this study.

Confidentiality

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Names will not be used in the reporting of findings. Every effort will be taken to ensure your confidentiality as a participant in this study. If you consent to participate, you will be assigned a random, three-digit number to protect you. No identifying information will be used. Further, your institutions and program will not be identified by name. With your permission, the interviews will be audio taped and transcribed. **You may decline to be recorded and have the recorder turned off at any time during the interview.** Prior to the finalization of the study, you have the option of reviewing and editing your comments as included in the report. Audiotapes will be stored in a locked drawer at the residence of the principal investigator. Audiotapes will be retained for one year, after which they will be erased. Questionnaires and observations will also be transcribed. De-identified records in the form of transcriptions will be maintained for a period of one year after they have been transcribed.

Participation and Withdrawal

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You are not obligated whatsoever to answer or respond to any question or to discuss anything that you are not inclined to answer or discuss. You can skip any question, or any part of any question, and will not face any penalty for answering, or not answering, any question in any way. **You may ask that the audiotape be stopped at any time and/or may leave the interview at any time for any reason without consequences of any kind. You may discontinue completing questionnaires and/or stop maintaining journals at any time for any reasons without consequences of any kind.**

Identification of Investigator

If you have any questions, concerns, or comments about this research and your participation in this study, you may contact the following:

Anna Badalyan (Principal Investigator) via email at badalyananna@yahoo.com;

Nathan R. Durdella, Ph.D. (Faculty Sponsor), via email at Nathan.Durdella@csun.edu.

Rights of Research Subjects

You may withdraw consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You can halt your participation in the study at any time. You are not waiving legal claims, rights, or remedies because of your participation in this research study. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, the details of this study, or any other concerns please contact the Office of Research and Sponsored Projects, (818) 677-2901, University Hall 265, Northridge, CA 91330

Signature of Research Subjects

I have read and understand the procedures described in this “Consent to Participate in Research.” My questions have all been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

Name of Subject

Signature of Subject

Date

Signature of Investigator or Designee

In my judgment the research subject is voluntarily and knowingly giving informed consent and possesses the legal capacity to give informed consent to participate in this research study.

Anna Badalyan
Name of Investigator or Designee

Signature of Investigator or Designee

Date

Interview Protocol
Program Review Institutionalization
as an Indicator of Institutional Effectiveness

Institution: XXX
Name: XXX, XXX
Date: 10.10.2011
Interviewed by: Anna Badalyan

Thank you for taking the time to talk with me today. Before we begin, I would like to give you the opportunity to read and sign the interview inform consent form.

Current interview is a part of a research study to partially fulfill the dissertation project requirement for the Doctor in Education degree at Community College Leadership Graduate Program, Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies, CSUN. The dissertation chair is professor Nathan R. Durdella, Ph.D. who can be reached at nathan.durdella@csun.edu.

The information you provide in this interview will help to identify the degree of institutionalization program review in the process of continues quality improvement for California Community Colleges. Our interest is in learning from your experiences.

The actual interview will take 30 minutes. The data collected from this interview is strictly confidential and care will be taken to exclude all the names and identifying characteristics from the data. I would like your permission to record our conversation on tape so that I can more accurately reflect your thoughts and experiences. Do you have any questions before we began?

Context

1. What do you think is the purpose of current program review?
2. Could you please draw a diagram that describes the program review process at your institution?

Input

3. Who are the main driving forces of the program review at your institution?
4. What is and should be the role of Fed, ACCJC, and CCCCCO in regard to program review?

Process

5. What do you like about Program Review process at your institution?
6. What are the pain points of Program Review process?
7. Who and how is involved in the Program Review process?
8. Validation process, if any: strengths and weakness
9. Training, if any: how useful and important?
10. Data pack, if any: how useful and important?
11. Technology, if any: strengths and weakness
12. Does Program Review at your institution connect with SLO? If yes, how?
13. Does Program Review connect with resource allocations? If yes, how?
14. Does Program Review connect with institutional plans? If yes, how?

Product

15. How the results of program review used at your institution?
 - At a program level
 - At the institutional level
16. What impact Program Review and its institutionalization has:
 - on You as an educator
 - on your program
 - on the institution overall
17. On a scale of 1 to 6, 1 being the least and 6 being the most, how truth the following statements for your institution? Why?

Program review processes are in place and implemented regularly.

Results of all program review are integrated into institution-wide planning for improvement and informed decision-making.

The program review framework is established and implemented.

Dialogue about the results of all program reviews is evident throughout the institution as part of discussion of institutional effectiveness.

Results of program review are clearly and consistently linked to institutional planning processes and resource allocation processes; college can demonstrate or provide specific examples.

The institution evaluates the effectiveness of its program review processes in supporting and improving student achievement and student learning outcomes.

Program review processes are ongoing, systematic and used to assess and improve student learning and achievement.

The institution reviews and refines its program review processes to improve institutional effectiveness.

The results of program review are used to continually refine and improve program practices resulting in appropriate improvements in student achievement and learning.
