A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY: AN ANALYSIS OF NO CONFIDENCE VOTES AMONG PRESIDENTS IN CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES

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by
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Susan: In another case, it was, you know, the district versus the group of faculty. Um, so if you put them all together, it definitely was about power and roles...

Susan: Different perceptions of roles.

And, um, I'd always been commended and continued to be, for being very open, having open forums, telling people what we had to do even when it was bad news. I'd already just navigated us through the worst fiscal crisis we'd had up till that time. We had worse ones later. And people were thrilled with how that trans—happened. I was the one who pushed our pro-chair governance. I mean, they didn't have anything, they didn't have anything, so now it was—it was totally about power, and I think, um, exacerbated by the—at that time, the state led academic senate pushed to tell local senates to, you know, go home and do what they needed to do. And I believe I shared this before, but our district was already very collaborative. So when 1725 came along, we were, you know, it was—we were hard-pressed to do more than what we were already doing. We did more but then that put us way out on the cutting edge, and other districts who were fighting to have roles that our people had even before 1725, they were making lots of, um, noise, you know, like at state-wide senate meetings. Then this response would come out, "You need to go back and stomp on their feet, spit in their
Susan further mentioned that the sovereignty issue that the faculty were referring to was during the time of reaccreditation and they were getting ready their self-study documents but their self-study wasn’t done properly:

Susan: It had all kinds of errors in it. That had happened like a year before this. And I kicked it back. And I said, “You can’t send it like this, you’re gonna—you’re gonna get a sanction or worse! This is wrong, this is wrong, this wrong.” I said, “The premise of accreditation is that you tell the truth.” And of course they had a number of barbs about, “Well, we don’t get our fair share.” They got more than their fair share. They were supported by a small—big college [sic]. So anyway, they cleaned it up, under reluctance, and they got a clean bill of health. And I had been the accreditation point person for six years in the vice chancellor and stayed very involved as chancellor. So I knew accreditation forwards and backwards. I will say as a postscript, they’ve gotten probation twice since I left, both Vase College and Wolmers College. We—we were squeaky clean till I left. That’s what the sovereignty issue was about. As to reasons why these changing mindsets and attitudes were more apparent among the faculty regarding shared governance, Susan offered up the following excerpt.
Susan: The academic senate at that time was feeling its oats. I mean statewide... And there were some specific players, who will go unnamed, who were advising. And that was a critical piece and I don't know if they were realizing it back [then], but we knew what was happening. They were advising their senates, "Go back." And here is how I used to describe it, "Go back, tell them how you want it to be, and if they don't do what you want, stamp on their feet and spit in their face and make them do it. And if they don't, give them a vote of no confidence." And so that's the advice they were giving them and that why there was a whole—there was a whole bunch of us that got them. In fact, we started calling them our merit badges, we were gonna make up little button and I'll wear them. I mean, there were a couple dozen of us within a couple of years.

Susan: And they were being advised at the state level to do that, which was pathetic. So yeah, you are right! The law was passed in 1988 and they were revisiting that at the leadership academy today [referring to a conference she had attended earlier that day]. But, it was about that time, that people were really pushing it and part of the problem, and I think there is stuff written about this, was that our organization was very collaborative before AB 1725 ever got passed. Very collaborative! So, the stuff that people were screaming about and the reason they passed 1725, we were already doing that.
Susan: And I know we were, because I was in that role as vice chancellor. And then—but then law passes, so then our people think, "Well, we gotta have more." So they—here we were right where we needed to be, and others were over here. And we weren’t the only ones there, there were a number like that, but then they thought we should be over here and that’s—that’s definitely when the tension came in.

Researcher: And you do believe that that played into this... [meaning the situation that led to the vote]

Susan: Oh yeah! Big time! The contact statewide was huge!... Okay, okay, it was also an issue!

Overall, each of these participants mentioned the implications of shared governance on their work in general, but only two of the four participants directly linked their respective votes to shared governance, while the other two participants only spoke about the negative implications of getting a vote as a result of shared governance gone wrong in general terms. For example, Bill mentioned that the new law provided the gateway for no confidence votes when he said,

“So that was the start of what really led to—ultimately led to, what I would call the vote of no confidence: the definition between what the role of the president and the administration was and what the new role under the shared governance prescribed laws of AB 1725 [pause] lead them to believe their roles were.”
Similarly, Paul also discussed how the community college environment shifted with the use of NCVs and suggested that it was harder for leaders who got the vote based on shared governance because it was about one’s management compared to being based on negotiations because that was purely about funding. The following excerpt highlights Paul’s view of how shared governance shifted the goings-on in the organization:

Paul: You know, because I grew up in it. You know a lot of presidents, you know, when this thing passed—it passed and it was a reform bill, it was AB 1725 (a reform bill for the colleges), and there was big bucks into it…. I think that when I became a president, which was (during that same time of the law), you know, so I was part of that growth with this whole governance structure of changing and understanding that change. A lot of CEOs retired, you know, around that time and after that. ‘Cause especially like the CEO, (my mentor/ president) the one I’m talking about, he would have never survived in this kind of environment. You know, just give me a job, no interview, you know, you gonna be my new dean. You know that’s the way it was done in those days; you can’t do that today. Um, so I think it was the fact that I grew up with it, and understood that people…

Generally, each participant talked about knowing and seeing the implications of the new shared governance law on their institutions and other presidents in California Community Colleges. Although they all knew the changing
institutional mindsets of institutional players concerning the use of the vote and had heard about what was happening with other leaders who got the vote across the state, in three of five votes, these leaders did not expect it happen to them or were still surprised that it happened because they thought they were doing everything needed to support their institutions well. However, this context-specific factor was indeed a trigger for NCVs in leadership.

**Budget constraints.** The other institutional factor that was an attributable factor for three of the participants’ NCVs had to do with some form of budget constraint. Smith (2003) observed that budget constraints placed limits on work of the leadership in five specific areas of the California Community College system during the 1990s and 2000s. These five specific areas included “salary increases...benefits, technology, facility and other capital outlay” project (pp. 1-2).

For instance, Bill attributed his vote to budget constraints precipitated by state budget cuts, the closing of a major town facility which used to generate FTEs and revenue for the institution, as well as some miscommunication about salary raises. He also noted that after a major military facility closed in the area, certain groups within the college developed a plan to generate funds by developing partnerships with the town’s recreational facility, offer dummy classes or classes that were on paper but not actual classes that would allow them to claim student enrollment. He noted that these individuals would then report FTE counts to the state and obtained money from the state for their FTEs. For Bill, this was
problematic and he believed that such discrepancies were not entirely legal. As a result, once the key players were aware that Bill knew about these FTEs, Bill notes that there was fear that he would have reported their processes to the state and there was a fear and scare of staff layoffs being generated by individuals in the institution. Consequently, Bill, who was initially hired as a change agent for the institution, was now being silenced as a potential whistleblower:

It was a—You have to remember the times. It was a (a major facility-pseudonym) closure, the finances were really bad in the early '90s, we were still in the recovery period in the mid '90s, had a really good decade after that and then it hit the fan again.... And most of these things when you look at it. What do I really attribute these things to, finances.... It's not leadership as much as finances. In Sunshine College's case, the '90s to '92 period of time was another recession, money was lost. And it was also shortly after the free (system of colleges) had stopped in the '80s and they were not adding any money/revenue—in fact, to this day, the fee generation goes to the State, not to the individual campuses.... So it was a kinda a recession, bad money. I happen to go to an institution, it was in a community; it was aging, along with a closure of a (major town facility-pseudonym). Finances, they generated their finances in a survival mode that was very questionable. Do I understand? Yeah, I know why they did it. That administration would have died, they would have been gone. Had they not found ways of creating
a revenue source that would allow their campus to continue, I just can’t live with myself, if I were to do the same type of thing.

And I got [chuckles]—the things you learn, I did all my homework, I studied the budget, I did have a question and no one seemed to be able to answer it. As to how they maintained their budget balance, in the wake of the (major town facility-pseudonym) closing...? Because they had—there were 1,400 FTEs at (this major town facility- pseudonym) and I saw that in the previous year’s budget before the presidency became available and I saw that they maintained it. And I said, “How did you maintain it? [Their response] “Well, we got new enrollments.” That all made sense and I didn’t think to ask how you got that enrollment, at the time, which was my mistake [sic]. That’s Lesson One: Make sure that when there’s something that you have a question about that you follow in detail. So when I got there, that was obviously the first question in my own mind that I needed to answer....

And ah, I started asking some questions, and some of the questions I asked were, “How did we generate this new FTE?” He says, “Well we formed some partnerships with the community and it led to some very, very big enrollments....” Then I said, “Okay.”

Then I get a call about November of my first year, midway through the first semester. It was from a young lady who had tried out for a part in a community theatre and when they went for the interviews, they were to sign
a sheet to get the credits for (Sunshine College); which sounds okay. So I said, “Tell me about it.” So she said, “So I was given an A in the course—or I was getting an A in the course—it was actually at the very end of the semester when she called me. I got an A but I checked that I didn’t want a grade.” So I said, “So how long were you in attendance?” She said, “I went for tryouts but I didn’t get the part, I only went to two classes.” Which in (the Community College State) law, it just didn’t make any sense. So I said, “Okay, I better look into this.” Before I got out the door, I got a second call from someone with the same thing but from a different community theatre. There were (a number of) community theatres. [Sighs] They had worked out a deal with the community theatre leaders, or if they didn’t have a person with a master’s degree, they brought in one from another school and everybody tried out for a play received credit.

Then, when Bill tried to address what he had investigated and uncovered about the institutional practices, he discussed the response he received:

And I had to stay on the side of not really relinquishing all the information as to why we were there, ah, but I knew.... And of course, they had picked up some of the other issues of the, "Well, we have these community generated things." I said, “Well, I am well aware of those, but we have to make sure they meet the intent of legislation and our finances.” So they were worried and not very nice; I mean I will tell you, they were not nice
[chuckling], ah, but that's what I did. I met with all departments and that the only one I remember being awful…. There was—the fear that the (major town facility) closing and that number was going to hurt them as I looked into the community organizations that were supporting those institutions particularly through those theaters. I had kept the—as quiet as I could keep the city relationship with the institution in this big FTE-generating recreation program, I tried to keep that one quiet, because that one was gonna hurt. Even though I met with the city manager and their attorney, that attorney said it was legal. And I said, “Well, [pause] the attorney for the system does not thing it is legal.” Bill: So because they were also involved in some of that stuff, they knew that if—if it did not continue that the institution was in deep trouble financially. It's just logical, when you lose 1400 FTE from a (major town facility) closure that you're going to be hit hard. So that fear—I would say that fear was probably rampant throughout the campus. And fear is a motivator.

Bill: I was fearful of it. I mean that’s why I said to the board, “If I—if this goes back to the student, my principle says I have to do something about this.” Um, but I know it was going to be the end of my career at (Sunshine College) and it would be the end of your board career when it gets public…And I said, “At some point, if this comes to a head, there is gonna to be some differences of opinions probably expressed between entities
here." So I tried to keep that as low profile as I possibly could. And there was a reason for that. The chief negotiator for—the faculty union was the person who was using that tool the most. He not only got his $210 dollars back but he was—he was the single most regular user of the facilities: swam there, he played racquetball. So I knew I didn’t want—he was—he was a (a subject area/ discipline) guy, thank God, his partner was (subject area teacher) and that partner was very high on the list of people using that and generating—I can go and show you transcripts, you’d be surprised [by] what you’d see about the.... You can’t repeat classes, don’t tell those faculty members that, um, they will repeat it [chuckling].

Bill: So if I were to say what caused most of them? Money, they are money issues.... Not having enough to pay your people what they’re worth. And do I think that—that faculty, in general, are reasonable in their request? Absolutely! Absolutely! They’re underpaid.

In addition, Bill also discussed a situation where a (vice president), the person second in command to him, told the faculty that Bill was planning on giving them a nominal raise. The institution had been in negotiations for a few years regarding faculty pay and contracts. Bill purports that this (vice president) was trying to undermine his leadership by inciting fear among the faculty with rumors that Bill had no intention of giving them the raises they were asking for over the years. Although Bill was quick to admonish this (vice president) and soon release
him from his position, this miscommunication about raises added to the growing contention between him and the faculty, as seen in this brief excerpt:

I always did town hall meetings and at one town hall meeting around the end of that spring semester, when we were in negotiations that hadn’t been settled for years, a faculty gets up and asks me a very direct question, [and] said, “I understand that the [former senior-level administrator] wanted a 3% raise but you wouldn’t go for anything more than 1%.” Well I said, “You know, well I’m not going to negotiate here on the stage.” Well the opposite was true, I told the [former senior-level administrator] to get this settled for 3%, but he was the one who was supposed to be the president…searcher: Hmm [chuckle]… So we had our differences that summer. I decided I better not get rid of him, because if I get rid of him, I am really signing my death warrant.

Similarly, Paul attributed both of his votes, in two separate organizations, to budget constraints that placed a strain on collective bargaining (contract negotiations) at (Jago College), and a state system’s audit that rendered an incorrect reporting about overstaffing which then snowballed into erroneous layoff notices at (Campion College). Paul maintained that his vote(s) was purely based on collective bargaining negotiations, precipitated by budget constraints. His narrative also provided in-depth and rich insights about this institutional factor and is evidenced in the excerpt below:
Paul: Budget, you know. I think it was a—the, ah, I think it was '95 or '96 recession. The district just didn’t have the moneys to give the kinds of salary that the faculty were asking. And ah, I think we were at impasse, fact-finding or something, and the word on the street was that they wanted me to make a—to accept their offer. And so negotiations....

And at (Campion College), again, [it was] negotiations, you know. The difference at (Campion College) though was—was ah, I think it was a color issue too....

Paul: Um [long pause], you know to try and go back, I think it had—both had to do with money. I think both had to do with money. (Jago College), for example, was involved in interest-based bargaining and I also accepted that and was a part of that. And what I came to find out is that interest based bargaining works well when you have money. And when you don’t have money it doesn’t work well.

Researcher: So was there state, budget cuts at the time or was there...?

Paul: Yes, yes. ‘Cause you had the first recession around '93 or '94. And so you had the recession and we weren’t trying to do any pull backs we just weren’t trying to give you anything, and of course, when you do that that angers people. For example, um, I had to deal with a group of students who were accusing me of wanting to cut the faculty’s fringe benefits. And that they have kids and why am I being so mean. And so we sat down with these
student leaders and showed them [and said], "No, we are not cutting anyone’s benefits, you’re gonna maintain your same benefits we are just asking you to pay a dollar a month. That’s all, so it’s not that we are asking you, um—it’s not that we were telling faculty and staff in negotiations to cut their benefits, we were simply saying, you know the cost is going up.”

And typically, the salaries ranged between 85 to 90% of a college’s budget. Your start-up cost and to do utilities and papers is another 10 to 15% [sic]. That only gives you a small amount of money to work with, and so trying to get folks to understand that. And then you have the problems that you say you broke and then at the end of the year you end up with all this money. The people remember what you said in September that you were broke and then you in June all of a sudden you end up with all this money.

Paul: So you have to deal with that [both chuckling]. But I think both of them had to deal with money and salaries.

Concerning the layoff notices at Campion College, Paul suggested that this was an error, that none of the faculty was laid off, and that he quickly rescinded the infamous pink slips as soon as the error was found. The following excepts speak to these layoff notices and what Paul said happened, which also aligns with the information found in newspaper articles and noted that over 60 layoff notices were sent to the faculty.
Paul: and then at (Campion College) it was precipitated by the layoff notices, you know, that we issued. Now we rescinded all 60 layoff notices and no one was laid off. But that got started because of incorrect reporting that we were doing in our fiscal—in our HR offices. You know, we were reporting that we had X number of faculty when we really didn’t have that many faculty…

Researcher: Oh, your FTE counts.

Paul: Ah-ha, Ah-ha, Ah-ha. Because back then, you were supposed to have, I can’t remember the percentages—that’s a shame—a certain percentage of your credit FTES taught by full-timers.

Paul: So when I brought in some folks. As a matter of fact, I brought a person from (Jago College). My HR director I had at (Jago College), when the HR director at (Campion College) retired, I brought her in. And when she came in she uncovered the incorrect reporting. She said, “Paul, we report to the Chancellor’s Office that we have x-number of faculty, and we really only have this many." And what we were doing were counting units and adding those up. I cannot remember the mechanism that we had that created the problem. Then we were also fudging on our FTES reporting to the Chancellor’s Office, our student contact hours. We were telling the Chancellor’s Office that our students were meeting three—four (4) hour a week with the faculty, when they were only meeting three (3) hours a week.
But that was what we were reporting. I don’t know how much that was over a 20-30 year period, I mean it was huge.

Researcher: So this was a problem created prior to you being there?

Paul: Oh yeah, prior to me being there.

Researcher: Okay.

Likewise, Susan attributed some of the growing concerns about her 13% raise as factor in a time of deep budget cuts and a national recession. Susan referred to her vote as the perfect storm, a situation where several small issues kind of grew over time and would later have a disastrous effect on her leadership.

Susan: But the third part of the perfect storm was that when I was hired, in my naivety again, and I tell people never ever do this, uh, I accepted a salary that was $13,000 less than my predecessor, nobody does that anymore, you always go up! You never go down! And—but again, with my reluctant board with this young woman and what does she know and all that, young to them, I was 45. [They] said (speaking about the board’s decision about salary) “Well, we can’t pay her as much as him because, you know, he was awesome.” So they said, "If you have a good three years, we’ll raise your salary.” And they did. And that happened at the same time that all this other stuff happened, so I had all three events within five month of each other. And then probably in September, the Board did the raise thing, because that was the three year mark. And then December, the firing of the president
became public. So yeah, I um, um, [pause] the July took me by surprise, I
guess the— and then the—the salary, yeah. I, uh, I have to take that back,
the one that surprise me the least was the salary, cause I warned the board. I
said, "I don’t think this is going to go over very well. I know you promised
it to me," I actually said that, "And I know you promised it to me and I
know I should have gotten it three years ago, maybe we should stair-step it."
I remember telling them to do that. "Maybe we should do 4 or 5% or 4 [%]
or whatever that was. And—and this very powerful business man on the
board said, “No way, you know, that’s our decision.”

Altogether, the institutional factors, structural reforms vis-à-vis shared
governance and budget constraints, were two of the key known triggers identified in
these president’s stories and they were two of the ways these leaders made sense of
NCVs on their leadership. Although the themes could easily overlap with other
themes in these findings, in this study contends that it is important not only to stay
true to the sense making of each participant and to convey why they thought these
known triggers led to the vote.

Leadership triggers. The theme of leadership triggers refers to situations
where the leader’s actions may have been perceived as a signal to the community
that this leader had essentially violated some type of institutional trust which then
caused institutional players to react to what they saw. Similar to situations where
institutional players thought the leaders violated some shared governance policy, such violations are crucial in the relationship between leaders and followers. In this case of presidents and faculty, such relationships reveal political polarizations which can put a strain on cultivating trust and respect between the two groups (Birnbaum, 1988). As a result, any action or interaction between these groups can be key occasions for making sense of what is going on, including times when the leader’s action or decision making goes against the expectations of institutional players (Weick, 2001). Thus, leadership triggers were seen in the decisions of these leaders to either hire and/or fire individuals in the community.

All participants talked about certain triggers generated by their actions in the institution that the faculty or a subset thereof did not respond well to. However, since some of the hiring and firing actions were already mentioned earlier in Paul’s narrative (fired his vice president for miscommunicating his position on raises), and Debbie, (who mentioned trying determine the best place to cut staffing to save funds), only Bill and Susan’s excerpts will be discussed here. Bill, who noted that he was hired because he was regarded as the change agent the college needed, and he then hired another change agent (a senior leader) to come in and support him in with his plans for the campus. However, this action was not well received by institutional players whom he agreed told him that he might have been moving too quickly.
Bill: Ah, the second year was when it really, really, hit the fan. When I brought in the dean, I don’t even remember her name, it was one of those changed names, (dean of a major division) and something. It’s something they didn’t like, I know that. Ah, that was probably when it really turned. It was that…

I was perceived—that was probably the final blow to those who were afraid that something might happen in the institution that would not be in their personal best interest. And it probably would have. In fairness to those people who—who developed some fear about what would have happened, we would have had to implode before we rebuilt ourselves. And—so you know, those people who had that fears, had a very—I think a very astute vision of what was going to occur had we gone down the path to make that institution right before we rebuilt it to what it could be.

Bill: I never got there, so I don’t—and my [pause] successor didn’t want to go there. He knew his job was to maintain—forget the two years of Bill and reestablish the type of authority that was in there before. Even though, as he would say, "The alligators were nipping constantly," they wanted things to be better, but they really didn’t. Um, and then the new person came in. I think it got far enough away that they began to thinking of themselves a little bit better. But in fairness, they didn’t change and still haven’t changed
some of the things that would be not quite kosher within the system... in
terms of collecting FTE.

Researcher: The faculty are concerned—were concerned that you were too
aggressive, it was only your first year, [and] moving too quickly.

Bill: Mm-hmm.

In the same vein, Susan suggested that she too was under fire for both hiring
someone who could help her to move the organization forward around issues of
diversity, and also for firing a campus president. The first excerpt will follow
Susan’s sensemaking of her actions that became a trigger about her hiring practices,
and this will be followed by excerpts of the firing process of a president.

Excerpt 1: One of the first people I got to hire as one of our college
presidents was a Latina, and they objected, they objected. Most—I don’t
think they objected to her quite so much, but they did object. But they
mostly objected to the fact that the committee sent me two names and I
picked the one I wanted, with the board’s blessing. And it wasn’t the one
they wanted and so that was a problem and it was at the same time I was
doing a lot of stuff with diversity. And then there were some other things
that happened.... I mean, as soon as I made the decision about the president
hiring [the Latina] that was like in June/July and there was some squawking
about it. We started having the conversations about, "Well, shouldn’t they
have more power, shouldn't they have more whatever." And then, so that
would have been probably in July or something like that.

Researcher: Okay. And would you suggest that, um, in retrospect, you
would do the same thing again?

Susan: Yeah, I think I would quite make the same decision. Um [sighs], I—I
suppose if I would do anything differently it would have been to contact the
search committee who had been dismissed, who knew their work was done,
who had a party even... thanking them for their work, I probably would have
gotten up, I may have, I won't, can't even say probably, I may have gotten a
hold of them and said just want to let you know I'm putting the
announcement out, here's the person, in other words letting them know first.
Although, I'm, you know, as you know I'm a search consultant now and I've
been through close to thirty national searches and that's not the
recommended process. We just try, I think— I think this is what I would do
differently. I would stress again, even harder, that their work was done when
the committee was dismissed. And then it would be myself and the board
making the final decision.

Susan: I would have [pause] put in writing even....You know—so that—so
that they did not claim that kind of surprise. That's what I would do
differently.
In another scenario, Susan maintained that the firing of a president was indeed a trigger for institutional players to make assumptions about her and her leadership. Implying that these onlookers themselves were making sense of her actions and interactions with this president, Susan noted, “the vote happened almost simultaneously with this president’s firing.”

Susan: Yeah, 1990s, no that was like a few months before that vote. And so at the same time and again I am getting ahead but you can piece this all together…. I was, uh, I let go of a president, a white president at a different college, who had—was extremely unethical and disreputable and everything else. And I, in my early naivety days, had given him more than a year to find a new job, on the condition that if he didn’t find one he would voluntarily ask to go back to the classroom. And, he didn’t find one. And the day he was to announce, because we were going to have to make a decision publicly or his contract would rolled, he held a conference, a forum, invited everybody to tell them—to tell them, and we checked it out with the local trustee in the (area), this was at a (Vase College), and he announced that he had just learned that morning that he was going to be fired. So the community, which was sixty miles away, became unglued, it was just as if I had done this horrible thing to their president with no notice whatsoever. And then worse than that, I came to realize that he had been using that year to undermine me. ’Cause I had found out all kinds of things he had told
community members and stuff. Whenever they wanted to do something, he would say, "The chancellor won't let me and blah, blah, blah, blah, blah." And actually, half of the staff or more at that college were glad he was gone, 'cause I was getting a lot of complaints about him. But they didn't like the fact that the district had done this, so that happened just within months of me hiring a Latina.

Susan: Because I really got done in by a president. It wasn't the one I picked, I got done in---- he was picked, the one that we fired, was picked a month before I was hired, by my predecessor, which is wrong, wrong, wrong; uh, and then he had no loyalty whatsoever. And I paid the price for that. But---- so I tell people be careful who you pick because they need to be competent leaders but they gotta be a part of your team. And when they're not ready to be a part of your team because they want to be the boss, then they need to move on.

**Theme Two: Crucial Blind Spots in No Confidence Votes**

Typically, blind spots can be regarded as areas in our lives that are hidden to us but known to others as we interact with each other as noted in the Johari Window (Luft, 1969). Merriam-Webster (2015) defined it "an area in which one fails to exercise judgment and discrimination." A deeper explanation of blind spots, with
consideration to leadership activities in organization, emerged from the work of Malandro (September 1, 2009), who described blind spots as the 'unproductive behaviors that are invisible to us but glaring to everyone else.' This writer suggested that such behaviors can have "unintended consequences," and "corrupt decision-making", suggesting that, although such blind spots are innocuous in and of themselves, they can become problematic when "they are unidentified and mismanaged" (Malandro, September 1, 2009). In the same vein, this study will refer to crucial blind spots using this latter concept, which not only referred to the things that blindsided these leaders but also the institutional and leadership situations that posed as crucial areas that were not apparent to these leaders.

This theme of crucial blind spots is better understood in the statement that individuals generally shared when they explained an unbelievable situation that they've experienced, such as all the signals were there but I just refused to believe them. The data analysis revealed that these leaders talked about such dissonance or blind spots by talking about the hidden social forces that were at work within the institution, such as interactions between the faculty and administration within the institutions or external events that had implications for these institutions. Other minor blind spots that were mentioned in the narratives but were not statistically significant using Cohen’s Kappa Coefficient in NVIVO included retirement of founding presidents or predecessors in the system that created opportunities for defining the next wave of leaders (Paul), a focus on affirmative action hiring to
diversity the leadership or new board elections in the district (Bill), a national recession that no one was expecting but it changed the way leaders did their work (Paul), a change in the governance structure between the state and local boards and chancellor’s office (Bill), gender (Susan), or race (Paul). However, this section will only focus on the most significant instances within this theme.

All participants discussed having strong and positive working relationships with the majority of their constituents and external stakeholders, at least before the vote occurred. Albeit, these participants also talked about factions among the faculty who were very vocal and would do anything to get their voices heard, including a no confidence vote. All leaders talked about these subgroups as being underground or hidden to a certain extent, and that these groups were both informal and/or highly structured social forces within the larger culture of the organization. What was also interesting is the impact these small groups appeared to have on the larger culture of the organization, which Schein (2010) defined as:

...a pattern of shared basic assumptions learned by a group as it solves its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, which has worked well enough to be considered valid, and therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to those problems. (p.18)

It is within this culture that we begin to see subcultures, usually groups that are organize based on their operational work or expertise (Schein, 2010), and who may
also form informal social forces or networks (Cross, Gray, Gerbasi, & Assimakopoulos, 2012). According to Cross et al. (2012), such networks are informal and social and:

...exist in every organization. Although these networks are often invisible to senior leaders, they have a pervasive influence on most employees' experience of and engagement with work. They are critical to how people find information, solve problems, and capitalize on opportunities. They are paramount to how high performers get their work done and distinguish themselves over time. And they are intimately intertwined with employee satisfaction, well-being, and retention. (p.1)

All participants observed and described these hidden forces through their informal publications, such as campus newsletters or community newspapers. Debbie's narrative of a small group of faculty who were also making sense of the leader's actions in the organization and sharing their sensemaking through an on-campus circulation, at least with other faculty members, is a key example of this social force. Other leaders who discussed similar campus newsletters included Paul, who mentioned that the campus paper known as (The Insect) was used as a means for attacking his leadership, and Susan, who talked about a neighborhood newspaper that the faculty were using to voice their concerns publicly as well as a group of faculty that wanted to be her unofficial advisory board. Overall, the deepest and most in-depth narrative about such social forces came through the narrative of
Debbie as she described a campus newsletter known as *(The Corals)* who actively engaged in making sense of her leadership.

Debbie’s name of this hidden social force was a group she referred to as the “cosmic accidents” or the “core faculty” who she alleges was in charge of running a campus letter known as *(The Corals)*. Those faculty and spoke with the local newspaper. Debbie describes this group as:

And, uh, I—(Josie) used to call them… ah, she used to refer to some of the—the people in this group as the, um, cosmic accidents because they were meant to actually be in Harvard or Stanford and by accident they ended up at the—at a community college, and [chuckling] why—were we not appreciating and understanding what we had there [chuckling]. So [pause] these were our cosmic accidents [chuckling]. You may have met some people in that group. But, but in their defense, they were hired at that time with a sense of what the community colleges were and what their teaching's going to be like. And so the colleges they were hired into were junior colleges, focused on transfer education and they had a notion that they would be teaching, um, for example, if they were in English then they’d probably get to be teaching some literature courses because their students were going to be so advanced and so far ahead, not a bunch of ESL and lower and composition for students who needed remedial work. I mean they saw pretty much a [indistinct talk] population, that was, you know, not all of
them but a lot of them had that image of what their college was going to be like [sic]. And if they did—if they were broad-minded about who was going to come here, they still assumed that it was—they were—people were going to come and be excited and they were going to be able to be teaching these advanced level courses. It was going to be more like university teaching.

Debbie: ...a noisy percentage of the faculty...and largely made up of that—that same core, the cosmic—the CAs, the cosmic accidents [chuckling].

Debbie: There was a—there was a—a group that called themselves (*The Coral newsletter*), did I mention that?

Researcher: Um-mm.

Debbie: And the heart of them was in the math and science department.

One of their leaders was a woman who was probably married to the dean, I mean, they never admitted it because there were nepotism rules in the district, but I—I mean, I am quite certain they were married. Um, and because she was so active in it, I mean, the implication was that the dean approved of—of what they were doing. Well he ended up—he went to the chancellor and uh, was—uh, he was, you know, complaining about me, along with the faculty in this area. And I forget what—what he was—told the chancellor what he was planning to do, but the chancellor told him that he needed to know that if he proceeded, the district would hire attorneys in support of me and that, you know, he would be..... And so he said he would
like to be, uh [pause] —a—I can't remember what—that he had a problem
with me or something like that. And her [the chancellor] response was,
"Well perhaps you should resign from being a dean and go back to faculty
status"; which he did.... So that left this position open. And the person I
wanted to choose for it [the open dean’s position] was this woman, who was
very outspoken, but I knew in my heart of hearts that if she had really
understood the situation she would be a reasonable person. I knew that she
had been swayed by *(The Coral Newsletter members)* and particularly by the
dean and his wife. And so I was willing, in spite of the fact that she had
been—I mean, she had gone to the newspaper and done all these other
things. I just knew that that was not her in her heart of hearts. Well, the
board did not want me to hire her because, you know, she had gone to the
paper, she had been quoted, and since she was seen as such a reasonable
person that was very harmful or could have been harmful. I mean, actually
not that many people—that was not a district in which the paper carried that
much weight. But, I mean it was still the, you know—it was still a very
nasty thing to have done. Anyway, I—I had to convince the board, I had a
really go out on a limb and the chancellor, she also did not want me to hire
her. But they let me do it. And she turned—it was as exactly as I had
anticipated; she ended up apologizing, I mean, she—once she got into that
role and understood, I mean, once she sat there and realized how we talked
about things and how things were worked out and how we sought input, I mean, she honestly—she just didn't know. Even though she was an experienced faculty member, I mean, she wasn't a newbie, but she got swept up along with the, you know...[sic]. So, you know, there were people like her, you know, there was this core of (The Corals), and then there were people like her, who shhhhp [sic].

Researcher: Interesting [overlapping talk]. What happened to (The Corals)? Do you know?

Debbie: They all retired [chuckles]. They were—they were that core faculty pretty much, with a few exceptions, but they were those people, I think I probably mentioned, they had been there when the college first started, they were the—they were the cosmic accidents?

Researcher: Yes.

Debbie: They were the cosmic accidents, and so they were the ones that—ah—and they were the ones that saw the college that they thought they were coming to, change! It's true, it changed! ... And as new people came in, it changed the tone tremendously of the faculty.

Researcher: ...in 19--, (The Corals), as you mentioned, start[ed]—sending out personal attacks concerning you, do you remember what most of those—what was the framework of some of those attacks?
Debbie: Yes, it was really interesting because, um, why I don’t remember all of them of course, but they did it on (coral) colored paper. They would—they did it all anonymously, nobody would sign their names (chuckles), and—and they said they had to do that [chuckling] because otherwise I would—they were fearful of their jobs or something. I mean that’s ridiculous because even if I wanted to be vindictive you couldn’t have been vindictive, you know [chuckles]. And they were accusing me, basically, of what—of what they were doing. So that was a big—it was sort of like, well you can see it, the republicans are doing it now [chuckles], you turn around and accuse the other side of what you are guilty off [chuckles]....

Debbie: So that was a lot of it. I mean they had little—I can remember little cartoons of someone hiding under a table, because if they came out, you know, they were going to be...you know. It was ridiculous. And you know we had—we already had at that time, I don’t remember what we called it, maybe College Council, which was the shared governance [committee]. And we had a bunch of committees. We had both of those operating, long before the other two colleges had anything like that.

In another excerpt, Debbie outlined the newsletter’s circulation process and how this newspaper made personal attacks against her:

Debbie: ...The biggest thing was that the (Corals) evaporated. I mean, no more of their—of their (Coral) colored flyers came out. They would—they
would put them out and then distribute them in everybody’s mailbox. Then somebody would slip me one, “Oh my god, it’s another (Corals), uh”. I wish I had kept them just to see what—what ah—what some of the things were.

Researcher: And were these pieces of paper, were they always about the administration or...?

Debbie: Oh they were mostly about me.

Researcher: Personal attacks?

Debbie: Yeah, yeah, personal attacks.

Although Debbie’s narrative did not cite any of the actual personal attacks on her leadership, partly because she said she could not remember, it was clear that the “cosmic accidents” or those in (The Corals) paper group were not content with her actions surrounding the budget, hiring decisions, and shared governance, all the areas of changes that was happening at the time. One of the unexpected outcomes mentioned by another sources, stated that the board tried to disband (The Corals) after the vote, but would later reinstate this paper, which Debbie confirmed in the interview (Agency Document 2, 2006).

Overall, the above narrative provided a glimpse into the ways such hidden social forces can influence others into inducing a NCV against the leader, and shifting opinions about the leaders as mentioned in Chapter Two. In addition, it is also unclear whether Debbie understood the role or power and influence of this
group before the vote, enough so to do something about it, or if it became more apparent to her after the vote. In Debbie’s story, this social force is believed to be hidden behind a newspaper that was influencing how other institutional players viewed the actions of the leader. This doesn’t appear to mean that all faculty members were moved to act against her leadership purely on the basis of this group’s sensegiving. However, she does infer that at least sixty faculty members participated in this process to give her the vote of no confidence, and the extent to which they may have adopted the sensegiving offered by this coral group or by other behaviors of the leader is unclear to this researcher.

Other participants also talked about similar social forces or groups who participated in making sense of the actions, decisions, and interactions of the leadership with institutional players. However, each participant described these hidden agents or forces, mostly faculty or faculty union leaders, in the following ways.

**Bill: Old guard vs new guard.** Bill noted that there were several changes in the institution before he entered the organization, including a changes in the old guard (senior leaders) with a younger savvy group of leaders (new guard), including a new academic senate president, who were asking the board to bring in a change agent. Bill mentioned that he was hired to support this new guard, but later ignored the old guard and their warnings. He noted that changing the furniture in the president’s office and hiring another change agent to support his agenda were huge
mistakes and something institutional players still talk about as a signal that he was trying to change the organization:

Bill: ...Starting my second year, I brought her [the change agent] in to lead the accreditation, change, and planning. She wasn’t very well accepted that year [chuckling] and fortunately, she did what I suggested, that maybe she should take a leave of absence. She was from the (a local) area and one of my former mentors was chancellor then and was known for his change. So we brought her in and it just didn’t work, it just didn’t...I didn’t read the culture, what I read was what some people wanted me to hear and do, but I hadn’t really studied the culture.

Bill: And the culture—the underlying culture of the institution did not want that change and were frankly a little afraid of it; because of (the major facility) closing and a lot of FTE, and the likelihood that maybe some people would be out of jobs. So understandably, that culture resisted the leadership that I brought to that institution....

...And I think it would be a fair criticism to say that I moved much, much too quickly for that culture. And they warned me. It’s not that they—some of the old guard brought me in for teas and coffees and drinks, and warned me that you can’t just come in and make the change. And they were right; I mean that culture did not demand that. So some of those faculty members would say that I moved much too quickly, they would probably say I was
likeable, but that I didn’t fit into that college. And that’s a really important thing for—for potential leaders to look at, is fit.

Susan: Good old boys. Susan explained that there was a group of faculty who wanted to be her “kitchen cabinet,” meaning an unofficial or informal advisory board, but when she refused they were busy undermining her leadership in the institution. She mentioned them three times:

Susan: I was home grown, I had ten years in the classroom, he had none [referring to her predecessor]. You know, I’ve been on their side on negotiations and even my six years as vice chancellor, I was often the mediator between them and him. So they thought that now that I was in that role, well they actually said, to me “Well, we can be your kitchen cabinet.” And I said, “I don’t intend to have a kitchen cabinet.” And that was the start of my deteriorating relationship with them....

Susan: ... Behind the scenes, underground, I knew that there was chaffing about the---- that the good old boys didn’t have the control that they once had, but no sign that they were going to go in that direction....

Susan: So, um, so yeah, gender meant everything. And the only thing that got me in more trouble than gender was the issues I took on diversity. And that was a big part of what happened to me because I was really taking on the good old boys, and so...
Susan: Oh, that would only be, yeah, that would only be what I told you earlier is that knowing how volatile those men were, I just—I hated, I probably would have held my nose and had a conversation with them and let them know what was going on. Um, another mantra that I’ve adopted, it goes back than the earlier one, is know the difference between preference and principle. You know, I would prefer not to do it, but it wouldn’t have violated my principles to do it, no. It violated my principles to make them decide....

Paul: The Insects. Paul described (The Insects) a newsletter from an informal faculty group that led personal attacks about administrators and other individuals, not just him. However, he suggested that a faculty member-turned-board member was a key writer for this paper and was instrumental in making sense of his leadership and inciting the vote against him:

... And so, um, when those kinds of things get beaten down or they don’t succeed, then they had a newspaper called (The Insects), okay. And I come outside my office one time and there’s this big ’ole plastic (insect) on my car door. And the—it was never proven, but the trustee who did the vote of no confidence, he gave me as faculty, that’s who it was alleged was the author of (the newspaper).

For example, at (Jago College) during the negotiations, and we are having a, uh, accreditations, and they had a mock funeral with me in the casket. And I knew
the chair of the accreditation team and so I had already called him and told him what was going to happen. The last time they did it the accreditation team turned around and wouldn’t come on campus. So they thought they could do this again and stop the accreditation and get me to move on the uh—on the negotiations. Well, I had already talked to the guy, and he said, “Well, Paul, hell, I’m coming.” See they lost, you know.

Paul: And one of the faculty—one of the board members was a former faculty member, (name of faculty/board member). He approached [the newspaper's author] and said, “Look, if you ever have my name in that damn thing I’m a meet you at that woodshed [sic].

Researcher: And what was the publication of (the newspaper) all about?

Paul: Oh it was a—it was, um, an inflammatory, anonymous rag about people... And it wasn’t just about me, it was about anybody they didn’t like: faculty, administrators, board members. It was just a rag, you know, and it was called (The Insect)...

Overall, these narratives speak to some of the hidden social forces that were signaling to the leader malcontent and disaffection against their leaderships, and were essentially blind spots for these president participants. Each leader noticed these ongoing events or situations but either paid no attention to them or were focused or distracted by other pressing issues. The findings from this study demonstrate that these leaders’ sensemaking about these small factions led them to
either disengage or not communicate with them enough, essentially ignoring them. Thus, the implications of these detractors’ barbs and behaviors may have been more far reaching and powerful in creating meanings through symbols and signals to the institution. Over time, such meanings may have snowballed and picked up traction by coupling themselves with other incidents and events that aligned with the meaning making of these leaders (Weick, 2001). Researchers of such social forces or networks suggest that if leaders do not engage with these informal structures to help inform sensemaking or leave them unchecked, such groups can move to actions against the leadership, if they see the leadership as the problem (Cross et al., 2012). In addition, they suggested that these groups often tend to get aroused by certain events or behaviors of the leader, and then communicate their understandings of what is going on from their assumptions, beliefs, deep distrust, and/or emotions (i.e., fear or anger) that have built up over time about some action or thing a person did (Weick, 1995).

**Theme Three: Implications of No Confidence Votes**

The third emergent theme found in the stories of each president participant was focused on the implications of these votes on their overall leadership, particularly the (a) personal implications and (b) professional implications. Each president participant was asked to describe their sensemaking of what the vote meant for him/her. Each one talked about the personal and professional implications
of these votes. As noted earlier, these leaders were unable to see the growing shifts in the environment that would eventually change the attitudes and mindsets of other institutional players, such as shared governance policies. This is also true for areas in the leadership that were blind spots, which arguably may have had additional implications on the votes against them and their leadership. Thus far, these themes were not only pervasive in these narratives but are central to understanding how these leaders make sense of such events on their leadership. The following themes speak directly to such implications on the leader directly.

**Personal Implications: Reaction to the vote.** Each participant disclosed his/her initial knee jerk reaction upon hearing about the vote as either being either a surprise or an expectation, which often evoked a lot of emotions. For instance, two of the president participants, Paul *(at Jago College)* and Debbie, talked about expecting the vote because of what was going on around them at other colleges and with our leaders. These leaders talked about noticing the strained relationships during contract negotiations and shared governance policies that eventually led to no confidence votes at other institutions. Conversely, Susan and Bill mentioned that they were indeed surprised and somewhat blindsided that the vote happened; they never expected it because they suggest that they were working hard to avoid such events from happening. For his second vote at *(Campion College)*, Paul did state that he was not expecting it to happen, because of prior fiscal and leadership problems the institution had before he got there. Despite the expectation or lack
thereof, each president talked in their narratives about their reaction to hearing that
they got the vote, in terms of their emotions and whether or not the vote was right
or wrongly given in their narratives, adding a new layer of richness to the text.

*Expecting the vote.* Debbie described her initial reaction to the vote and
whether or not she thought the vote had any merit, given that she was indeed
expecting the vote on her leadership. She also included how certain institutional
players reacted to the vote as well:

Debbie: Well, it was uh, there were—you know it's very interesting, because
I could see it coming, you know, sort of like seeing it, you know. But I
really was, was not in a position to be able to—to shift the course. Uh, part
of what, uh, contributed to it was just the whole AB 1725 thing... So all of
that just became this perfect storm.... You see it, you see it converging.
What—you know, what can you do about it? You can't change it. You can
explain... Yeah, I could see it; I could see these things converging....
Debbie: Well, I don't, uh, at the time, the academic senate president, um,
was a guy who was really a, uh, a supportive faculty member, but he
wasn't—he was not a very strong leader. Um, he was, um, he was chair of
one of the occupational programs, and so he didn't have—he didn't have the
support of the academic faculty in the same way a person who came from
history or math, or whatever might have had. And he—he was almost
apologetic about the vote. I mean, he really didn't like the fact that this
happened.... And so he—I remember he told me that morning, quite
apologetically, "I am sorry. It was—it was only 60 people (or whatever it
was), but it was a—it was a no confidence vote." And, you know, as I said,
"I saw it coming," but it was still, you know, your heart just sinks. It felt
really bad.

Debbie's initial Reaction:

And, um, I remember that I had to go to something that day, right after that,
um, off campus. It was—it was somebody's birthday or it was a—again, if
it was right around a holiday, it was some—some college related thing that I
went to. And I remember another faculty member was there and she came
over to me and said, "What happened? I see it in your face, I see it in your
face." You know, I was trying to act like everything was fine and it didn't
matter and, you know, whatever, but still, it really did hurt. It really hurt....

Well there's an emotional—the emotional piece of it is personal. The other
part is not, I mean for all those reasons I mentioned that most of the people
did not even know what they were pushing for. There were lots "(outspoken
deans types) in the group, or this young little part-timer who had no idea—
no idea!"

Response to the vote:

Researcher: Do you believe the vote was wrong?

Debbie: Well sure, yeah!
Researcher: Why?

Debbie: Well, because the whole—I mean, it is basically people not understanding share governance and not understanding what we were already doing, not understanding what it meant [and] having really distorted notions about how, you know, what having a voice in governance really meant.

Researcher: So neither you nor the board really addressed it head on?

Debbie: No, absolutely not, yeah. The only head-on thing was wanting to hire this (outspoken dean) and the board just.... In fact, normally, I would never have to go to the board about that, but because the chancellor, I mean, she was so opposed to it. She said she would go along with it if I convinced the board. So she was the one who insisted that I go to the board.

Researcher: So no one really directly, um, had a—there was no real process then. Like for instance, nowadays there is a Bill of Particulars that comes out from the academic senate or the group and you have a conversation about it and address those issues. So back then?

Debbie: Nothing, nothing like that.

Similarly, Paul, for his first vote at (Jago College), noted that he too was expecting it, and he also shared his response to the vote and whether or not the vote had any merits against his leadership. Interestingly, he also discussed one specific antecedent condition, such as another president getting the vote prior to his entry
into the institution. Cerebrally, Paul admitted that he knew it could happen but that he saw himself as a different type of leader than his predecessors, and was unable to see a basis for the vote. This particular information points to the type of climate and culture that Paul had entered into at that time:

Researcher: So, did you know, were you expecting it to happen? The no confidence vote?

Paul: Um, Mm-hmm. Okay, because for instance, at (Jago College), they only had one incident of no confidence vote prior, with (a former president), I think, she went over to (a university overseas), in 19—.

Paul: Um. (Repeating the name of the former president). And we were both people of color.

Researcher: Interesting. So it wasn’t a surprise to you that they were gonna give the vote. You knew they were upset about negotiations. So you kind of expecting it. Why were you expecting it?

Paul: I had an ear.

Researcher: Ah.

Paul: And I had seen it at other places. And a lot of times, it does get the organization or the CEO to move to give them what they want. And I wasn’t gonna do that.... I was expecting (Jago College’s) because of what had happened to other college presidents and the things they have said.
(At Jago College), I don’t think I was the first vote of no confidence, but they had real difficulties with the strong leaderships or even the weak leaderships that they perceived.

Researcher: Right.

Paul: So the rumors were there. So the expectation was there.

Paul’s initial Reaction:

Researcher: I see. Yes, okay. So where were you and what did you feel in that instant when you heard you got the vote?

Paul: At which one?

Researcher: Both. Let’s start with (Jago College).

Paul: I was devastated here at (Jago College).

Researcher: Why?

Paul: ‘Cause I really liked this place and I thought I was doing a good job. You know. And I thought we were doing some good things as an institution. You know, we, uh, (Sciences), I got (a Science Program) to give us $500,000 worth of equipment. I got a legislature to write us special legislation for $250,000. We were moving things in (the new campus location) for a whole new center. We were developing relationship with the—the (a nearby military facility), I had met with the commander at (the facility) and was telling him how terrible the facility was and brought in the other colleges. And he then decided that they were gonna create a
university center on (the military facility) just for us. So things were moving well and I just felt—we just felt devastated here.

At (Jago College), you know I cannot remember physically where I was....

At (Jago College), I personalized it. You know, when I look at my career the two colleges that I have the greatest affinity to is (Jago College) and (Cox College). Now, I enjoyed the six years that I was at, uh, (Campion College), but the two that really have a place in my heart are those two institutions. (Cox College) because that where I started teaching and (Jago College), because that’s where I had my first real first good run as a CEO.

Paul: At (Jago College), I had to defend myself, because it was so personal, you know. It’s kinda like your wife coming home to tell you she wants a divorce and you don’t know why. At least you pretend like you don’t know why. So it was, uh, at (Campion College), I had did all the things that I felt were necessary externally as well as internally [sic]. You know, it didn’t affect me as much personally, as it did here [at Jago College].

Researcher: Would you say [pause], in retrospect, that any of these votes had any merit to them?

Paul: ... I mean the (Jago College), no...

Researcher: So you mentioned while here in (Jago College), you fought and you defended yourself, can you expound on how you did that?
Paul: Well, you know, for example they would say, um, I tried to run the school as a business that I would refer to students as customers. Um, and I would try to defend myself by talking about the size of our budget and that these students had choices, you know. (This state) has free flow. So, you could decide, “Hey, I’m gonna drive to (name of another city), ‘cause they treat me better at (a local city) or I’m gonna drive to (another local city) because they treat me better at (local city).” So I talked in terms of...that we were a business and that we had to operate ourselves as a business. So I think whenever they came up with whatever allegations I always had a defense of why, I was doing that.... And that’s when (Carl) came to me and said what I said earlier; about “Paul, we need to focus on what’s at hand”. For example, one of the votes—one of the things they said about me was that I was running this place like a business. You know. And my response back was, “Well, heck, we are a $45 million organization.” Heck, I don’t know what our budget was...a $50 million, I said, “I better run this damn thing like it is a business”. And so, I had to learn that educators don’t like being called a business, but, I better operate this thing as a business, because we better have students and have enrollment to get revenue from the state otherwise you’re gonna lose. When I tried to defend that I’m operating as a business, (Carl) came to me and said, “Paul, quit that, quit fighting it. The more you fight it, it is going to escalate. Because every time you try to
defend it then something else pops up. They are constantly bringing what you didn’t do or what you haven’t done.” So the focus then became on let’s continue moving the college forward, I cannot allow that distraction to stop me from doing the things that we were doing and plus I had board support. Well, the guy who the vote of no confidence, ran for the board a year or two later.

In addition and for his second vote (Campion College), Paul talked about not expecting the vote, his reaction and response, as well. For example, in contrasting his reactions to the vote at both colleges, Paul explained that for one vote, he was hurt, and the other vote, he was hurt and angered for several reasons, including racism and unfairness:

Researcher: So you also said in one of the, um—in a response to one of the (Cox College) faculty members who asked you about the vote, you were very candid, you said, “It hurts” a vote of no confidence. Why did it…..

Paul: It hurt.

Researcher: Why did it hurt and which one really hurt[s]?

Paul: (Jago College).

Researcher: You’ve done a lot.

Paul: (Jago College). Um, because you know you’re trying to do the best that you possibly can and you think you’re doing what’s right for the organization and you’re following the lead of your board, you know, you’ve
gone through your planning process. Your planning process says you should do this and, you know, all this other junk. And then all of a sudden because I can’t get you what you want in negotiations, you’re going tell me you have no confidence in my leadership. So it really hurt. *(Campion College)*, it really angered me and I said, “The hell with it.” You know, I said, because the only—the only thing that I felt that *(Campion College)* could do me was—the only thing the board could do to me was fire me. And I was still at the age where I needed to work; I just get myself another damn job [sic]…. 

Paul: Didn’t personalize it as much. Because the *(Campion College)* one didn’t hurt…

Paul: Whether my skin was tougher, I didn’t personalize it. Um, even though I think the color was a major issue behind it but I didn’t personalize it at *(Campion College)*.

Paul’s initial Reaction:

Paul: At *(Campion College)* I was driving home…. You know, I was telling you that that African American faculty called me. So I was driving home with *(Campion College)* and I just told him, I said, “Hey look, your no confidence vote don’t mean a damn thing to me, I’ve had it before. Is there anything else you wanna talk to me about?” He said, “No.” I said, “Goodbye.”
Um, (at Campion College), I’d already been through it. The only thing that upset me at (Campion College) was that they used the brother to deliver the word. That hurt. That hurt.

Paul: (Cox College) —not (Cox College) —I mean (Campion College), they’ve had worst fiscal calamities there and they never did a vote of no confidence. I mean they’ve had worse and they never did a vote of no confidence. They had worse CEOs than me and they never did a vote of no confidence. They had CEOs that the board fired that they didn’t do any vote of no confidence. But why me...? At (Campion College), even though they had worst fiscal problems than what I had, the vote was never taken.

Paul: That, uhm, if they had him do it, it wouldn’t appear to be racist, you know. But, the issue was, once the contract was settled, it went away... No one was laid off because we were able to um, re—not negotiate, we were able to, you know, recalculate the budget, reduce some things, ah, that no one lost their jobs. No, I take that back, I really take that back. Two classified employees lost their jobs; however, I had a no layoff policy. And those two employees were absorbed in the organization somewhere.... So I told the college presidents they had to find work for these two individuals. And they two presidents did. So no one was laid off.

Researcher: So why give the vote? Was it just a knee-jerk reaction?
Paul: I think it was a knee-jerk reaction. I also think it could have been a color issue. I think it could have been an issue that I wasn't 'cow town' and doing what they wanted. You know, I wasn't fired behind it!

For the other participants, like Susan and Bill, both had a different reaction of being surprised. Susan, for example, previously mentioned that she had gotten the vote for shared governance violations, and spoke about how surprised she was about getting the vote. She also talked about the validity of the vote in terms of whether or not the vote was deserved:

Susan: I was surprised.

Researcher: Why were you surprised? What happened?

Susan: Because there wasn’t anything that bad going on! I mean, as soon as I made the decision about the president hiring [the Latina] that was like in June/July and there was some squawking about it. We started having the conversations about, "Well, shouldn’t they have more power, shouldn’t they have more whatever." And then—so that would have been probably in July or something like that.

Researcher: Interesting. So you had no cues that this was coming?

Susan: I really had no clue that was coming.

Researcher: What were your thoughts when you got the vote? Your personal, professional or presidential thoughts, do you remember?
Susan: Well, obviously, it’s, um...hmm, I don’t know what to say, it’s hard to say. Well, certainly I was surprised that goes without saying, I was disappointed, I was indignant and I think I was indignant which kept me from being hurt. Not that it doesn’t hurt, but it kept me from being really hurt because I was indignant. I was like “Come on you guys, what are you doing, you know who I am [and] you know what I’ve done.”

Researcher: Do you feel like this vote was wrong or undeserved in any way? And if so, why?

Susan: Yeah, I think it was totally undeserved.

Researcher: Why?

Susan: I think that the reasons why are obvious, because no confidence, no confidence in my leadership? Come on...

Susan: ...so, yeah, it was, it was totally undeserved. And I think it’s—it’s significant that two years later, the two senate presidents came back and issued an unprecedented, as far as I have ever heard, letter to me and the board expressing their strong confidence in us, which was, I mean, I can hardly keep a straight face when that happened. I was pleased but it was like, yeah, okay.

...Um, and then I finally went on vacation in June of that year, and to the same place that I had always walked—gone, to go camping up in (the coast), and I fell off a cliff.... I was helping my husband who was, uh, diving for
abalone and I slipped and fell, and I had a real serious fall. And broke my wrist, and cut open my head in multiple places and all that. Anyway, um, when I came back to school, to the college, uh, everybody was very solicitous, I got cards and flowers, the union itself sent me flowers and certificates for dinner and, uh, at that point were saying they'd just elected a new president of the union, a woman the first time in the history of the college, and she was much more reasonable. And she was trying to pull things back together as well herself and then publicly some of them were saying, well we didn't want to kill her, you know, we just wanted to whatever [chuckles]. Um, they were not responsible for the death threats. I'm—I'm ninety-nine percent sure... the death threats came from some other crazies at (another college). Uh, but anyway, and then so when school started in August, late August, and we had our open, uh, back to school which is one of only—one of only two times a year that I get to address everybody, I talked about it openly. I talked about what we'd been through, what has happened, what we'd done as a result, and—and—but didn't act out on the right decisions, et cetera, et cetera, and then just moved on.

In the same vein, Bill also discussed that he too was surprised by the actions of institutional players and also reflected on his initial reaction and response to the vote. Additionally, Bills assessment of the vote, as to whether or not it was a
personal attack was also interesting to this study, particularly because he focused on how it affected his wife personally versus him:

Bill: ... the surprise for me, 'cause I didn't see a vote coming, it hadn't been talked about, at least in the circles that got to me. And I used to be pretty good in getting the janitors to talk to me and some of the new faculty, but I hadn't heard anything. When I was gone, my executive assistant knew that it was coming; however, 'cause her husband was involved in some of the negotiation, well they called for a vote of no confidence while I was in (a city college), not while I was on campus [chuckling]....

Bill: And so it was set up and I knew at that point that it was going to be very difficult. I had couple of really good strong people that were working with me to make sure that shared governance went... who were faculty members. And we brought some new programs and we brought in a (special grant), it was the only one on the (location) and there was only two in the country at that time. So we did some really good things, but that did catch me by surprise...

...so I'm driving back after the week of accreditation and had I stay away and write my reports, and then—so I call my office and my executive assistant said, 'I have something that I have to tell you. They had a vote of no confidence but they didn't win it'. [Chucking] I said, "Oh, okay, I mean
that's one thing, it's nice to know that they didn't win it, but the fact that it
was called said a lot.” And it didn’t matter whether they won or not at that
point, the newspapers got it, got a hold of it, etc., and so it was in the
news…. Because I really didn’t have no sign that this was happening; even
though I always prided myself of having my ear to the track, so to speak
[sic]. I didn’t see it coming. And—it was—I could speculate now on how it
happened, when I look at it I think I know how it occurred, and why it
occurred then, and probably who was even responsible for it. But that's not
important, it happened.

Researcher: Do you think the vote, in retrospect of course, do you think the
vote was personal, a personal attack on your leadership?

Bill: [Pauses] No. I think it was more of an attention-getting device, aimed
at the board and worked well. I don't think it was personal; I—although,
when I think of some of the hostility particular that the English department
then it might have been. The chief negotiator from the English department
was just—was just not a very nice person…. But no, was there personal
attacks within that time, yes [sic]! Oh, yeah! That one person that I
mentioned, he would come in and just berate me in my office and would get
up and he would use the bully pulpit in the town hall meetings to do some of
that, yeah…. But do I think that the vote was that? Had it been successful
then I probably would have taken it personal…. But I never took it
personally, because it wasn’t successful…. So, no, I really didn’t think so. You know, I really think fear, it is a driving force and a very powerful driving force when it comes to: does the president state his direction? Is that important to me? Or, is the fact that I’m living here in this wonderful place, putting food on a table for something that I love doing that I might lose [sic]? That’s a strong motivator. I’d rather try to be president. I think that’s fear…. So I didn’t take it personally…. Um, if they attacked my family, I mean, yeah—then I would say it’s personal. I mean (this woman president) got attacked. Um, I think who else…somebody at (another college) got it, and that person—it was all going on in that area.

Altogether, these president participants stated that they were either surprised, expecting or not expecting the vote for one reason or another. Such responses and reactions eventually became prompts for them to make sense of their leadership in these institutions. However, there was definitely a time of silence between the time of the vote and a decision on how they would respond to the vote for each of these participants. It was during this time that leaders talked about getting support from fellow colleagues, family, and the board. Susan noted that in her attempt to keep a low profile, she would tailor her activities in and around the campus, and did her best to stay away. These particular reactions were interesting to this study, because it demonstrated that the leader’s initial reactions and where
they felt comfortable to interact with others and where they drew some support from:

Susan: ...so when I'm picking my community events, I made sure I went to those places. I didn't really wanna deal with some of the other people for a while [chuckling]. And I go there and I had, you can appreciate this, I had wonderful, older African American women, some of who I'd never met, come up to me and say, "I'm—I'm praying for you, honey.

In addition, as these leaders spoke about emerging from the dust of these votes, two participants, Susan and Debbie, reported that a few of faculty or union members involved in the votes would later apologize to them for their actions against these leaders. It is unclear if such apologies, which appeared to be significant after the vote, may or may not have made a difference in the leader's reaction to the vote, although they both noted that they appreciated it.

There were also some outliers within this theme of leadership implications, such as how these leaders' families responded to the vote and how these leaders developed coping mechanisms for dealing with these votes. For example, Susan's extended family advised her to quit her job. Susan also mentioned that her father had died a few months before the vote, but she remembered her mother noting that "it would have killed him." Susan also mentioned that her husband, a retired faculty member from that district who knew these institutional players well, was upset but highly supportive of her, knowing she would fight. As a coping mechanism, Susan
mentioned taking time to visit her daughter while she was away for college, to get a break from the campus during that time. Similarly, Bill talked about his wife having sleepless nights over the vote. Bill also mentioned that after buying a house and wanting to retire with his wife and family in that area, he called and told his wife to pack her bags when he heard he got the vote, causing them to uproot their lives once again and search for a new home. It appears that regardless of how much these presidents knew or thought they knew about what was going on, these votes may have left a deep imprint on who they thought they were as a leader. Other coping mechanisms came from the support of other leaders who encouraged other presidents to exercise, take care of themselves and do other personal things to get through and survive this stressful time in their lives.

**Professional implication of the vote.** The second implication of the vote was that it demanded a response from the leader. As a result, all participants, except Bill, decided to stay in their institutions. Such decisions were not only triggered by the vote or support of the board, but it also had to do with the leader’s sensemaking about why they got the vote. As mentioned in Chapter Two, a major caveat of a vote of no confidence in the cases reviewed leaders viewed these votes as baseless because they believed that they were doing what they were supposed to be doing as a leader and institutional players were simply resisting their efforts.

**Staying or leaving the position.** A major professional implication for all president participants was the leader’s decision to stay which was highly contingent
upon how the board responded to them getting these votes. One participant, Susan, was extremely vocal and, in her words, “indignant” and broke her silence by going to the media and telling them that she had no intentions of leaving (Article Document 7). Additionally, all participants talked about being supported by their boards completely and meeting with the board to determine if and how they would respond, except for Bill. Bill noticed that his board shifted their support primarily because those board members were in a re-election year and with each of their seats on the board being tenuous, his board members did not stand by him in the end. According to Bill, the board’s response about his leadership and leadership actions concerning the FTE problem during one of the town hall meetings was a clear signal to him that he did not have their support. He said he then embarked on a “friendly divorce” between himself and the board.

Similarly, Paul, Debbie and Susan also talked about having strong board support and simply moving on without addressing the vote directly. However, each participant talked about responding to the vote indirectly through strategies to increase faculty involvement either in shared governance issues or in special programs and services. For example, Debbie stood out as embodying the key elements in the stories of the leaders who decided to stay. Debbie also talked about the aftermath of the vote and that she and the board did not address the vote head on, but she understood the possible implications of the vote and knew the board would support her.
Researcher: What do you think [they thought] was gonna happen when they gave you this vote?

Debbie: Hmm, that’s a good question. That’s a good question. Uh [long pause], because I—I doubt that they really thought that the board was going to take that seriously [chuckles]. Umm-hmm. You know, I have never really thought about that particular question, but that’s a really good one. Umm.... You know, I’m thinking of possibilities. Presumably, they thought—I suppose they thought it was going to make a major shift. Maybe they thought that I would be embarrassed into—into leaving or something like that. Uh, I—some might have assumed, I suppose some might have assumed that the chancellor would say, “Well, we have a problem here, we better have a new president.” But I can’t believe the major of them thought that. I think it had more to do—my guess is that not a lot of them really thought about what they really expected, it was more a, ugh, a chance to express.

Debbie later goes on to mention that she had strong board support, “But I—I never—I never questioned the support of the board, I never questioned the support of the chancellor.” This decision to stay not only solidified her role as a leader but it allowed her to stay in that position up to four more years after the vote had occurred. She noted that professionally although she survived the vote, there were some scars.
I’ll tell what changed, uh, was that I probably backed off a little more than I
would have, in many ways, to the detriment of the college. That I probably
did not—was not going to stick my neck out as much in something that was
really important as I did before.

Researcher: Was this as a result of the vote? Or?

Debbie: A result of the whole thing, you know. Like why—why put yourself
through that? I don’t mean, big, big things, but you know, this is an issue,
this is an issue that needs to be addressed. Well, maybe next year, you
know. I’m not gonna—I’m not gonna stress out. I mean, I was working
incredible hours and putting in so much.

In addition, Debbie noted that she did not change anything, referring to her
style and professional work; she noted that she realized that the “Noah’s Ark
committee” that they had already had in place prior to the vote had not
distributed the information they gained to other members of the institution
and that was a key problem that she corrected. She noted she would take
minutes, send out emails and keep records of these collective meetings. In
addition she noted that people changed after the vote:

And, we started the fall semester and it just kind of went away. And what
was amazing was the people who said—afterwards, that they really
appreciate the effort I was making towards shared governance. I was doing
the same things, nothing’s changed [whispers and then chuckles]. "It’s really good that you’re...."

Researcher: So neither you nor the board really addressed it head on?

Debbie: No, absolutely not, yeah. The only head on thing was wanting to hire this (outspoken dean) and the board just....

*Impact on reputation.* Each participant also discussed how these votes were highly publicized using different media, including external print media, community and district papers, which then drew concerns from key stakeholders and affiliates of the college. These participants also addressed the impact of the vote on internal members, mostly the faculty, who may have gone to the media to share their side of the story and, and that some of them did so without doing any fact checking. According to these leaders, these local papers would print this information without discussing it with the board or attempting to verify this information with them directly. Although these entities may have actually made attempts at fact-checking for these reports, it is unclear if leaders knew of it or were willing to participate in such processes at that time. Consequently, three of the four participants, Bill, Debbie and Susan, briefly discussed the far-reaching implications of the vote on stakeholders, such as key community members, business people affiliated with the college, city, and district. In most of these cases, such stakeholders appeared to have been alarmed by such reports and each participant discussed having to take some
time to reassure these key stakeholders. For participant, Susan, it was important for her address this issue with the media, with the help of the board, to quell some of the concerns of both internal and external stakeholders. This action was also confirmed by a reporting agency in the state (Agency Document 4):

Susan: I mean, you know, there's lots of articles in the newspaper, we had a horrible reporter who kept repeating over and over, and he would write anything that these guys said, and then my board, chair and I finally went to the editor-, the publisher and expressed our concerns about the biased reporting and the guy was moved off our beat. He—he wasn't allowed to cover us anymore. But they never would take it back, you know....

*The vote can follow your career.* In Bill’s case, he noted that, although the vote had failed essentially, the rhetoric in print and now social media had not only been incorrectly printed but followed him throughout his career. This was also a key and new finding, not reported in other reports about the vote. It appears that these votes can indeed follow the leader and become a barrier for acquiring certain positions even after the leader leaves these institutions. The following example is an excerpt from Bill’s experience:

Bill: …it didn’t matter whether they won or not at that point, the newspapers got it, got a hold of it, etc., and so it was in the news.
Researcher: Do you find that they’re different implications for people who get the vote, versus those who don’t get the[se] vote, after they leave?

Bill: No.

Researcher: And then why is this idea of you getting a vote persisted so long? You know, the word is out there that you got the vote, but you didn’t; the vote failed.

Bill: It wasn’t immediately that way. Even if—if you pick up any one of those articles, you would think I lost the vote. Not one article reported the outcome of the vote; it was pretty lopsided, um, but because it was held.... It doesn’t matter whether you win or lose one; the fact that there was a public display made by your faculty that your leadership is not accepted, raises.... It doesn’t happen to everybody; it’s not something that’s common, it’s not—

You don’t have experience in business; you get fired. Ah, it only happens in the public sector, in particularly in institutions, community colleges, colleges.

Bill: Why it persists? It makes good lore. It’s part of the lore of any institution. In (Sunshine College's) case, I would say it’s probably used as leverage, as what happens when someone supersedes the cultural “how we do things around here.” Ah, it—I would not be surprised if it’s not, because that faculty that led that are probably nearing the end of their careers now
[sic]. They were younger than I was, by a number of years. And, so I think it probably exists more because of lore.

On the contrary, Paul explained his proactive practice of working closely with key local newspapers and city officials to ensure that he were not only protecting the reputation of the organization but his as well, at least before or after any incident on the campus. Incidentally, this study was unable to locate a single newspaper article about Paul for both votes, and he was quite curious about how I found out about his vote. This study was only able to locate Paul through an article that named him as one of three final candidates for a chancellorship position, and the article also outlined the qualifications and concerns of the campus about each candidate. Subsequently, in the school announcing the outcome of on campus visits of these candidates, they mentioned that Paul had received two no confidence votes from two different institutions. In this article, Paul addressed both votes with campus officials and noted that reasons for the vote, being hurt by it, and, at the same time, how the vote was a badge of honor for his overall leadership. However, this article also noted that the faculty from Paul’s previous institution had contacted the faculty leaders interviewing Paul to tell them about Paul’s vote of no confidence at his two previous institutions. In another scenario, Susan, who was appointed as interim by the state’s chancellor also had to deal with resistance from the faculty, who were allegedly advised by the faculty from her previous institution, that she too was a recipient of the vote.
External influencers. All participants, except Bill, also provided another new finding in this study that has not been noted in the literature. This new finding suggests that there were some outside influences on how these president participants made sense of the vote on their leadership. For instance, California’s community college system has agencies, like the Community College League of California, who are positioned to assist each campus board and CEO get through these votes on their respective campuses, and they too provided some amount of sensegiving to these leaders (Agency Document, 7). However, president participants did not mention such agencies, except Debbie, who mentioned bringing in a consultant to develop strategies for moving forward after the vote.

Nevertheless, three of the four participants asserted that they were being supported and encouraged by an outside individual, or conferencing with a group of fellow CEOs that also got the vote. It appears that the input or sensegiving of these fellow CEOs were coincidentally and remarkably quite similar for each of these participants. The external CEO(s) were not only highly supportive of these leaders, who may have felt some amount of disappointment or even shame discussing their vote, but encouraged these leaders to not give up. One example of this is evident in the words of Paul:

Paul: Yeah, you know, it’s kinda—I think I told you about being at some conference and I was crying—I am not really crying, and a senior CEO came up to me and said, “Paul, if you don’t get two or three of these, I’m
gonna question what you’re doing. You know, because in any leadership position if you are making everybody happy, I’m gonna question what you’re doing because someone’s not goin’ to like it. It may just be one person. "You know, and we have a tendency to say, "Ah, the administration or the faculty doesn’t like it," where it’s only two of us who really don’t like it, but we’re saying the faculty to represent everyone and typically we don’t speak up and say, "No, that’s not what we want." Um—so I would say that the badge of honor may have come from the fact that I’m trying to do something, you know, and when you try to do something you’re not going to please everyone. At least, I don’t think you’re going to please 100% of everyone—you know... you’re not gonna make—you’re not gonna make everyone happy. And ah, what you hope though is that you make the majority of folks happy. You know, um, but you have to be willing and you have to be courageous to make those tough difficult decisions and hope that, ah, they’re the correct decision—you’ve done all your homework and all that kind of junk.

Similarly, Debbie also mentioned meeting someone at a conference and being advised about how she should make sense of the vote on her leadership as well:

Debbie: It was during this period of time that I attended a small group conference, (Chancellor's conference) —chancellors—how did I get—or was it (a presidents and chancellors' conference)... there was a person there,
who had been in a, he was an older gentleman, and he had been in (the state) and was at that time, I don't know...and he said to me, uh, well something came up or someone said, "Well, how are you doing? Heard your senate gave you a vote or what's going on? And I said, "Well, I think it's going to be okay, and whatever, whatever." And he said, "Oh, which one is this?" And I said, "Pardon?" He said, "So how many have you had?" And I said, "One." And he said, "Well how long have you been president?" And I said, "Well eight years" or whatever it was, it was something like eight years. And he said, "Well, you haven't been doing your job!" [chuckling] And we all just cracked up. His attitude was, if you been there that long and you only had one, then you've been—you've been acting too nicey-nicey and not making the decisions you need to be making [chuckles]. I mean, I'm sure he—it was half in jest and half not in jest.... But that kind of thing sure made me feel a whole lot better [chuckling].... Well, it's—yeah! It was sort of like, if you have been there that long and you are doing your job, eventually it's going to happen.

In the same vein, Susan mentioned that she too was encouraged by outside leaders who provided some form of sense-giving concerning how she should think of the vote on her leadership. She notes that they said, "Don't let it get to you that means you are doing what you are supposed to do, etc."
Overall, as the leader participants were trying to make sense of what the vote meant for their personal and professional lives, they were also moving forward with trying to figure out if they had their boards' support. However, as mentioned early, Bill quickly realized that he indeed would have a short tenure at (Sunshine College) because he did not have that support, although he is the only leader whose vote actually failed, according to Bill. As a result, the decision to stay or go, although easier with the support of the board, did not mean that these leaders did not feel hurt or disappointed by the vote. What this study did not expect to find were the implications of the vote on the leader after they had already left their institutions and applied for other or similar positions. The evidence provided in these stories pointed to the fact that these votes became a stumbling block at times for a few of these leaders. This finding is in stark contrast to the leadership turnover literature (see Coyne & Coyne, 2001) which suggested that such leaders were not even pursuing similar positions or were unable regain that level of appointment. A major inference from this finding is that some leaders may indeed be looking for similar level positions but may be faced with barriers related to how they may have exited their previous positions. In addition, these leaders appeared to have had some outside influence on how they made sense of the vote on their leadership as well, such as getting feedback from leaders who had a previous experience with the vote. Overall, this study not only better understands the ways in which these incidents can shape the sensemaking of the leader and faculty or faculty union in these
incidences but it has also reduced some of the gaps regarding of the aftermath of the vote on the leader as well. A major outcome of these leaders sense making was their openness to share the lessons they learned with a desire to pass it on to aspiring leaders, like this researcher.

**Theme Four: Lessons Learned**

There is a quote credited to John F Kennedy, which can summarize this section extremely well: “The Chinese use two brush strokes to write the word ‘crisis.’ One brush stroke stands for danger; the other for opportunity. In a crisis, be aware of the danger--but recognize the opportunity” (Goodreads Inc., 2015). For these leaders this duality of a crisis can be seen through the key lessons they learned from this experience. Such lessons included: not being surprised by the vote but to plan for it; being sure to get the board’s support; knowing when to stay or go; knowing oneself well; being patient; earning the trust of constituents, and being willing to make tough decisions, to name a few. Appendix G will provide a detailed outline of the lessons these leaders learned from these NCV experiences and acquired over the span of their career and shared with this researcher about their leadership and leadership identities. Overall, a key takeaway lesson that each participant emphasized was communication, and how it should be used for building and maintaining relationships; managing expectations; building trust; getting input
from key constituents, and making themselves accessible. This section will focus on the lessons leaders learned concerning their experience with the vote directly.

The most salient lesson learned was being strategic during these votes. In other words, each participant highlighted several strategic steps the used to move past the vote on his or her leadership. However, the single underlining theme that was evident in each of these strategies employed was to strategically find ways to explain and communicate their leadership actions and decisions. This singular but powerful theme emerged as a lesson learned and a strategic plan for any leader in this type of situation. Each participant shared his or her strategies as it related to the specific vote and incident of the vote. However, the data did converge around ideas of building up stronger coalitions with constituency groups, through consistent interactions. For example, in the below excerpt, Susan talked about how she used meetings to get to the bottom of the problem and to formulate solutions for moving forward:

Susan: ...we had several rather painful, small group meetings with two or three—four faculty leaders. At least one of whom was really trying to help, and myself and my board chair. So we had a couple of meetings like that to talk about what is your problem and it came out immediately. Yeah, they didn’t like the fact that I got a raise that had been promised me three years earlier. They really wouldn’t talk about the president hiring a Latina. They wouldn’t talk about that at all.... And they really wouldn’t even talk about
the president that I fired because most of them were glad that he was
gone.... So, it's just like they knew things publicly but that wasn't what it
was about. So when we had these private meetings and we set up a series of
them, then it came out, "Well we need—we need a bigger say in decisions,
we need to have more...." They didn't say power, but more control, more
decision-making. So we talked and talked about how we'd do that, what was
appropriate and what wasn't, and where their role and where mine started,
where mine ended and the board started. And the upshot of it all, there was
one specific thing they wanted and that was to have a faculty member sit at
the board table....

Susan also noted that, as a leader, "You have to deal with the press; you
have to deal with your own staff, your own supporters who are very
upset...and reassure them. You have to talk constantly with your board so
they do understand and stay on board and stay firm".

In discussing more general lessons learned about the vote, Susan talked about
balancing visibility and accessibility to constituents, depending on one's position,
because of what it might communicate:

So, um, you can never—I guess another one would be—you can never over-
communicate. You know, you do it in many ways and many, many venues
and keep finding more. If you're a chancellor—first as a president, I think
that the challenges for communication is even greater. Uh, how do you walk
the fine line of being visible and accessible and communicating with all of the faculty without undermining the president, and that's very hard because, you know, the more visible you are, the more it looks like you're running the institution which the president doesn't like and neither will some of the faculty. At the same time they wanna know or hear from you, so finding that fine line, uh, chancellor's state job role is really touchy and I see people struggle with that. And, at the same time, I tell chancellors that and pick your presidents carefully 'cause your presidents could do you in.

Similarly, Paul also discussed several lessons he had learned; in fact, he provided a list of adages and other lessons he had learnt over the span of his career. For instance, concerning the vote and the lessons he learned, he noted how communication, especially listening, was among the most pivotal lessons he had learned:

Paul: [pauses and sighs] You have to listen more and try understand more. Listen more to the organization. Um, try to hear the values that people are coming from and understand those values [sic]. Not saying that they would cause me to do anything different, because of the information that was given to me at that time.

Paul: And I think what I learned there was you have to have faculty involved in that vision, in that conversation. And if you don’t have faculty
involved, you’re not gonna go anywhere. I don’t care how much money you have. Um, as a servant leader, I thought I’d help you, because I always felt [that] if I had a strong team, I’m gonna be okay. So that’s where I felt that.

Debbie spoke about finding ways to be more visible within her institution as well. Specifically, she spoke to the strategy of communicating through a shared governance bulletin, a strategic step she implemented because she realized that the shared governance committee (Noah’s Ark) was not reporting information back to their divisions and units. Thus, Debbie developed a strategy for communicating what was going on in these meetings as a lesson learned:

Debbie: Uh, well certainly there were, the, you know, the beginning of every semester, there was, um, a meeting or something like that. Now later, after we got—after we had shared governance committees, um, I had my, my administrative assistant put out a—a written bulletin, I forget what we called it, but it was—it was to inform everybody about what was being considered and done in each of the main committee—committees, whether it was budget committee or, I forget what we called... there was one like president’s shared governance committee....

Debbie: Except for communication, using (my administrative assistant). I think that communication thing was really, really, really important. Uh, and it’s—it’s hard, I mean, maybe it’s a little different now because people have
email, and there are more ways to kind of get the word out. But this—email was not—it wasn’t that everybody had email at the time.... And so, when you walked around the campus, you saw some people, you don’t see all the people—you don’t see all the people. You can spend all your time walking around, and basically you tend to see the same people all the time.

For Bill, he explained how here had learned more about leadership at that (Sunshine College) where he got the vote than anywhere else. Incidentally, he also noted that before he left he noticed how strained communication lines could impact a leader:

...ah, and so I knew it was time to go. All the communications that took place from that point to when I finally resigned were really more problematic with the board and how they were handling their interactions with people on campus, and one of my (cabinet member) and (senior leader), and the way they were interacting with the negotiation processes, that’s where the problems pretty much rested. And if rumors were to come out, it came out, kinda that—that way.

Furthermore, Bill asserted that, for him, there were two things that were important strategically for moving the organization forward, and one of them was communication:
I felt there were two things that were important: 1) Not to—not to give into and be weak but to go forward with our institution, 2) Try to continue to enrich the communications of the campus, even more so than before. So you know I was already doing the open town hall meetings and I ramped those up. I worked with a lot of the community groups...

As noted earlier, leaders described many other types of lessons they learned throughout their careers, but, for the purpose of the study, the above section only highlighted a few of the lessons these leaders learned as it related to the vote. All participants mentioned that, in essence, they were already using these same communication strategies in their leadership; however, after the vote, they mentioned ramping up these efforts and being more intentional and purposeful in the process.

**Conclusion and Summary of Results**

In conclusion, each participant highlighted the following four major themes in his or her narratives:

a) The triggers that these leaders were aware of but unable to address carefully for one reason or another;

b) The leadership and institutional areas where they had blind spots and how such blind spots eventually affected their leadership;

c) The implications of these votes on and their personal and professional leadership, and
d) The lesson they learned, particularly after and directly related to the vote. Overall, these president participants used a lot of candor in outlining both the triggers that they overlooked and the blind spots that they missed, but were still exasperated that they got the vote on their leadership. For instance, Susan, Bill, and Paul (Campion College-pseudonym) asserted that they were blindsided by the vote because, first, the institution's predecessors offered poor leadership and they weren't given the vote, and second they (president participants) were busy working hard for the institution, getting things done and, in their eyes, avoiding such incidents.

Perhaps it is important to note here why leaders would measure themselves against their predecessors, an antecedent condition that could have an impact on leadership. From the literature, the predecessor CEOs has been described as the second-wave founding leaders in California community colleges (Sullivan, 2001). Sullivan (2001) described this second wave as leaders who were similar to the first wave in that they generally were "White men who were married, in their 50s, and had risen through the academic ranks," whose leadership styles were mostly "traditional leadership style" with a command-control structure, and who all retired by the early 1990s (p. 561). Subsequently, the third wave of leaders, similar to these president participants, came out of the civil rights era, was more diverse in terms of gender and race, and became focused on building coalitions and collaborations on their campuses (Sullivan, 2001). Each president participant
served under a leader of the first wave and had this frame of leadership in mind when they discussed their reactions to the vote.

Two other major findings that are unique to this study emerged as possible impacts of this vote on leadership, to include:

- the impact on the leader’s careers and finding new positions, and
- the givers of the vote can try to harm one’s career even after a leader leaves the organization.

Perhaps, these votes are unique to the cases found in this study and more research is needed to explore these findings closely, but these two significant findings are key areas for understanding the experiences of such leaders. These finding elicited several questions about the hidden impact of the votes. The questions that came to mind included whether or not these votes can end one’s overall career. What would happen if leaders get these votes earlier in their careers, such as in their first presidency? Would such leaders be able to overcome such a leadership crisis? Such questions imposed concerns about the possible implications of the vote which will be discussed in greater details in the next chapter.

Overall, these leaders tried to make sense of what happened to them by retrospectively looking back; for some, this meant remembering this leadership crisis event that could have happened over 30 year ago. They were prompted to identify and select what they remember as the most salient or fundamental factors in these stories. The decision to stay or go was central in shaping these leaders’
careers, and this decision was allegedly based purely on the support of the board on their leadership. Each participant’s story was unique and appeared authentic as they shared their counter-narratives about what happened to them. Furthermore, these leaders admitted that their sensemaking lenses were also influenced by other leaders in the system, who advised them on how they should regard these votes on their leadership. Although there were areas of their stories that converged around specific themes, there were innumerable divergent key points found, which can be used for future analysis and study.
Chapter Five

Discussion, Conclusions and Recommendations

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore how presidents in California community colleges made sense of no confidence vote (NCVs) crises by identifying the factors that they believed may have contributed to the vote and sharing the lessons they learned about these critical events. This chapter will explore how these leaders made sense of these events by summarizing and synthesizing the study's key findings using the following sections: (a) discussion of the study's salient findings and themes, (b) conclusions from these findings, and (c) recommendations for further research and practices.

Discussion of Findings and Themes

The need for and importance of this study can be summarized into four distinct categories, previously discussed in Chapters One and Two as major threats and gaps to leadership, particularly the leadership pipeline in California community colleges. For example, the California League of community colleges (CCLC, 2012) issued their sixth report on some of the major threats facing California’s community college system (CCC) as of 2011-2012, and they acknowledge the imminent and increasing exodus of retiring leaders coupled with the gaps in attracting and retaining potential leaders to fill these positions, as a potential threat in this system. Other threats previously identified in this study include the need for improving,
clarifying and developing a deeper understanding of the context, complexity, and challenges of the position by exploring the lived experiences of presidents whose leaderships survived a crisis. In addition, there is also the need to expand the concept of crisis in the literature on leadership and leadership in crisis. Likewise, there is also a need to offer in-depth insights about these leadership positions for aspiring leaders and hiring authorities, particularly concerning ways to proactively limit or reduce the implications of such crises, increase sustainable agendas, which may, in fact, may help to attract and retain more leaders to fill this forthcoming gap.

Most of the discourse in the extant literature tended to focus on how leaders managed internal and external crises in their organizations (Coombs, 2007; Smith & Riley, 2012), how such leaders may exit their organizations under duress or under fire (CCLC, 2012), and turnover rates among leaders as well as the rationales for these cases (Cornelius, Moyers & Bell, 201; Coyne & Coyne, 2007; Wiersema & Bantel, 1993), which also proved inadequate. Consequently, very little knowledge has been garnered about how leaders managed and survived crises targeting them, particularly personal and professional crises for which they were blamed via no confidence votes. March and Weiner (2003) referred to such crises as a form of “leadership blues” for presidents, describing “the stories, and painful experiences that give rise to them” that leaders talk or “sing” about (p. 6). They also stated that such stories not only highlight “the unpleasant features of administrative life in
academic organizations" but they also influence aspiring leaders by either
"attract[ing] or repell[ing]’ them (p. 6).

Sensemaking for Thematic Analysis

Weick’s (1995) sensemaking theory was the primary theoretical framework
used for this study, particularly given its applicability to individuals making sense
of dynamic situations within an organizational context and particularly during crisis
events (Weick, Sutcliffe, & Obstfeld, 2005). Sensemaking was chosen because the
contexts surrounding these no confidence vote crisis situations matched key
elements that could illuminate our understanding about the individual and collective
sensemaking in organizations. For example, Weick (1995) defined sensemaking as
the act of “making something sensible” of whatever is going on in our
environments, particularly given a “shock...surprise’ or “occasions for
sensemaking” that compel us to notice that change or shift (pp. 16, 83).
Consequently, the study’s themes emerged as these leaders acted on their
sensemaking by becoming more reflexive and retrospective, engaged in making
sense of these NCV votes on their leadership, and shared their understandings
through their narratives or stories. The act of retrospection is one of the seven
properties outlined by Weick (1995) as the “sensemaking process” (p. 77). Because
this process provided the mental frames that individuals use to understand their
environments, it is likely to encapsulate the other six sensemaking properties as
individuals share their stories (Weick, 1995).
Sensemaking through narratives. Weick (1995) further proposed that retrospection, or the act of looking back is about “knowing now what they know” and that this is a key ingredient in the concept of sensemaking (p. 29-30). Schön’s (1983) agreed, noting that professionals do need to understand and reflect on their actions, but he also maintained that such practices of reflection which can produce an unrealistic and often rationalized view about one’s expertise in situations, particularly when its goal is to impart wisdom to others. Thus, each participant was only able to achieve such retrospection and offer plausible and constructed narratives by taking the time to diagnose the situation by noticing, selecting, linking, extracting, and focusing on specific situations or events which, according to the participants’ perspectives, resulted into a vote as they attempted to make sense of their experiences (Starbuck & Milliken 1998; Weick, 1995). Each CEO participant revisited his or her interactions, reactions and lines or systems of communication with key members of the community during these votes.

Interestingly, all of Weick’s (1995) seven properties were also observed throughout these CEO participants’ retrospective stories and sensemaking activities. These properties were observed in the ways that these CEO participants described their sensemaking in respect to their (a) identities—both personal and professional identities, such as describing their upbringing and families and their leadership styles and practice, etc.; (b) retrospective stories—focusing on what their believed and remembered happening, the outcomes, impacts, strategies they used, etc.; (c)
enactment choices—each participant discussed the rationalization processes for
certain actions, such as staying or leaving their organizations and include the
strategic choices that participants believed they had to make because these choices
are based on beliefs about one’s identity as the leader in these contexts; (d) social
interactions and (e) on-going processes, both of which are both heavily connected
and involve leaders working with others to make sense of situations, which can
result is a continuous effort to not only understand and create meaning but to
minimize anything that can disrupt the organization in crisis situations, such as
continuous contract negotiations; (f) extracted cues about what might be going such
as resistance from faculty about a strategic plan, and (g) plausible meanings and
interpretations about situations that may not be accurate but are used to increase
stability in the organization by agreeing to what is plausible, such as rescinding
layoff notices because there was a clerical error (Weick, 1995).

**Sensemaking in organizations and crisis.** Sensemaking is considered a
precursor to decision making which eventually informs relevant actions (Weick,
1995). However, Weick (1995) and Weick, Sutcliffe and Obstfeld (2005)
emphasized that this type of sensemaking is also different from the sensemaking we
do in our everyday lives, as this type can begin with a change or crisis in an
organizational setting wherein, both individually and collective, people are in a
continuous cycle of (a) making sense of what is being noticed and interpreted
mentally, and (b) sharing their sense of what they have noticed and interpreted by
sharing it collectively. The goal of sensemaking during such times of confusion or uncertainty is to get back to a place of homeostasis or some level of normalcy or stability within these institutions. For leaders, this may mean that they either delay or pursue certain change agendas, depending on the level of support they have or types of feedback they receive from within the organization. Thus, the end result of sensemaking is to evaluate, filter out, latch on to, become committed to, and publicly and irrevocably act upon explanations to respond to change or crisis (Weick et al., 2005). Weick (2001) developed this concept in the form of a blueprint for making sense during crisis, which occurs when there is:

- an interruption in an on-going social setting...[people then react] often enact something...[they] retrospectively notice meaningful cues in what they previously enacted, interpret and retain meaningful versions of what these cues mean for the individual and collective identity, and apply or alter the plausible meaning in subsequent enactment and retrospective noticing (p. 95).

Thus, to better understand the factors leading up to these no confidence votes and to increase credibility and plausibility around these narratives, the present study followed the lead of other researchers, who have suggested that such constructed narrative should be weighed against or triangulated with the sensemaking or sensegiving of other agents, including the media, in the contexts of these organizations (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991; Smerek, 2009). Weick (1995)
further maintained that sensemaking always starts with the individual and his or her reality of the world; hence, such individuals are not only making sense of their environment from their personal standpoint but are also working to manipulate it for any number of reasons. As a result, this study sought to incorporate the sensegiving and sensemaking frames inferred by the various stakeholders, including the leader, faculty and faculty groups, media, and board, as they discussed these votes.

**Sensemaking and communication in educational settings during crisis.**

Weick (1995) and Weick et al. (2005) explained that sensemaking is a social process that occurred through our continuous interactions and communication with others in various contexts, particularly when something triggers us to pay attention. Weick (2001) stated that such triggers can eventually lead to a crisis, “characterized by low probability/high consequence events that threaten the most fundamental goals of the organization” (p. 224); moreover, they can act as a signal for an opportunity or threat. In other words, these crisis events can evolve out of unlikely situations, but, when they do occur, they can be highly disruptive to organizations, thus driving the need for making sense (Weick, 2001).

For example, a routine activity in organizations, such as contract negotiations, can become increasing stressful, causing high levels of anxiety for faculty and administrators. Consequently, if anything else disrupts that process, this
additional trigger is then used to support rationales about what is going on, which may include ways to reduce ambiguity and uncertainty, such as a call for a no confidence vote. Weick stressed that such events involve sensemaking and sensegiving processes that individuals in that community use to exchange information, a process that happens as we act or communicate within “feedback loops” (Weick, 2001, p. 321) or “double-interact” loops (Weick, 1976, p. 240). For example, Weick (1976) had applied this type of interaction to the educational setting that he described as being loosely coupled systems. He asserts that when individuals in these institutions experience increased levels of ambiguity or confusion and uncertainty caused by an interruption or crisis, they must take the time to figure out the situation and make sense of it (Weick, 1976). As a result, individuals in organizations, including education institutions, engage in communication cycles to reduce “equivocality,” a mixture of uncertainty and ambiguity in the environment, which then causes them to talk among themselves within their groups and across groups to make sense (Weick, 1976, pp.240). Weick (1969) posited a “double interaction process” as a way of interacting and exchanging ideas in the community (pp. 241). Weick (1969) described this process of (a) acting, which is initiated when someone says something, (b) interacting or responding, which occurs when another responds, and (c) double interacting, which occurs when occurs when someone says something, another responds, and then there emerges a response to that, thereby adjusting the first statement.
Weick (2001) further asserted that the level of analysis needed to understand sensemaking in organizations, which by itself alone only offers a “limited context” or a piece of the story (p. 447), should include the “social context [which] is crucial for sensemaking because it binds people into actions that they must justify,” and “to ignore context” is to reduce our understanding and interpretations of such sensemaking (p. 53, citing Salnick & Pfeffier, 1978). Thus, for the present study, the crisis event generated by a no confidence vote provided an optimal environment for understanding the sensemaking of these leaders, as each of CEO participants reflected on the relationships and interactions with members or groups within his or her communities within the institutional contexts.

Sensemaking and this research. The guiding research questions for this study were, first, how do presidents make sense of a vote of no confidence vote on their leadership? Second, what factors do they attribute to the vote? Third, what lessons did these leaders learn as a result of this experience, if any? In addition to the interview protocol questions, these research questions generated in-depth and descriptive narratives about this phenomenon as experienced by each participant. These findings are a major departure from previous literature which only focused on no confidence votes in general, and essentially failed to investigate tacit experiences and implications of these votes on leaders and their careers. This is the gap in the empirical knowledge that this study hopes to fill.
As previously mentioned, Smith (2003) carried out the only empirical study that had briefly addressed what may have led to the vote, such as shared governance policies and budget constraints; moreover, she offered some idea of what happened to the leaders after the vote, in terms of them staying in their organizations, leaving immediately or slowly after these votes. Smith’s (2003) findings were replicated in this study; however, the in-depth narratives of these CEO participants in this study also produced themes with both distinct and overlapping factors for further consideration. In addition, these findings provided richer data for understanding these leadership crisis events which can be summarized into four major themes:

- known triggers in their organizational environments and leadership;
- crucial blind spots that included hidden social factors;
- implications of the vote on their personal and professional lives, and
- lessons they learned about such situations and leadership overall.

As mentioned in Chapter Four, the candor and the openness of these respondents were overwhelming for this outsider-researcher, and the emergence of these themes was only possible as each participant often disclosed very intimate, very difficult personal experiences in their lives and professional careers.

**Theme One: Known Triggers.**

During the interviews, each participant attributed his/her leadership crisis to certain known triggers that were either caused by institutional or leadership factors.
The term *known triggers* refers to what these participated believed and directly linked to that which caused the votes. Weick (2001) defined *triggers* or “trigger events [as] special event[s] that [are] identifiable in time and place and traceable to specific man made causes”, as cited by Shrivastava (1987), which can eventually “escalate into a crisis” (p. 227). He described such triggers in organizational life as anything that causes an “arousal’ which can cause “interruptions of ongoing activity...to either fight-or-flight” (Weick, 1995, p.45), or trigger events that are “cosmological episodes...[which] occur when people suddenly and deeply feel that the universe is no longer a rational, orderly system...[that can be] so shattering...[that] sense[making] collapses together (Weick, 2001, p. 105). Both Susan and Debbie (pseudonyms) believed that the triggers they were aware of in their institutions could have been attributed to miscommunication around shared governance roles and processes. For, Bill, Paul and Debbie, their assertions were that their leadership actions, particularly during times of budget constraints or the hiring and firing process, were key institutional triggers for the no confidence votes against their leadership. These institutional triggers and others can cause an interruption in the flow of daily routines, which individuals in the community then pay attention to and respond to, subsequently developing their own sensemaking or meaning about what was going on. It is important to reiterate that the majority of the variables and situations that these leaders identified as attributing to their NCVs
either overlapped throughout these themes or were highly discrete triggers, such as race or gender.

A common thread in these stories about known triggers was that, at the time, these triggers were not considered serious moments for arousal because these activities were part of the routine of work in the academy. The community may have become accustomed to triggers that generally may have low-level consequences, such as reaccreditation, budget planning, or contract negotiations, which are generally areas of concern because they are challenges typical to most institutions. Fanelli (1997), in his analysis of leaders in crisis, asserted that a crisis can be an alarming or earth-shattering event, such as a destructive earthquake or a college shooting that no one would have time to prepare for, or a slow build up, like a hurricane, something that gives us time to prepare and respond. Thus, in the academic context, known triggers more than likely stemmed from continuous cycles or "occasions for sensemaking" that may have created some stirring or stimuli of either uncertainty regarding "the unknowns" about a situation and/or ambiguity or "confusion" about what it all means, resulting in an environment filled with equivocality requiring sensemaking and a response to reduce these stimuli (Weick, 1995, pp. 83, 94-99). March and Weiner (2003) suggested that no confidence votes can emerge from previous events that "provided tinder for a blaze (p. 7). Weick (2001) also asserted that these leaders' presumptions about how their actions may have been a source of arousal is based on their "presumptions of logic" or thinking
that such arousals are normal and perhaps “sensible” or understandable (p. 348).

Such presumption may be the reason why leaders were caught off guard by the convergence of these routine variables into a no confidence vote. However, Weick encouraged leaders to find ways to strategically manage such presumptions because, should these perspectives remain unchecked, leaders may fail to anticipate pitfalls or hesitate to correct the triggers generated by these actions that are then used as inputs for fueling doubts and disrupting routines in the environment (pp. 348-351).

This research purports that a no confidence vote can be considered a low probability and high consequence event that can pose a threat to both the leader and his or her career and to the institutions that will readily use an option some would call a nuclear option (Tierney, 2007). Each participant identified both some institutional triggers and leadership triggers that they were aware of that they believed may have contributed to the vote.

**Institutional triggers and shared governance.** For two participants, a major institutional trigger was the structural reforms or changes, such as shared governance policies and laws that required leadership restructuring around roles and decision-making practices. For example, Susan and Debbie identified Assembly Bill 1725, as a fairly new policy that was used as a threat, particularly when these leaders’ behaviors were perceived as violating this law. All participants believed that the faculty and other groups felt that the policy not only gave them equal
footing but also could be used to garner more collegiate control over their institutions and even the leadership. Other documents supported this finding indicating that this law posed challenges in that it lacked a model to delineate how governance should work for specific institutions, that it lacked proper funding sources to support it, and that multiple meanings existed concerning the different roles of institutional players in specific areas of the governance process, such as resource decisions, hirers, etc. (Smith, 2003; Tierney, 2007). In Susan’s case, the faculty accused her of not being collaborative and failing to consult with them after she fired one president and hired another (Agency Document Z). However, these participants’ sensemaking about such accusations were similar as they noted that they were already practicing shared governance in their organizations even before the law was passed and already had systems in place to support these policies. For example, Susan said,

I think there is stuff written about this...that our organization was very collaborative before AB 1725 ever got passed. Very collaborative! So, the stuff that people were screaming about and the reason they passed 1725, we were already doing that....

Similarly, Debbie also mentioned developing a “Noah's Ark” type of committees, noting “I think we probably had a college council before that but after AB 1725 it became more---- this, you know, we had a union representative, we had faculty union representative, we had a classified union representative... that's what
"I recall." The sensemaking of these participants is that they believed that they were already responding to these shared governance mandates and stipulations and that the responses of the faculty were unwarranted because they had their "fair share" of power to govern, according to Susan. In this context, it appears that Susan had a strong role in how shared governance structures emerged as a model for these campuses. At the same time, she viewed this governance model that she had helped to build as doing its job, even before mandate. Likewise, the faculty’s perception that shared governance isn’t fair may have been their reality because what they were expecting shared governance to be one way, but it did not materialize. Perhaps, both Susan and the faculty are placing blame on the other for the parts of the governance models that were perceived as not working, either due to self-serving biases, on the part of Susan, or some type of expectation violations, as seen with the faculty (Burgoon & Dunbar, 1999; Sedikides, Campbell, Elliot, & Reeder, 1998). For example, as noted in Chapter Two, such self-serving biases during a conflict or crisis causes one individual to perceive his or her behavior as more appropriate or successful when compared to others in the institution (Cantos et al., 1993; Sedikides et al., 1988), and perhaps, Susan, may perceive her actions as being necessary to be a successful leaders, and prioritized her actions over the needs of the faculty during that period of time.

Susan further explained that her decision to fire a president, for example, is an action that she needed to discuss with and get the approval from the board, but
such “personnel matters” were to remain private with other constituents. For Susan, the difference in her case is that on the day she and a board member approached the president to fire him, she noted that the president immediately created a stir about his dismissal, which then may have encouraged the faculty to swiftly give the vote to Susan as well as the board. Both participants believed those misconceptions about shared governance and the role of faculty and presidents in certain decision-making process were key variables in these incidents. Without clear boundaries about how shared governance is best operationalized in certain situations, certain presumptions and assumptions will likely continue to persist in these organizations and incidents.

For example, a major disadvantage of CCC system is that individuals within these subsystems or networks within the community may be more inclined to accept the sensemaking or sensegiving of these expert shock absorption mechanisms or groups, and may not take the time to make sense for themselves Weick (1976; 1995). Weick (1976) explained that the disconnections between stakeholder groups may be typical for agents within educational organizations as they “try to make sense of their organizational [lives]” (p. 2), because lines of communication and understandings of about and between groups may be loosely coupled in some areas and tightly coupled in others. He further advised that this system has its own devices or mechanisms for coping, absorbing, and making sense of shocks for other members of the community, such as local academic senates, a mechanism also
discussed in previous literature (e.g., Birnbaum, 1992; Elmore, 2004). Weick (1995) also pointed out that, if and when such systems are indeed interrupted, it can create equivocality (i.e., ambiguity, uncertainty, multiple meanings and interpretations), as well as instability. He asserted that such interruptions can generate both "positive emotions," such as "relief" because of the departure of a poor leader, and "negative emotions," such as "anger" in that such disruptions interfere with work or getting back to their routines (Weick, 1995, pp. 47-49).

Weick (2001) posited that leaders and other groups in these types of systems need to recognize that there are "multiple cause and effect linkages and preferences," "multiple realities," and perceptions are present within that context (pp. 380-401). These assertions can be applied to the fact that faculty may have different expectations or perceptions about what a capable leader is as they work closely together, while leaders may feel more constrained by such participation and limited by the process of participation.

For these participants, the challenge of developing a shared governance model had been met; hence, they believed they had the structures in place to support the goal of the AB 1725 law. However, there were some crucial disconnects between how leaders and faculty envisioned an effective shared governance model and how they believed they had achieved this goal, a fundamental problem with this AB1725 policy (Gabriner, 2005). In other words, as participants explained their shared governance systems and described the structures they had in place and how
they were working within these structures in response to these policies, the sponsors of the vote were pointing to specific incidents when they believed these leaders violated their expectations of how shared governance should work. For example, Susan’s narrative explained that, for her institution, shared governance structures were already in place and working. She mentioned that, even with these structures in place, there was a “power struggle” and she had to let them know that she was the one “making the calls” in certain decision-making processes.

The extant scholarly literature examined also identified some of challenges of shared governance policies and how this has impact relationships between administrators and faculty, such as on-going political posturing present in these institutions as a result of AB1725 (e.g., Schmidt, 2009; Smith, 2003). As a result, the policy either solidified the structures that were in place or compounded the issues via major ecological changes (Gabriner, 1995; Shulock, 2002). In the scenario in question, faculty felt that Susan violated their shared governance policy and expectations after they sent her their two final candidates for a presidential position with their preference and she chose the other person, the Latina woman president. In retrospect and later on in her narrative, Susan mentioned that, out of courtesy, she should have met with the faculty committee and shared with them who she was going to choose before she announced it to the general campus and explained why she made her choice, even after thanking and dismissing them for their committee work. However, there were major philosophical differences about
this process and this policy, and Susan’s sensemaking is that she did not violate any shared governance policies, because it was in her purview to make the final decision. However, there appeared to be a violation of expectations and informal rules as seen in disconnections between the faculty’s and the president’s understandings about how the process would end. The expectancy violation, more so than Susan’s compliance with AB1725, may have been the impetus for her NCV (Burgoon & Poire, 1999). But that was not Susan’s interpretation. Instead, Susan’s sensemaking about the faculty’s reaction in this scenario also points to the on-going power struggle within the organization and resistance to her diversity agenda as she suggested. Putnam, Grant, Michelson & Cutcher (2005) posited that the faculty’s reactions during such interactions with leadership may be a form of discourse resistance, a resistance and cynicism to overall communication of leaders. These researchers asserted that this type of resistance can stem from the culture within these organizations that promote such resistance as a form of solidarity and such actions as a “tactic” to demonstrate their “routine resistance” (p. 11).

A major area of contention in the CCC shared governance model is philosophical, which involved the ways in which leaders and faculty should view each other’s role in that system (Olson, 2009; Trombley, 1997). As previously outlined in Chapter Two, these two groups have crucial philosophical disagreements about this model. However, unless these two entities have a healthy working knowledge of their roles, faculty will continue to move or push the
limitations of the consultation model on the administration, while the administration will see this consultation process as a hindrance to their role as institutional leaders (Collins, 2002). Weick (1976) recommended that, to lessen the impacts of such disconnects, interruptions, and hidden sensegiving in such structures, "practitioners...must thread their way through [the organization] and must share their sense-making and stories in such a way that they don't bump into each other while doing so" (p. 18). In other words, leaders will need to find meaningful and intentional ways to strengthen formal and informal lines of communication, designing systematic ways to check the pulse of the organization and project. They cannot take for granted the possible sensemaking or sensegiving that may be going on in these decentralized structures.

**Leadership action triggers.** In addition to these known institutional triggers, each CEO participant identified known leadership triggers, described here as the known actions or decision-making behaviors that may have influenced the perceptions and responses of members within their community colleges. For example, several of these leaders described missteps they now agree that they made, in hindsight. For example, they talked about needing to communicate more, and perhaps, if they had communicated more they may have averted a crisis. Similarly, leadership triggers also referred to the situations where the leader's actions may have been perceived as a signal to the community that this leader had essentially violated some type of institutional trust or expectation. Such biases and expectation
violations (Burgoon & Dunbar 1999) may then have caused institutional players to react to what they saw or perceived as a violation of their expectations (Weick, 1995). These particular triggers were also evident during decision-making processes involving budgets and budget constraints, as well as hiring and firings decisions.

For example, Paul, Bill, and Debbie identified certain leadership triggers, such as decisions surrounding budget constraints. Although they each had fairly unique budget challenges, they all espoused beliefs that limited resources was a strong determinant in their situations, over which they may or may not have had the capacity to influence. For example, Bill attributed budget constraints to the potentially illegal revenue sources generated by key institutional players, a situation exacerbated by the closing of a major revenue source, a town facility that had closed prior to his organizational entry. He explained that his attention to this potentially illegal source was a probable cause for concern among the faculty, coupled with fear and anxiety that they could potentially lose that revenue source. Paul attributed his first NCV to strained contract negotiations precipitated by steep district budget cuts at Jago College, and Debbie had to make human resource cuts that were mandated by the district as well.

Debbie’s narrative, however, provided an interesting level of analysis as it showed how these institutional and leadership triggers can converge. She characterized certain mandated district budget cuts as “intercepting” shared
governance concerns. She explained that when she refused to cut these two specific administrative positions that the faculty had recommended for cutting, her flat-out refusal to follow their recommendation was interpreted as “You see it, she is not practicing shared governance, she’s not letting us decide which administrative positions to cut.” Debbie admitted that she knew these two administrators needed some support to perform at the level the institution needed and later explained that she did provide the necessary support. However, she stated that her initial sensemaking at the time was that cutting such positions would have sent the “wrong message” because these positions were occupied by two minority women, as well as “devastating” because key administrative positions were difficult to fill.

Budget constraints in this study came in the form of state and local budget cuts due to a national recession at the time that affected contract negotiations and raises, loss of revenue sources, and pay increases, such as in the case of Susan. For all participants, funding was always a major challenge in their institutions, and for leaders and institutional players alike, it may have caused a lot of stress. Weick (2001) noted that “stress paves the way for its own intensification” which can cause individuals to feel vulnerable and seek out ways to be more tightly coupled with those in charge of the purse because they are dependent on these individuals (pp. 139-140). In her study of CEOs in California community colleges, Smith (2003) also argued that the “competition for resources caused disagreements… and was a likely trigger for no confidence votes” (p. 2).
For participants Bill and Paul, budget constraints were crucial and stressful factors leading to their votes as well. For example, Bill discussed budget concerns that were already present in the organization before he arrived. He noted that with the loss of revenue due to the closing of town facility, institutional players developed a scheme for generating FTES through questionable partnerships with different local facilities. As a new president in that institution, Bill fell under the burden of becoming a whistleblower and wrestle with the responsibility of reporting this FTE scheme to the state.

And I had to stay on the side of not really relinquishing all the information as to why we were there, ah, but I knew.... And of course, they had picked up some of the other issues of the, "Well, we have these community generated things." I said, "Well, I am well aware of those, but we have to make sure they meet the intent of legislation and our finances." So they were worried and not very nice; I mean I will tell you, they were not nice [chuckling], ah, but that’s what I did. I met with all departments and that the only one I remember being awful.

Bill agreed that the faculty and staff had a right to be concerned, and his sensemaking of the faculty and even the board’s reactions to his investigation into the matter as being “motivated by fear.” He said he knew that the outcome would not be good and that “it would be the end of my career there” and in part, it was. Whistle blowing can either be a “bold exercise in personal leadership or
professional suicide” (Tate, 2009, p. 209). In fact, Bill admitted that if he had done the whistle blowing it would have ended his career at Sunshine College.

Similarly, Paul noted that Jago College had been in negotiations for years, even before he got there, and his vote “came on the heels of negotiations” and was precipitated by district cuts that initially prevented him giving raises to the faculty at that time. He noted that he later found some resources and gave them a raise, albeit not necessarily what they were asking for. With his other NCV, Paul recalled that a clerical reporting error in faculty FTE reporting over decades resulted in quick action and 60 payoff notices served to faculty and staff, which were later rescinded. At that point these “concerns went away.” In addition, Susan mentioned being promised a raise by the board a few years prior when she was hired, and that a substantial raise was perceived as unfair when everyone else was not going to get a raise. Each of these participants’ sensemaking was that the faculty’s reactions about needing resources or raising salaries were understandable, even though they also noted that their reactions may have been based on fear, trust, or, as Susan put it, “a power struggle” over resources.

For these participants, these known institutional and leadership triggers were also the result of changes in the institutional context as well as the result of ecological changes such as a shift in institutional identities due to shared governance or budget cuts, as previously noted. Weick (2001) stated that any type of “ecological change” can become a trigger or “surprise or discrepancy” in
organizations (p. 97). He applied this assertion to his analysis of the smokejumpers and the rapid ecological changes they faced while fighting the Mann Gulch fires, a fire that these smokejumpers misjudged and that caused a loss of life, Weick (1993) asserted that crises can come in many forms and that a simple change in the wind or poor assessment of the environment can become catastrophic if we fail to notice the nature of these ecological changes in the environment. One group of researchers suggested that such ecological changes can be in the form of antecedent conditions already established in the environment, defined as "conditions leading up to or cueing behaviors," and the "conditions from which conflicts are likely to emerge" respectively (Schermerhorn et al., 2012, pp. 14, 58). When leaders are focused on maintaining order and stability in their environments, they may overlook certain ecological changes even when such factors can pose as a threat and thus create ambiguity in the environment. Weick (1987) suggested that if these leaders also fail to act by making sense of what is going on, such inaction "could create disorder" leaving the environment to feel even less stable (p. 352).

Shen and Cho (2005), in examining the factors leading to leadership turnovers, observed that antecedent conditions could exist in the organization even before the leader takes over organizations, and such conditions could include anything from in-group fighting, conflicts, or, in these cases, budget constraints. If not managed, any of these could result in a leader's demise. As seen above, participants in this study talked about budget constraints as being already present
before their tenures. They also believed that budget cuts or contract negotiations were, for the most part, out of their capacity to control.

Curiously, these leaders’ sensemaking may also have been skewed by both their former identities as faculty and their positions as the leaders, which may have been used to determine and understand the growing frustrations within their communities. Such identities can cause leaders to frame certain activities as normal or “familiar, expected or relevant” (Starbuck & Milliken, 1988, p. 39) or they can be viewed as simply a guide, a standard for conducting business or operating routinely, which is also known as “assembly rules” (Weick, 2001, p. 252). Weick (1976) also explained that this type of thinking happens even during times of ambiguity or uncertainty, when individuals in loosely coupled systems are preoccupied with maintaining a certain level of “third-order controls” over their “overly rationalized” environments (p. 10). He further posited that such controls act as guide for maintaining the culture and climate and for supporting routines, and individuals only couple within their systems to communicate in order to help members make sense of the world and get back to normal (Weick, 1976). Thus, participants in these communities may have grown accustomed to years of budget constraints and frustrations with limited resources, and such triggers may become expected, whereupon individuals remember them and have rules, “scripts,” “causal maps,” or an arsenal of strategies for dealing with the fear and uncertainty.
In summary, each participant understood that his or her actions during shared governance interactions, decision making during tough budget times, and decision-making processes during hiring and firing decisions were known triggers that would generally create a stir in the environment. Similar triggers have been discussed in previous research and have lead to a crisis were the leadership was the target (see Schmidt, 2009; Smith, 2003; Tierney, 2007). As participants framed and made sense of these challenges, they all did not expect that such routines would result in a no confidence vote against their leadership. In hindsight, they may have become so accustomed to the faculty responding to such routines that they failed to see that certain ecological changes and antecedent conditions were also converging to shape the sensemaking and sensegiving within their communities, including their own sensemaking. Most of these leaders struggled to understand the levels of reactions and responses they received concerning these known triggers. What is also clear here is that these leaders may have underestimated the on-going sensegiving within this environment as well and the consequences they would face because of it. Weick (2001) referred to such reactions as evidenced by these leaders as a “struggle in sensemaking,” which involves the “temptation to normalize unusual events” and to not see the surprises or triggers of certain activities because we have become accustomed to them (p. 358-359).

However, these routine triggers did not appear to be the sole activity in the environment that shaped sensemaking; rather, these triggers were the well-soaked
wicks in wait of an activating stimulus or agent that would then cause the combustion. Weick (1977) referred to this type of environment as being "punctuated" by "a stream of pre-punctuated activities" which are the activities we point to and try to label, even arbitrarily, but, once they are labeled, we link them to other activities as we "soliloquize" or act upon them and give them meaning. Thus, this sensemaking struggle can also be applied to the next theme, crucial blind spots, as well because this may be where certain key accelerants exist. Overall, Weick (2001) asserted that such triggers can either be reduced or escalated depending on our willingness to notice them as well as on our ability to find ways to interact and communicate with members in our organizations with the goals of reducing the implications of such triggers and maintaining stability.

**Theme Two: Crucial blind spots.**

Crucial blind spots are those behaviors we fail to see, perhaps in ourselves and others, that may be apparent to everyone else (Weick, 1995). Within each of the previous triggers mentioned, each participant had a "presumption of logic" about what was going on in their institutions (Weick, 1987, p. 348). Weick (1987) described these presumptions as an attempt to maintain "orderliness" and "rationality" about our environment whereupon our logic causes us to act "forcefully" when we have stronger presumptions or "more hesitant" during times of weaker presumptions and when we do not anticipate any changes in the
environment (pp. 348-351). Schein (2010) referred to this logic as our assumptions about what is going on in an organizational culture, recommending avoiding such assumptions because organizational cultures are “deep, wide, complex, and multidimensional” and such assumptions can cause us to “stereotype” or even oversimplify situations (pp.155-156). Needless to say, these leaders were not only blindsided by the vote in certain respects because they were “acting on their presumptions,” but they may have overlooked some of the more irrational behaviors and patterns of others in their environment (Weick, 1987, pp. 349).

For example, each participant discussed some of the hidden forces behind the no confidence votes that were present in the respective institution. Susan described a group of men she called the “good old boys” club, whom she said wanted to be her “kitchen cabinet” and, when she refused, they found fault in her leadership actions, particularly around shared governance issues. She mentioned how this “kitchen cabinet” group was constantly trying to undermine her leadership by launching complaints about her to her boss, the chancellor, writing personal attacks about her in local newspapers, and usurping her leadership during occasions when she interacted with individuals in her institution. She believed that this group was also important in giving sense to the rest of the community; in hindsight, she said, “knowing how volatile those men were... I probably would have held my nose and had a conversation with them and let them know what was going on.” She also noted that after the firing of that campus president, this group met quickly and gave
her the vote. She also believed that these individuals were the main instigators for
the vote against her leadership and explained that she did try to meet with the
faculty before they voted but they refused. In addition, she explained how this
group used the local newspapers to share their attacks publicly, and she would later
approach that same newspaper to share her side of the story, which she did.
However, it is unclear if Susan actually met with this group after the vote had
occurred, to create new lines of communication, other than creating space for them
on committees. What is clear is that her actions, and particularly the firing of the
president, may have been a signal to this group and others that Susan was violating
some presumed expectations in that organizational culture.

Similarly, Bill talked about the “old guard” who began resisting his
leadership because he was moving too quickly. He noted that, amidst all the
problems they were already facing with budget and revenue sources, his actions of
purchasing new furniture for his office drew attention and became a highly
symbolic action. Essentially, Bill’s sensemaking here is that he was being criticized
because he was trying to change things too quickly; thus, everything he was doing
pointed to the mindset. He further noted that this old guard and other members of
the community would have preferred that he maintain the presidential furniture as
part of their tradition. He later recalled a conversation with his successor who told
him that they still talked about him changing the furniture. Bill admitted that he did
receive warnings from the old guards about moving too quickly, but he believed he
was hired to be a change agent and had no choice but to make decisions to move the institution forward. In addition, within his first two years as president there, he also accepted the responsibility to chair an accreditation committee process that would also take him away from the college and perhaps, away from the things the college may have thought he should be more focused on at the time. He would receive his vote while he was away from the campus, leading this accreditation process. Other sensegiving documents found about Bill’s leadership included a farewell letter written in 2014 from someone involved with a faculty union. This Sunshine College member said that Bill was “the fulcrum point of employee relations” and also mentioned the dissatisfaction and problems they faced in the wake of his departure (Newsletter Document, 2014). In retrospect, Bill noted that the fulcrum point probably referred to all the things going on, including the new furniture purchase. He later noted that, in retrospect, he did not read the culture, a lesson he now says he applies to other positions. He believed that, although he was as a change agent, “the culture did not demand it,” a key factor he overlooked at the time.

Debbie also discussed having to work with a similar group or faction of the faculty, who were allegedly more deliberate in their reactions toward these leaders. Debbie talked about the “cosmic accidents” faculty members who used a campus newsletter, *The Corals*, which was based on the color of the paper, to spread their sensemaking with other faculty and the campus community. Debbie noted that they
used the media as means to launch personal attacks against her, her leadership, and against anything they believed violated shared governance policies. She described this group as a “noisy percentage” of the faculty who wanted to be in charge.

Debbie’s sensemaking was that there was a struggle for power over shared governance issues, and, although members of this group were part of many committees who were supposed to be sharing information with the rest of their departments and faculty, the information was not being shared. She noted that this was a key problem that she wasn’t aware of at the time and would later develop a strategy to correct this problem and allow information to be disseminated.

Likewise, Paul spoke about a group at Jago College (pseudonym) who also used a campus newsletter, *The Insects*, to share their sensemaking about his leadership and about anything they weren’t happy about. He also mentioned that the campus had already undergone years of contract negotiations and so such newspapers were, perhaps, a means to voice their concerns. Paul maintains that his no confidence vote was not the result of shared governance or his leadership; rather, it was focused only on contract negotiations at Jago and a clerical error around layoff notices at Campion College. His sensemaking asserted that, although both problems were serious, they were typical incidents in colleges. Once the faculty understood the clerical error or why he had constraints in meeting their negotiation demands, the concerns about his actions “went away” and the need to discuss the vote also “went away.” He further posited that this group and the faculty union may
have been more upset about him stating that he was running the school like a business, a decision he stands by as a leader who is responsible for managing a lot of community resources. He noted that, in addition to this campus newsletter, faculty members led a symbolic funeral march and he was supposed to be the person in a casket. However, he did not discuss what this funeral march may have meant, but he mentioned that it was just before the accreditation team was coming to campus. While it is clear that these individuals were trying to make a statement, it also unclear if he ever addressed the individuals who led the march or ran the newspaper directly. However, he said, “I kept defending myself” during my first vote, perhaps as a means for talking with this group. He later noted that his cabinet members would soon advise him to stop doing that and to focus on moving the campus forward. He said he stopped and did not address the vote directly with the campus from that point onward. He would later note that this advice to simply move on and not address the vote directly would color his sensemaking and how he reacted to a second vote while at Campion College. He mentioned that he never addressed it but soon retired sometime after that vote.

In each of these scenarios, participants talked about knowing these groups and being aware of how they were using both formal and informal communication channels to undermine their leadership. However, their sensemaking throughout these interviews was, and I paraphrase, that they were doing their jobs, committed to their work, working through the channels in place to make decisions, getting the
work done, and doing extraordinary things in their respective colleges. Moreover, some of these leaders were not privy to these informal communication channels within these groups, while some were tapping into the wrong channels. Such as Bill, who thought that his connecting to janitors and other staff was also a connection to the faculty group who raised this vote against him.

Each of these participants strongly believed that he or she did not deserve the reactions received from the college communities—the vote. Thus, the decision to pass a no confidence vote became the new interruption, trigger, or shock to make sense of, as well as the message or double-interaction messaging where sense givers rest on an interpretation of the leader’s behaviors. Weick (1988) referred to this collaborative process as “coordinated sensemaking” that allows individuals to work together and connect their view of the “picture,” what they think is going on so as to create enough sense to act upon (pp. 238-239). Weick (2001) noted that such coordinated efforts are then solidified when members take their interpretations about what is happening seriously and act upon them. Thus, such interpretations particularly on the parts of the sponsors of the vote, namely the faculty and faculty unions, became the new occasion for sensemaking in these events, as they created a new cycle of arousal to make sense of.

Once these votes were enacted, these leaders were then forced into their own sensegiving cycles about what was going on in their environment. This sensegiving cycle included the leader’s response to arousals about what the vote meant, by
seeking out the sensegiving of the board and their interpretation of the vote. In most of these cases, their boards were highly supportive of the leadership. Thus, depending on the board's interpretation and reaction to the vote, each leader then enacted his or her own sensemaking, and did so with external stakeholders, a type of sensegiving (Smerek, 2011). Each participant understood the role of the board as the only group who had the power to hire and to fire; therefore, it was important for them to check in with their boards to understand their sensemaking processes as well. Each participant, except Bill, maintained that his or her board was highly supportive, and all told their campuses that they stood behind their leadership.

However, in Bill's case, he noticed that the board had changed their support during a town hall meeting, when they failed to support or acknowledge his work concerning the revenue source problems. These boards are locally elected, and Bill noted that the board that had initially supported his leadership began shifting their mindset against him. His sensemaking is that the board was more concerned about regaining their seats and dealing with their own ecological changes. March and Weiner (2007) explained that such elected boards are sometimes more "beholden" to their communities and even to the unions who may have financially supported their campaigns to win their seats (pp. 6-7). Thus, Bill understood that he had lost their support and decided to meet with them soon after to have a "friendly divorce."

Overall, each participant was seeking out these key constituents' sensemaking and interpretations concerning these votes. Eventually, these
participants, except Bill, noted that the board would very publicly tell their colleges and communities and the media that they were in full support of the president and his or her leadership. Moreover, these leaders also adopted the sensemaking of the board, using it as the key signal for staying or leaving. Similarly, these participants also talked about the sensemaking cycles they were thrown into with external stakeholders or members of their communities, such as endowers, city personnel, alumni, etc. These individuals were external observers who generally received their information from the local newspapers and were concerned about what was going on in the organization at the time of the vote. Using the sensemaking of the board, most participants talked about reassuring stakeholders that these votes did not have any power to fire them; they had the support of the board and that they were getting things done.

Weick et al. (2005) posited that “sensemaking begins with chaos,” forcing us to pay attention and construct some meaning of what is going on (p. 411). These authors explained that such constructed sensemaking is only “materialize[d]” when we both create meaning and act upon it, giving it “language, talk, and communication” (Weick et al., 2005, p. 409). This acting comes from a key element of sensemaking known as “enactment,” defined as the occasions when “people take their interpretations seriously and act on them” causing either stability or changes (Weick, 1995, pp. 78-79). It is based on what we decide to pay attention to in our environment, manifested via possible interpretations and cues about what
is going on, which are then used for interpreting and managing our environments (Weick, 1995). Thus, our rationales about what is going on, what we pay attention to, what we are committed to, are then acted upon, justified as part of this enactment and as something we do personally and collectively in organizations.

There are certain pitfalls that can become a challenge during this process of enactment. Starbuck and Milliken (1988) asserted that what we select, frame, categorize, reframe and then act upon can be “distorted” by our own thinking, whether or not we looking in the wrong places, as we filter out information we actually need, frame the wrong meanings, and are led by our own expectations. Weick (1998) also suggested that we may become so overly confident in our wisdom concerning what we are seeing, that we act upon that wisdom, believing in our own capacity to act, make judgments, and maintain orderliness in our environment. Thus, this becomes a pitfall in our thinking, which he refers to as the “fallacy of centrality” (Weick, 1998, p. 370). As cited by Westrum (1982), Weick (1998) described this pitfall as what “people believe... that if it existed... [then] surely [they] would have known about it, but since [they] don’t know about it, it doesn’t exists” (p. 370). This distorted filtering can constrain our process of understanding what is going on in our environment and cause blind spots, or “professional blind spots,” that are based on our “deep assumptions” about the culture, our identities, and our identities within that culture (Weick, 1995, pp. 113-114). Weick (2001) also inferred that the “temptation to feel that one has
experienced it all and that there are no surprises left,” particularly in our work, is a form of “aggressive confidence” that can “dull alertness and [causes us to] impose the same old sense on a changing world” (pp. 358-359). However, leaders are not the only ones who do this; as a matter of fact, both internal and external groups may have different expectations and perceptions about leaders and are watching to see how leaders are expertly assessing and evaluating their environments accurately to avoid such blind spots (Starbuck & Milliken, 1988). Thus, these possible frames or categories we use to select and label the information we are seeing may become a factor in our sensemaking as we interact with others across groups in our organizational culture (Schein, 2010; Weick, 1995).

Weick (1995) further asserted that, during times of uncertainty and ambiguity, “evaluation is difficult unless there are similar others with whom one’s own performance can be compared” (p.79). As a result, individuals also scan the environment to see what others are doing to respond to similar problems, and, as a result, they will “mimic” or “imitate” others in similar environments (Weick, 1995, p.79). This process of mimicking others is also discussed in the institutional theory literature, wherein it is described as a type of “mimetic isomorphism,” which refers to how institutions model or pattern themselves after other organizations they see as successful, and that they do this in response to periods of uncertainty and ambiguity (Meyer & Rowan, 2006). Although the relevant scholars focused on organizations and structurations in their environments, this pattern of imitating others can be
applied here to the subcategories of networks and groups within the larger context of an organization. Weick (1995) observed that individuals will “converge” with their respective counterparts across the organization to seek out and share blueprints or maps for dealing with certain situations, and then they enact and imitate these patterns of thinking in their networks (pp.79). This level of sensemaking and sensegiving could be seen at each level and among each network of the organization, such as among faculty, faculty unions, etc. Psychologists have referred to this process as a form of “group-think,” a term coined by Janis (1972) and defined as a process where “people strive for consensus within a group… [and where] people put aside their own personal beliefs or adopt the opinion of the rest of the group” (Psychology.About.com, 2015). Thus, sensemaking can snowball from one individual’s meanings and interpretation to pick up traction across organizations.

For example, each leader talked about hearing of other presidents who were facing a no confidence vote on the heels of negotiation or as a result of shared governance challenges, etc. These participants, along with every group within their communities, were also extracting cues from their counterparts as a blueprint or cause map for dealing with these votes. Just as the faculty were looking at other faculty to see what they did, they were also given a map or script from their state local senates about how they should react as well. As a result, the faculty were able to mobilize other members of the campus to act, gain some traction around their
interpretations of these leader's actions, and secure their sensemaking in the irrevocable action of a no confidence vote.

Similarly, these CEO participants were extracting cues from other presidents and looking to see what they did to survive these votes. In addition, they too had an outside agency informing their sensemaking process, the California League of Community Colleges, which Smith (2003) acknowledged as supporting the leadership through this process and guided their sensemaking process. Thus, these leaders were also using a blueprint/script and knew how to tightly couple themselves to their boards to ensure they had board support; otherwise, they would have to leave. In addition, these CEOs also talked about connecting with others in their network of CEOs as a mechanism for dealing with these votes. Curiously, each participant talked about being told by a well-respected individual in the field while these votes were happening that they must have been doing the right things, meaning they were doing their jobs by leading effectively. Paul would later call it a "badge of honor" during a presidential search when questions about the vote came up. Other leaders would also suggest that it was because they were committed to their agendas or doing their jobs that they got the vote, another type of self-serving bias where the problems are not seen as deriving from the leader directly, but from some external entity (Campbell et al, 1998). Bill was the only participant who noted that, when the faculty met to cast their votes, many of them voted in support of his leadership, and he described this process as "the vote failed." Paul also said
the same thing: the vote failed” but he was referring to the fact that these groups did not get what they wanted and that was for him to leave. Susan and Debbie also reported the same.

In summary, whether presidents act or do not act when there are some stimuli or arousal in their environment, at least not in the way that onlookers are expecting, they are indeed enacting sensemaking in their environments and may be unaware of blind spots. In other words, what they believe, pay attention to, and then act upon or ignore is essentially their sensemaking of events in their environments (Weick, 1995). Maitlis and Sonenshein (2010) in their analysis of Weick’s (1988) study of the Mann Gulch fires, suggest that if these firefighters were not so committed to how they perceived their environment, they would have noticed the changes in the environment. They also explained that, when individuals and collective bodies, too committed to an idea about what is going on, publicly act on those ideas particularly during times of crisis or equivocality, the last thing they want to do is search for a new idea about the crisis; such commitment can “facilitate” sensemaking and stabilize the situations or “inhibit” sensemaking and lead to blind spots (p. 562). Throughout these incidents, both the leaders and faculty groups who were interacting during these shifts had blind spots about what was going on, including what the behaviors or actions of leaders or the faculty meant, as well as how to interpret and act on those interpretations.
As a result, there were double-blind spots between these leaders and their respective faculty groups leading up to these no confidence votes. The term, double-blind spot is a concept being coined for this study and used to refer to the idea that while both groups in this context were making sense of the other, the activities of the faculty groups, for example, may have led to a double-blind spot for these leaders. Meaning, if leaders were unable to forecast hidden triggers or forces behind certain actions that lead to the no confidence vote, this in turn may have caused a blind spot to occur. A secondary blind spot that may have occurred, happened when leaders were unable to foresee the aftermath of the vote on their careers and on their personal lives. Figure 11 provides an illustration of this concept below.
Figure 11. Leader's Sensemaking: Double Blind-Spots in NCV Crisis illustrates the double-blind spots found in the sensemaking of leaders about the implications of the no confidence vote on their overall leadership and careers.

Building on the work of Weick (1988) and Maitlis and Sonenshein (2010), Figure 10 is being used to illustrate this double-blind spot concept, which refers to the ways in which our lenses can be obscured by our commitments to our identities, prejudicial mindsets, attribution biases, and expectations. For leaders, the first blind spot occurred when they failed to notice the potentially serious implications of their actions on others and how their actions may have led to the vote. The secondary blind spot occurred when these leaders enact their own sensemaking and
sensegiving about the vote itself, particularly when they feel immediate relief with the support from their boards and they fail to see the more distal consequences of the vote on their leadership and careers. From the narratives of the leaders, such consequences were difficult to perceive, thus, causing these votes to have unforeseen and hidden consequences. Similar to the leadership turnover and dismissal literature such as Shen & Cho (2005), this secondary blind spot may place barriers on leaders apprehending similar positions on account of these votes.

Therefore, this double-blind spot concept provided an idea of what can actually happened to these leaders after the no confidence vote, which is in contrast with the mainstream master-narrative that implied that unless the leader loses the support of the board, these votes basically symbolic. It appears that as both leaders and faculty made sense of their individual situations and shared their sensegiving of what is going on and what they noticed, both parties may not have foresaw this unpredictable outcome. For leaders especially, there may have had blind spots about what these votes can mean on their leadership, personal lives and overall careers. Smith (2003) suggested leaders may believe that no confidence votes were on account of poor budgeting practices or failed collective-bargain negotiations, which they believe can be survived compared to votes based on incompetencies or poor leadership practices. However, this research study maintains that such perceptions about the votes in Smith’s work may be flawed; particularly when leaders realized that simply getting the vote for any reason may cause hiring boards to be more
cautious about leaders with a vote, as seen in the experiences of Paul, when he applied for the chancellorship position after his second vote. For most of these participants, they discussed the aftermath of the vote and the implications it had on their health, personal lives, job opportunities and overall careers.

It may also be possible to apply this double-blind spot framework to those who sponsor the vote, seeing that in some cases, boards and presidents may decide to retaliate against the sponsoring group, such as disbanding academic senates or changing tenured promotions, as noted in other cases, as previously mentioned in Chapter Two. Thus, for faculty, this too can have unforeseen consequences on them as well and may result in blind spots, both in their sensemaking and perceptions about what is going on and in the unpredictable outcomes that can impact them directly. However, as far as affecting the faculty’s overall careers and without primary sources to confirm this proposition, it is still unclear if faculty faced the same types of barriers as presidents after the vote, and more research would be needed to capture their sensemaking and voices concerning the aftermath of the vote.

From the sensemaking of each of these participants, the leaders identified a few hidden forces in their institutions that were also making and giving sense to others. Such sensegiving was the mechanism used to communicate alternative meanings about the leader’s actions and interactions. There were also assumptions made about the size of these hidden forces that did not account for the effect and
influence that these small groups had within their communities over their networks.

These faculty and faculty unions carefully created and examined the symbolic interactions and responses of the leader, possibly evoking triggers or signals for highlighting any violations of institutional values and culture (Schein, 2010). Such actions could have been the result of emotions on the part of the sponsors of the vote, for, as Weick (1990) explained, during times of equivocality, emotions play a pivotal role in the stimuli we respond to and how we interpret situations. Consequently, such emotions may have guided the responses of the community in each of these cases. As a result, these participants may not have carefully assessed these hidden forces, which resulted in blind spots that would have a great impact on them.

Finally, it is still unclear in these narratives the extent to which these participants were interacting with these groups directly or at all. Thus, lines of communication may have been interrupted, severed or been non-existent, and any engagement in the feedback loop’s processes of interpreting and adjusting was made virtually impossible within these organizations. With the absence of communication lines between participants and groups, leaders would have found it difficult to accurately predict how these groups would act. Retrospectively, these participants also pointed to these hidden forces that they believed were wielding their powers to shift the sensemaking in their institutions, which would eventually lead to a no confidence vote. Thus, sensemaking has an active, actionable function,
and individuals were constructing their sensemaking about the leaders through newsletters and other media (Weick, 2001). However, these leaders were not the only people making sense in these environments; as they interacted and communicated with others in their organization, participants were able to see the divergence of thinking across groups as it related to the vote. As a result, the vote became the new shock or interpretation that would force these leaders into making and giving sense about these votes. This new reaction then generated additional equivocality in the environment. In other words, the actions of the sponsors of the vote may have reduced equivocality in areas that affected them directly, such as contract negotiations or shared governance, but inadvertently increased it in others. These leaders had to now develop their own sensemaking patterns in response to these votes. In addition, each participant conceived of these hidden forces as coming from a small percentage or a small faction among the faculty. It is also likely that leaders may not have perceived the impact of these small groups or factions on the sensemaking of their organizations, and did not take their mechanisms for communication serious enough to address these communications with them directly. In retrospect, the effects of these blind spots may have been reduced if leaders had been able to detect them and address them earlier in their organizations.

**Theme Three: Implications of the vote.**
The sensemaking of each of these participants consistently included their responses and reactions to the implications of these votes. Smith's (2003) study of no confidence votes in California community colleges between 1993 and 2003, found four major responses to the vote: (a) not responding at all; (b) making public statements in support of the CEO; (c) addressing concerns directly once they have the board's support; (d) meeting with the Board or sponsoring group to determine the fate of the CEO. These reactions are highly symbolic responses or signals to the rest of the community regarding the outcome and possible closure to this no confidence vote trigger. However, all participants described attempting to make sense of what these votes meant for them, explaining their responses and reactions to the vote, and focusing on both the personal and professional implications of this crisis on their leadership. These findings were also key in understanding the outcome of the votes; meaning, how these votes can be used as a mechanism for solving one set of problems even as they give rise to others, such as unsustainable leadership agendas and strategies to move the organization forward, whether warranted or not.

In describing their responses to the vote, participants discussed both the emotional implications of the vote, which were often negative, and the professional implications of these votes on them, their families and their overall careers. Smith's (2003) study had similar findings, reporting the emotions of faculty during these crises as well, who reported having feeling of "denial, fear, and anger over the
perceived disrespect of their values and contributions” in their organizations (p. 8). Likewise, she asserted that CEOs had similar emotional responses to the vote, such as “anger, depression, increased illness, difficulty sleeping, defensiveness, and a loss of trust and respect for faculty leaders” (Smith, 2003, p.9). She further asserted concerns that such emotions could further stunt the relationships between leaders and the faculty (Smith, 2003). In the context of this study, each participant took the time to explain, define, and describe the emotional impact of the vote, as well as the implications of the vote on their professional identities within this context. However, before describing these implications, it is also important to discuss the potential implications of the vote itself.

A major tenet of this study is that it will not attempt to evaluate the validity of the vote on these leaders; hence, the focus on the sensemaking of these leaders. However, another interesting finding of this study is that although these leaders understood the concerns raised by sponsors of the vote—generally the faculty and faculty unions—they were unclear about the outcomes these sponsors of the vote desired or expected. An example of this is most prevalent in Debbie’s interview, when she mentioned that, beyond their concerns, it was unclear what other outcomes they wanted:

Hmm, that’s a good question. That’s a good question. Uh [long pause], because I---- doubt that they really thought that the board was going to take
that seriously [chuckles]. Umm-hmm. You know, I have never really
thought about that particular question, but that's a really good one....
Let me just ponder it for a minute. You know, I'm thinking of possibilities.
Presumably, they thought—I suppose they thought it was going to make a
major shift. Maybe they thought that I would be embarrassed into...into
leaving or something like that. Uh, I... some might have assumed, I suppose
some might have assumed that the chancellor would say, "Well, we have a
problem here, we better have a new president." But I can't believe the
majority of them thought that. I think it had more to do—my guess is that
not a lot of them really thought about what they really expected, it was more
a, chance to express.

Eventually, Debbie created strategies to respond to the faculty concerns but she also
mentioned that her mindset towards them had also shifted:

Probably the only thing that changed—I'll tell what changed, uh, was that I
probably backed off a little more than I would have, in many ways, to the
detriment of the college. That I probably did not—was not going to stick my
neck out as much in something that was really important as I did before.

Likewise, Susan also talked about the implied outcome of the vote. She
said, "No one asked me to leave.... I wasn’t going to leave voluntarily." During that
time, she also made public statements to this point. Once she decided to meet with
the faculty to address their concerns, she realized that they were more focused on getting more say in decisions than the issues regarding her salary, the firing of the president or the hiring of the Latina president. She said that “they were glad that president was gone.” She would later recall one of the individuals who led the charge against her apologizing for their actions. Susan also mentioned that she was disappointed that certain groups within the college, such as the classified staff and other specialized groups, did not publicly show their support for her. As a result, she noted that this shifted her mindset against these individuals and others in the environment; essentially, “they gave up on me.”

Paul also mentioned that, for both institutions, no one asked him to leave as well. At Jago, the person who led the charge against him was someone he had moved out of an office that was to be used for a foundation and required him to teach more versus buying out his time for special projects, like his predecessor. After the vote, Paul mentioned that this person would later run for a seat on the board and win. As a result, this faculty-turned-board member would vote against him and his strategies for the institutions and, after a while, Paul mentioned that he, himself, then decided to leave the institution.

Conversely, Bill’s experience was different because the vote against him failed to pass. However, even with the failed sanction against him, the rhetoric in the media about the vote spoke against him has persisted.
Personal implications. The findings indicated that, as these leaders interacted with their communities, their actions as well as the actions of others may have constructed the triggers and interruptions within their environments. As a result, these leaders observed how specific triggers, often directed at them personally, were both filled with and caused conflicting emotions to inform their sensemaking (Maitlis, Vogus, & Lawrence, 2013). Weick (1995) explained that sensemaking is linked to our emotions, defining emotions as a space and a process “between the time that an organized sequence is interrupted and the time at which the interruptions removed, or substitute answer is found” (p. 46). It can be inferred that, as these leaders were processing the meanings of these votes, their emotions may have been highly aroused until they were able to find solutions to respond to the NCV trigger or interruption.

Maitlis and Sonenshein (2010) observed at least four types of emotions as operating during crisis events in organizations, which can influence sensemaking of its members: “positive,” “negative,” “expressed,” and/or “self-conscious” emotions (pp. 28-35). Positive emotions are “constructive” and are recognized when we experience relief, for example, after a crisis, such as the hope we feel in the arrival of a new and distinguished president (p. 35). Negative emotions are often influenced by “fear,” “anger,” and/or “disappointment” about an action or crisis, such as the institution losing its accreditation, and is associated with “impeding” sensemaking (p. 31). Expressed emotions are often offered as the rationale
individuals give as to the reasons things went awry, and these emotions can also include emotions such as hurt or happiness, for example. Finally, self-conscious emotions include those emotions individuals feel when others evaluate them; as a result, these may include “guilt, shame or embarrassment... [or] pride” (Maitlis & Sonenshein, 2010, pp. 33-34, citing Leary, 2007), depending on these evaluations. He further asserted that both positive and negative emotions are prevalent in organizations, intense enough to derail and impede sensemaking about what is actually going on (Weick, 1990). For example, negative emotions may be more generally associated with sensemaking during crises, and these can happen “unexpectedly and the interruption is interpreted as harmful or detrimental” (Weick, 1990, pp. 163). As a result, such emotions can put constraints on the cues we bracket and then make sense of.

Each participant’s sensemaking about the vote included a range of reactions as well, such as they were expecting it, surprised by it, or not expecting it to happen, which were accompanied by an array of emotions as well. Debbie and Paul (for Jago College) noted that they were expecting the vote to happen because of what they noticed happening at other colleges. Susan and Bill were both surprised by the vote for different reasons. Susan was surprised, noting that “nothing bad was happening,” and Bill was also surprised by the vote, observing that he thought he was aware of what was going on in the environment. Regarding the second vote at Campion, Paul was not expecting it and thought it was a “knee jerk reaction” about
the layoff notices. These participants also shared their emotional responses concerning their varied reactions to the vote. Debbie said, "I saw it coming, but it was still, you know, your heart just sinks. It felt really bad." Paul, although expecting the vote at Jago College because he noticed that other presidents were getting it too, said, "I was devastated here at (Jago College)... 'cause I really liked this place and I thought I was doing a good job." Susan, who was surprised by the vote, said,

I was surprised that goes without saying. I was disappointed, I was indignant and I think I was indignant which kept me from being hurt. Not that it doesn't hurt, but it kept me from being really hurt because I was indignant. I was like "Come on you guys, what are you doing, you know who I am, and you know what I've done.

Similarly, Bill talked about being surprised, but, unlike the other participants, he did not talk about any other personal emotions but mentioned that his wife and administrative assistants were hurt, relating the time he spent comforting his assistant who was upset by the vote as well. His rationale was that, with these positions, you had to take the "good with the bad" and he decided to "not to give into [them] and be weak but to go forward with our institution." Paul's second vote at Campion College surprised him, but he was also hurt by their process of delivering the vote: "I'd already been through it. The only thing that upset me at Campion College was that they used the brother to deliver the word."
That hurt. That hurt.” These responses indicated that each leader’s expressed emotions or reactions not only pointed to their initial reactions to the vote but also revealed the unexpressed and negative emotions that they felt as a result of the vote. These votes can also be construed as a form of evaluation of these leaders, entailing self-conscious emotions of hurt or embarrassment, all of which can influence and constrain sensemaking about what these triggers mean (Maitlis & Sonenshein, 2010).

In addition to these personal emotions, leaders also commented on whether or not they thought the votes were warranted and/or personal. These leaders indicated whether the vote was not merited, it was undeserved or it was wrong. For example, Susan talked about the vote not being warranted because she was doing her job and believed that the faculty were aware of her work. Similarly, Paul also talked about the vote as not having any merits at both colleges, because he too was doing his job; at Campion College, for example, their reaction to the layoff notices was a “knee jerk reaction” which subsided, he noted, once everyone understood the clerical error. In addition, all participants, except Susan, discussed whether or not the vote was personal. For example, Paul, regarding the vote at Jago College, said the vote affected him personally but not as much at Campion College, although he also suggested that the Campion College vote may have been more about race as well. Debbie mentioned that the vote had an “emotional piece that is personal… [because] people didn’t know what they were pushing for.” Bill did not think the
vote was personal, albeit with one caveat: "I didn’t think the vote was personal; had it been successful, I would have taken it personally."

Interestingly, for these leaders, the vote and whether or not it was personal remained inconclusive. For those who thought it was personal, they referred to it with some emotion, such as the voting hurting or as having an emotional component. This is important because all participants, except Bill, talked about campus newsletters that launched personal attacks against their leadership. For example, Susan recalled receiving death threats, and Paul talked about a huge insect, similar to the name of the newspaper, being placed on his personal car. He also talked about a funeral procession where he was supposed to be the person in the coffin, etc. Therefore, it is unclear why there was a resistance or to saying that these votes were personal. These leaders’ responses somewhat mirror the findings in the literature that propose that such votes are used arbitrarily to put pressure on the leadership (Schmidt, 2009; Tierney, 2007), or that the rhetoric of the sponsors of the vote insisting that the votes should not be viewed as personal (Smith, 2003). However, Smith (2003) observed that these “votes are an attack on the CEO’s leadership and are often personally devastating” (p 9). Hence, the crux of leadership may be where the idea of the vote being personal or not becomes convoluted, as individuals may not associate who they are with what they do at work. For example, these participants may employ multiple identities, or what social identity theory calls personal selves (for example, see Dutton & Dukerich,
1991) as they interact with their environment (University of Twente, 2015). All participants may operate within their identities as faculty so they could connect with the classroom and challenges of that world, as a fundraiser and business elite to connect with potential donors, or as an administrator to deal with tasks specific to that role. Thus, participants may act in the role of leadership, and it is this self that sponsors are attacking, not their truest self. Leaders may still see their truest self-preserved.

However, this study asserts that there may be greater personal implications of these votes than initially considered in the mainstream literature, which may be a key factor in understanding the other consequences of this sanction. As a result, these leaders’ sensemaking about the validity of the votes may have also been influenced by their emotions, specifically self-conscious emotions that can “guide behavior” or determine how they assess their actions may or may not have contributed to the vote (Maitlis & Sonenshein, 2010, p. 34).

Retrospectively, each participant also referred to the extracted cues they did or did not notice in anticipation or expectation that a vote could happen. Weick (1987) described such expectations as “self-fulfilling prophecies” which are the “predictions [about] the outcome of a plan” or strategy that we tell ourselves and end up constructing a reality to support that prophecy (p. 347). Two of the participants expected the vote to happen against their leadership, retrospectively believing that the vote would happen because it was happening in other places, the
environment was unstable with the changes due to shared governance, or growing tensions about budget cuts and constraints. These challenges and more may have converged into a "perfect storm" as described by Susan and Debbie. Other participants described being caught off guard and surprised because their confidence and presumptions about the organization and culture caused them to overlook blind spots. Whatever the reasons, all of these leaders at the time were facing a crisis of their leaderships.

These findings also indicated that these leaders (except Paul at Campion College, where he received his second NCV) were facing such a crisis in their leadership for the first time, and, unlike other crises for which these leaders would generally plan, these participants were in fact the scandal or the crisis in these situations. As a result, they did not have the "raw materials" or cues and frames needed to quickly "normalize" these triggers in their colleges through their sensemaking (Weick, 2001, p. 97). Each participant discussed trying to find the meanings for these votes and a mechanism for coping with this process. Weick (1982) called such an action a search for "adaptive sensemaking" which is "achieved by minimizing surprise [by using] strong abrupt sensemaking that confirms the past and achieves closure" (p. 359). At this point, the actions of making sense may have become a fundamental problem for leaders. As a result, many of these leaders talked about being more self-reflective regarding what the vote meant for them, a reaction consistent with Smith's (2003) study. Weick (1977)
suggested that such an occasion “involves individuals examining reflectively their own actions in order to discover what they have done and what the meaning of those actions is” (p. 182). However, for these leaders, such sensemaking was not done in isolation but with other presidents in the environment.

In addition, participants also talked about finding mechanisms for coping with the vote. For example, participants focused on getting external support from friends and family as a coping mechanism, and one participant talked about staying away from campus to visit family, for example. Overall, these leaders were sorting through streams of data for comprehension, gathering scripts or routines and stories from other presidents who had experienced and possibly survived a vote (Weick, 1995). For example, Susan and other participants talked about getting a list of things to do or getting support from other leaders who had also received such a vote. Relevant strategies included staying healthy, taking care of themselves and their boards, taking some time away from campus, etc. This list of strategies for survival and the stories from other presidents became the new inputs into these leaders’ sensemaking. Weick (1995) described such inputs as the substances of sensemaking and suggested that stories in particular function as a “tool for diagnosis,” “reduce the arousal,” and “improve and...prevent” such arousals for these leaders (pp. 129-131). Such stories are also considered “cause maps” that individuals embellish and use to construct an orderly and plausible story for dealing with crises (Weick & Bougon, 1986, p. 312). Weick and Bougon (1986), using the
famous Pyrenees map story or poem, explained how a lost group of soldiers in the Alps unknowingly used a map of the Pyrenees to find their way back to camp—the map wasn’t about accuracy but about being plausible enough to apply to a similar landscape. Thus, maps or strategies, even outdated ones, do not have to be completely accurate; rather, they merely need to be plausible enough to adapt to and get us to closure (Weick & Bougon, 1986). Such maps and strategies were also seen each participant story, as they described their sensegiving experiences with other presidents who shared their experiences and strategies for surviving the vote.

It is not clear how successful this advice was or if these leaders explored alternative solutions to deal with this crisis, but, from these leaders’ sensemaking perspective, this experience was a powerful mechanism for helping them get through this difficult time. In addition, it is possible to infer here that these leaders used their judgments to reflect on what they knew and did not know and, by connecting with this network of leaders, they found advice credible enough to move forward. However, once these leaders were able to move forward, it is also unclear if they sought out new maps or strategies for dealing with this type of crisis.

Another key tenet of these findings is that, regardless of the outcome of the vote, it was successful in interrupting the regular routines and operations within the environment, causing these administrators and others to take notice. Weick (1990) also posited that such interruptions or arousals can be a “signal that important changes” were made in the organization and that such signals can increase emotions
about these interruptions from the time they enter the organization until the moment they are reduced (p. 163). For several of these leaders, this interruption was powerful enough to silence them for at least a short period of time, between the moment the vote was given and when these leaders and their boards decided to address it, either directly or indirectly.

A potential reason for this silence is found in the shaming literature (Clough, 2010), as well as the literature on ceremonial and ritual patterns with leaders. This study proposes that this period of leadership silence may be also be the result of feeling shame, another type of emotion caused when individuals feel undervalued, inadequate or singled out for doing something or for "badness" by others in their organizations (Clough, 2010, p. 27). Using her analysis of the suicide of former Chancellor Denice Denton at University of California, Clough (2010) explained that this tragedy may have been precipitated by the challenges this leader faced in her organization about her sexuality, as well as instances of public shaming in the media about mistakes she made during her tenure. She further posited that such shaming can be personal and may cause individuals to become withdrawn, as well as cause them to lose a sense of pride in their identities within their institutions or even to become increasingly "reluctant to go the extra mile" (pp. 26-28). She asserted that the social level of shaming in organizations is particularly relevant to leaders who may feel shame when "[their] behaviors in situations that matter to [them] is called into question" (p. 28). Although none of these participants
described their emotions associated with the vote as shame, many of them thought the vote may have been used to embarrass them in some way or another. Although no one would want to talk about being shamed or ashamed, participants did talk about a change in their mindsets about how they would react to those who supported this sanction against them. Perhaps, this construct can be applied to these leaders’ narratives, when they talk about staying away from their campuses after the vote, or only attending events where they would feel supported during that time.

During the time of what this study is calling leadership silence, most participants also talked about focusing on family (Susan), getting consultants (Debbie), connecting with faculty whom they knew were supportive (Debbie), and supporting and getting support from the board (Paul). Bill, who mentioned that his vote of no confidence failed because the faculty did not get the required votes against him, was the only participant who may not have engaged in this level of sensemaking. Weick (1993) suggested that, during chaos, the structures, roles, and identities within organizations may begin to “disintegrate, individuals may become isolated, left without explanations or emotional support for their reactions” (p. 110). Thus, each participant provided a glimpse into the realities they remembered facing when they first received the vote.

**Professional implications.** The implications of these votes appear to be based on what these leaders were telling themselves; what they expected to happen; what they told others to expect, and what others were telling them to expect about
what these crises meant in their organizational contexts. Weick (1987) described such expectations as a type of self-fulfilling prophecies that “drives the leader’s beliefs...which then drives actions” (p. 354). Weick (1995) further posited that such beliefs not only fuel actions but also fuel our expectations about what is happening and what should happen. As a result, such expectations act as “filters” that guide our interpretations of what is happening which then fuels our “commitments” to act in a certain way (Weick, 1995, pp. 145-153). Many of these leaders had very volitional and determined responses to the vote, evident in their decisions to either leave their organization or to stay. Weick (1995) asserted that such a commitment to an action only happens when our “beliefs justify taking irrevocable actions”; hence, such public actions may even cause us to construct or manipulate the reality or meaning of what really happened “to accommodate these beliefs” (pp. 161-168).

For example, these participants had different personal responses to the vote, as well as contrasting responses concerning their professional lives. In other words, they described their reactions to the vote in terms of (a) their decisions to stay or leave their institutions, (b) their reputations, and (c) their careers after they exited the organization. These findings were particularly interesting because they can be used to fill the gaps in the literature about what happens to leaders during and after a no confidence vote. In addition, these findings also point to what these leaders
believed in terms of their identities within an institutional context: they were committed to their beliefs and resolved in their actions following the vote.

a) Decision to stay or leave their institutions. A noted previously, one of the key demands of NCVs is a call for the ousting of these leaders by using insurmountable pressures. Debbie identified a small group of "cosmic accidents"—faculty members who were feeding disparaging information about her through their campus and local newspapers—as the force behind her vote. After securing support from the board and chancellor, she decided that she was not going to leave or address the vote publicly. However, she did eventually make some shared governance changes and strategies to increase communication lines across the organization. Similarly, Susan also made public statements to the local newspapers that she was not leaving, likewise securing support from the board as well. Her public response to the vote may have been her way of closing off the issue, and she did talk about developing strategies as they related to the issues raised. In contrast, Bill talked about leaving, although the vote failed to pass, because it was evident to him that he no longer had the board's support. Paul, on the other hand, did not have any plans to leave and said no one asked him to leave. Overall, the decision to stay or leave was highly contingent on the perceptions and support of the boards about these leaders.
b) *Reputations.* Weick (1995) observed that sensemaking in an organization provided an opportunity for leaders to act in their identities, as they interacted with others in attempt to be the ultimate "sensemakers" and "sense givers" in their organizations (p.10, 18). Additionally, these sense maker are also "sense-givers," expected to find ways to move the organization out of crisis events (p. 10). Such identities about leadership are socially constructed realities about who leaders are and the behaviors and performances they are expected to have and model in their institutions (Cahill, 2006). For these participants, their identities emerged out of their committed understandings about who they were in their organizations, their beliefs about their capacity to get things done as the leader in their respective organizations, and their overall expectations that they can get things done (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991). Similarly, other researchers have also noted that organizations and other individuals within them have identities, and that organizations are keen on maintaining a certain reputation to protect those identities (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991; Maitlis and Sonenshein, 2010).

Maitlis and Sonenshein (2010) have shown that identities are particularly important during crisis events because they can be "threatened" and as a result limit "action as individuals and teams lose important anchors about themselves" (p. 563). From these assertions, it is probable that these votes were about identity posturing between leaders and faculty, maintaining their reputations within the organizations, with each of them acting within their respective identities. For example, three of
the four participants suggested that faculty groups were being advised about how they should think and react to share governance violations. This sensegiving to faculty was also documented in Smith’s (2003) study on no confidence votes in California community colleges. These CEO participants pointed to the cues and sensegiving that faculty members were probably receiving from the state’s Academic Senates and using to demand that their leaders enact the policy and share their power and control with them. Susan described this sensegiving best; she stated that they (the faculty) were being advised to,

...go back, tell them how you want it to be, and if they don’t do what you want, stamp on their feet and spit in their face and make them do it. And if they don’t, give them a vote of no confidence...

As a result, these leaders may or may not have realized that the organizational ecology changes brought on by this shared governance policy was not only shifting the ways in which faculty and leaders interact with each other, but it was also being used to possibly shift or even create new identities for faculty. It can also be inferred here that such shifts in identity may have also been a blind spot for these leaders, who may not have realized that both their roles and how they interacted with the faculty were being redefined by external law and policies, an additional sensegiving device. Smerek (2009) asserted that this type of sensegiving could have caused these faculty members to be on high alert for violations in five ways: (a) priority setting—influencing how others think by highlighting what
people should pay attention to; (b) “framing” —setting the boundaries for how to make sense of something by highlighting certain aspects of an organization's or individual's activities (p.148); (c) setting-forth—a desired future image that an individual either warmed up to or rejected, such as instituting plans of becoming a school focused on diversity; (d) constructing crisis—altering the thinking of a campus community and individuals may re-label behaviors to imply that the institution is facing impending doom if things don't change, and (e) sensemaking occurs through symbolic action and language in establishing, reestablishing and confirming identities. Thus, this interpretation of sensegiving applies here because, if faculty members were being prompted to enact the symbolic action of a no confidence vote against the leadership, they were buying into a sensegiving that painted their lenses and colored the ways these leaders were perceived.

Consequently, both these participants and individuals in their communities believed their own frames for interpreting their identities through their work and their environments. In this case, faculty groups believed shared governance premises were key in redefining their roles, so, if these premises were being violated, they took their “interpretations seriously and acted on them,” resulting in a crisis moment for the institution: a no confidence vote (Weick, 1995, p.79). Bill said it best when he said such actions against institutional players are also about creating “lore” for outsiders to draw cues from about what happens to leaders in that setting and what they can expect if they enter (Amey & Twombly, 1993;
Herbert-Swartzer & McNair, 2010). On the other hand, these participants, both as sensemakers and sense givers, also believed that their institutions were already responding to such policies and that they had already made such sensemaking clear to their organizations through the committees and mechanisms they had in place. However, once these votes were enacted against the identities of these leaders, discrepancies and disconnects between these groups, heretofore triggers, emerged.

In addition, another way that leaders discussed the implications of the vote on their identities was in the form of communication through both the external and internal media used by the faculty and other groups. As discussed in theme two, all CEO participants talked how the sponsors of the vote and others were using campus and local or regional newspapers as means of personal attacks against them. Although this research was only able to locate a few articles related to this point, Smith (2003) also noted the role of the media in the votes she examined, in that the media was used as a means of publicizing the vote. In general, presidents as a whole may be concerned about the role of the media on their and their institution's reputations. For example, in an ACE (2007) report, presidents talked about finding strategies to reduce the growing trend of using the media and "news cycles" (p. 44). Other researchers have discussed the role of media in shaping discourses about what is going on in their organization (Maitlis & Sonenshein, 2010), anchoring and influencing what is reported about these NCV incidences and setting a precedence for reoccurring news cycles and similar reports (O'Connell & Mills, 2003). Such
outlets can also be a mechanism to publicly embarrass and question the leadership’s creditability and legitimacy, especially if leaders are believed to have violated the expectations of their constituents (Burgoon, Stacks & Woodall, 1979; Habib, 2001; Schmidt, 2009). Fain (2007) viewed the media as a mechanism for “amplifying complaints,” sensationalizing crisis situations, and highlighting the vulnerability of universities and colleges during crises (p.1). For example, Bill talked about how the media played a role in what stakeholders were thinking when they heard about the vote. In addition, he also talked about a recurring problem he has faced since he left Sunshine College, which is responding to incorrect reports about him getting a vote of no confidence. He mentioned that these reports anchored themselves in the media, which is a credible presumption because that is how he was located for this study. However, as Smith (2003) reported, the media can have negative implications on the leaders but they can also be supportive and investigative in their processes, with the goal of getting the most accurate news and from all parties of interest and with all elements of the story examined. Her recommendation is for leaders to find ways to connect with media, a strategy that Paul readily applied to his practice.

*d) Career implications.* Another significant finding of this study is the implication of the vote after a leader has exit their institutions for any reason, such as retirement, new job opportunities, etc. Three of the four participants noted that these votes were brought up during job interviews after they had left their respective
institutions. For example, Paul talked about seeking out another executive position at his previous institution and that the faculty interviewing him receiving information from other faculty on the vote. As a result, he had to spend time discussing the votes and his sensemaking about them. This actual incident was reported in regional papers, primarily because the hiring of a new CEO is a public event and so this information was publically available. The other presidential candidates were also recipients of the vote, and, as it turns out, none of these candidates were chosen for these positions. Paul, Susan, and Bill all mentioned the implications of the vote even after one leaves, and Paul noted that sometimes boards do not want to deal with incoming leaders who have experienced a vote and they may be deterred by such a vote even before meeting candidates.

Still other researchers see this type of behavior as a type of blackballing process particularly when the leaders exit after these crisis events (Boeker, 1992; Gamson & Scotch, 1964; Webb, 2005). As previously mentioned in Chapter Two, Gamson and Scotch (1964) characterized this process of blackballing an individual as a form of “scapegoating,” a “ritual” process that occurs when general managers and team owners “ceremonially” place the blame of the team’s performance squarely on the leadership performance of field managers, which then allow these owners to fire and replace them with someone they believe will improve the team’s performance (p.70). Perhaps, these NCVs are a modern-day ousting process that places blame solely on the leader and pushes for his/her ousting resembles this type
of ritual. As a result, the leader alone is the symbol of all that was wrong, whether or not this is actually true. By sharing this information in the eyes of the public and without the voices of the leaders in a majority of these stories, it is possible that these leaders bear burden of the situation may or may not have helped to create. Thus, it may be inferred that these votes can have farther-reaching implications on leaders than initially found. According to one media report, Susan had been asked to serve as an interim president for a college when the faculty from her past institution sent information about the vote to the faculty at the new institution. These new faculty members were upset that the Chancellor’s Office would hire a leader whose faculty had lost confidence in her. She would later push past these roadblocks and serve as interim for a year there.

In addition, it is unclear what the expressed or unexpressed implications of the vote may mean. For example, as a possible stigma, a no confidence vote may have overt and covert consequences for leaders and their identities as the president, than perhaps previously considered or even admitted by the leaders who experience NCVs. Merriam-Webster dictionary defines a stigma as a “mark of shame or discredit” and generally “a set of negative and often unfair beliefs that a society or group of people have about something” or someone (2015). Citing Goffman [1963] Lloyd (2013) defines stigma as a symbolic mark of “permanent disgrace” with varied meanings or consequences as he applies it to the attitudes, discrimination and prejudices of the general public against drug-users and drug treatment centers, for
example. In his study, he found that higher levels of stigma were precipitated by the media, were evident in the ways people thought of addicts such as “junkies” and that individuals with drug-abuse problems were readily blamed for their addictions (pp. 92-93).

Others described stigma as a social process that involved “interpersonal experiences” with consequence determined by how individuals can respond to us, either by accepting and approving of us (positive) which also includes individuals wanting to pull us closer to them or their groups or “rejecting us (negative) and thus pushing us away (Richman & Leary, 2006, p.365). In his early work, Leary (1995) suggested that such rejection can occur when individuals who “have a need to belong...or for social acceptance” feel devalued or ostracized by the groups from whom they are seeking acceptance (p. 3). These individuals may then feel stigmatized. He further posited that there are many reasons for such rejection or stigmatization which includes levels of aggression based on our feelings of being devalued or threatened by the individual we later stigmatize (p.5). He also asserts that such stigmatization can be on a continuum from “avoidance” to outright being dismissive or “banish[ment]”, for example (p.6). This researcher further posits that the latter response level may be a key threat of these votes, a similar pattern seen in scapegoating responses found in the literature and discussed further in this review.

Likewise, other social stigma researchers have focused on the discriminating and sometimes stereotypical responses that can cause a stigma, which they believe
can induce shame, lack of awareness and distress. These researchers suggested that such reactions can be based on stereotypes such as diseases with stigmas such as HIV (Hartwig, Kisioki & Hartwig, 2006); attribution biases such as mental illnesses (Sheri, 2015); discrimination such as seen in certain disabilities (While & Clark, 2010), and expectations such as seen in dealing race or ethnicity in higher education such as stigma consciousness (Pinel, Warner & Chua, 2005). Richman and Leary (2009) further asserted that individuals who have been stigmatized in such ways may have feelings of hurt, disrespect, and may even be stressed. They may also be engaged in seeking out relationships with others to restore or increase needed levels of acceptance or self-esteem, as opposed to them getting it from those who stigmatized them.

Similarly, a supposition of this research is that such stigmatization may be a crucial factor in these leaders' experiences and responses to these votes, particularly if and when these leaders were asked to leave their organizations. In addition, these public actions and use of media may have also been used to permanently stigmatize these leaders. However, it is unclear if leaders take the time to reflect on the implications of the vote on themselves, their identities and their work in the organization to determine if and how such stigma may paralyze these leaders in their actions within the organization or their self-awareness about what these votes really mean for them. Meaning, if leaders do not realize the personal and public implications of the vote on their leadership it may be unlikely that they will be
pressed to push past such implications as they try to stabilize and move forward with running the institution. Likewise, if these leaders are espoused to the master-rhetoric that is common in their field, such as these votes are not personal because they are arbitrary or that getting the vote is a badge of honor, it is possible that such leaders may never take the time to assess the implications of them votes on themselves and their institutions. Such sensemaking and sensegiving can pose as a danger for those in leadership.

In summary, the implications of the vote can have serious consequences for these leaders, personally and professionally, even after they leave their organizations. There may also be serious consequences on institutions players and on the overall reputations of these community colleges. NCVs can create some amount of lore about itself to the general community, who then build a narrative about what it means. Arguably, it may be fair to suggest that these votes may give rise to changing identities and understandings about how leaders and faculty could work together in their context. As noted in earlier chapters, some researchers have suggested that such outcomes are a way of life or a cultural paradigm in the academy that leaders should expect, especially if they fail to perform well in their positions (Birnbaum, 1988; Schein, 2010). However, these leader participants have pointed out that leaders’ actions and behaviors may be evaluated on the basis of pure perceptions or the sensemaking of others within or outside the institution with various agendas. Overall, both the sponsors of the vote and these leaders were
making sense of their situations and their identities when they devised very
different volitional plans for dealing with some of the issues in the organization. As
for the leaders, they faced a second dilemma in their institutions, since, as they
worked to reduce the equivocality in one area of the institution, the next crisis was
about them. As a result, these participants' sensemaking about what these votes
mean and how they were able to work past them were key tenets of this study.

Theme Four. Lessons learned.

As these CEO participants shared their sensemaking of their no confidence
votes, they also shared the apparent wisdom they developed from these events, as
well as lessons learned from their overall careers. Each of them identified the many
lessons they learned, closely related to general leadership lessons, where the leader
can reflect on what they have learnt and said (Weick, 1995). As each participant
shared his or her constructed stories and counter-narratives of the sensemaking of a
no confidence vote, participants were also sharing what they saw, said and did, to
develop lesson they learned. As a result, these participants identified
communication as the key sensemaking outcome for their leadership. Specifically,
when asked what lessons they learned, each participant identified how he/she had to
strategically develop plans for improving communication and decision making
across the institution. Although these leaders did not present their newly developed
knowledge or sensemaking as a way to avoid or prevent a vote from occurring, they
did suggest specific strategies that they used to reduce the probability from it occurring and inferred that it could be applied to leadership today. These CEO participants also provided a plethora of other lessons that they learned, such as advising other leaders to not be surprised by the vote but to plan for it. A complete list of these lessons has been compiled (see Appendix G), and they have been categorically sorted into three areas: (a) discussion on competencies, (b) self-confidence and preservation strategies, and (c) balancing work and family.

For example, Susan discussed meeting several times with members of the “kitchen cabinet” group to discuss problems and develop strategies to meet their concerns for more decision-making power. She and the board also met with the media and the local newspaper to discuss their influence on the story and to develop stronger partnerships with this external stakeholder. Similarly, Paul talked about learning to listen more to the needs of his community and finding ways to include them in his work. Debbie maintained that she did not do much, other than opening new lines of communication to demonstrate how she was responding to shared governance concerns and to keep the institution as a whole informed. Bill’s lessons learned were more reflective, and he mentioned that he “learned more about leadership [at Sunshine College] than anywhere else.” He talked about learning to read the culture and how he learned to enrich communication lines among groups. These findings are similar to what Smith (2003) had observed in a study of no confidence votes in CCC system, and she noted that leaders, in hindsight, learned
that “they could have engaged in much more proactive communication prior to making and implementing certain decisions” (p. 9).

Over time, it is possible that these leaders have been able to reflect and develop their own adaptive frames and mental models for understanding these votes, even if their sensemaking is influenced by a previous sensemaker. As a result, these leaders shared their sensemaking and the adaptive processes used to survive these votes. Through these retrospective stories, these leaders acted as architects in their environment as they created or constructed their realities about what happened and what it meant, interacting with others in loosely coupled environments to both influence or manipulate their sensemaking and perceptions over time (Ancona, 2011; Fairhurst & Grant, 2010; Weick, 1995; Weick et al., 2005). This is not to say that what these leaders extracted and framed in their stories or maps, weren’t initially built on old maps, but their stories have helped to demystify the lore of these unknown events, creating routines to better stabilize and inform other sensemakers.

Weick (1995) observed that, through these leaders’ retrospective stories, they were able to create “plausible enough” and “engaging enough” realities to help share their rationales and strategic processes used in their sensemaking (p. 61). As a result, these participants, using information that is selected, framed, and retained, then tried to strategically infuse this information back into their environments as an outcome of the crisis (Weick, 2005). Weick referred to this type of information
giving or stories as “third-order controls,” our taken-for granted meanings and understandings in our culture, which are used to share our understanding of our experiences and provide a logical, sensible, yet reasonable enough map for the organization and their peers to use as a guide or as a map of their sensemaking about no confidence votes (Weick, 1995, pp.61, 127). Weick (1995) viewed such maps as plausible and useful because they can help leaders keep moving, strategizing and making sense of their environments, even if the map is not accurate. Such stories are also ways for “coordinating activities,” and this is seen in the communication strategies that these leaders used to address the problem, even if these strategies were indirectly performed (Weick, 1987, p. 341). The communication strategies noted here derived from these leaders’ enacted sensemaking about these votes, what they meant and how they were able to use them to move forward.

The communication strategies referenced by participants, for example, were part of the lessons they learned and were directly linked to participants’ specific situations. Thus, this research argues that such strategies are fundamental in establishing and reestablishing communication across organizations. However, whether or not these communication strategies could prevent a no confidence vote was still being questioned here. As these leaders diagnosed their individual situations and developed strategies to move forward, such strategies may or may not have prevented leaders from repeating this no confidence vote cycle. Some
researchers have suggested that such cycles are the norm in organizations that are designed to prevent such occurrences, such as in loosely coupled organizations (Birnbaum, 1998) while others suggested that the individuals in the setting have mindsets that need to shift altogether. Building on the knowledge of attribution theory, defined as the “causal explanations for behaviors... that assist people to make sense of the world [and] to guide their own” (Ariyanto, Hornsey, & Gallois, 2009, p. 293), some scholars suggest that such causal explanations are colored with biases about others and their personal and professional identities. These researchers examined the discursive practices that individuals used as they interact with others outside their groups (Ariyanto et al., 2009). The researchers observed attribution biases between both groups and that stemmed from the perceptions about who we are and who others are, and they also described it as follows:

The intergroup attribution bias refers to people’s tendency to attribute positive in-group behaviours to internal causes and negative in-group behaviours to external causes. Conversely, positive outgroup behaviours are disproportionately likely to be attributed to external causes, and negative outgroup behaviours are disproportionately likely to be attributed to internal causes behaviour, and to predict events. (p. 293)

These researchers also found that these biases were present in the ways both groups thought about and interacted with each other, in both overt and covert ways and thinking and in the sensegiving and sensemaking these individuals construct
about the other. Birnbaum (1988) concurred, advising that such biases are based on how colleges and universities are designed; thus such sensegiving or sensemaking is also situational and evident in their communication. This environment allows faculty and administrators to act within their roles and identities, to work and coexist in the same space, and to “communicate only with people similar to themselves” (Birnbaum, 1988, pp. 6-7). He also explained that, based on this loose and tight coupling situational design, there may be different mindsets present that leaders need to find a way to bridge. For example, he suggested that, to the faculty, administrators are associated with “red tape, constraints and outside pressure that seeks to alter the institution,” and that they are removed or more remote from the central academic concerns that define the institution. Similarly, administrators may view the faculty as “self-interested, unconcerned with controlling costs, or unwilling to respond to legitimate requests for accountability” (Birnbaum, 1988, pp. 6-7). To effectively lead in college system, Birnbaum (1988) proposed that leaders need to actively create and maintain strong communication loops that are intentionally designed to be safe spaces for these groups and others to operate in (p. 207).

Overall, it may be inferred here that if both leaders and faculty groups do attribute a certain amount bias to each other for any number of reasons, even if the system has normalized such thinking, then leaders need to find additional strategies to consciously reduce the root causes during these types of interactions with faculty
and vice versa. This concept is important because, even with these strategies and new lines of communication, leaders and faculty members may become even more tightly coupled when interacting within these strategies but still thinking and perceiving within certain biases and mental models. As a result, such unchecked perceptions and biases could render a new cycle of triggers and shocks in that system, particularly if attributional biases are not dismantled or discouraged strategically.

Conclusions

As mentioned in Chapter One, too little is known about what happens to presidents and chancellors (CEOs) who received these votes, although there are concern that the use of these votes is growing among California community colleges (Smith, 2003). However, no current national reporting agencies collecting these data were found, neither has there been any empirical analysis with primary sources who received these votes. Furthermore, from a search of secondary sources (i.e., newspaper reports and other documents), it did appear that the usage of these votes may indeed be increasing, used more by faculty and faculty unions than by other groups, to voice their concerns or to pressure leaders to resign from their positions or be fired by their boards (Schmidt, 2009; McKinniss, 2008; Tierney, 2007).
Weick's (1995) sensemaking theory and analytical frames were utilized as the fundamental framework for analyzing the in-depth narratives of each participant. For this phenomenological study's analysis, data were collected from four CEOs using semi-structured interviews (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007) and analyzed using approaches outlined in the literature (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). The study's research questions rendered emergent themes that were closely aligned with Weick's (1995) sensemaking theory. Retrospectively, each participant took time to remember his or her experiences, highlighting and focusing on specific situations or events leading to a vote. Subsequently, these findings nestled comfortably within the scope of Weick's (1995) theory.

As noted in Chapter Four and to the surprise of this researcher, each participant spoke very explicitly and candidly about his or her lived experiences of growing up, the challenges of balancing marriage and family as a leader, the trajectories to the presidency, whether or not he or she thought the vote was merited, whether or not the vote was personal attack on the leadership, reactions to the vote, the emotions felt during these events, the impact of these votes on careers (if any), and what lessons were learned. Perhaps such openness was based on the transparency of the research process or how the research questions were arranged, allowing participants to retrospectively relive their experiences from growing up in the academy to finally addressing what happened during and after the vote, all of which may have allowed them to become more comfortable during the study
Another possible explanation for this openness is that all participants, all of whom are currently hardworking retirees, may have realized that they had nothing to lose in finally telling their stories, as a type of pseudo biography or as a way of breaking silence. This researcher is honored that such participants were able to share their sometimes blunt stories about their presidential lives. Such candidness is considered atypical in qualitative research, and others have highlighted the many difficulties that researchers may experience when interviewing “elite” participants, such as presidents (e.g., Hochschild, 2009, p. 5). This researcher felt an obligation to take great care in honoring the words of these participants while faithfully analyzing these narrative, which is evident in the reliance on using as much of these CEOs’ own words and language (in vivo) as much as possible (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011).

This study did not position itself to evaluate the rightness, or wrongness for using these votes against the leadership. However, other researchers have, such as Smith (2003) whose study discussed the votes in California community college’s system and uncovered some of the implications reported by CEO leaders. Building on her work, this study focused on the narratives and meanings CEO participants used to explain their experiences with this phenomenon. Each of these participants discussed the different rationales behind the vote on his/her leadership. Researchers of the vote have suggested that many sponsors of the vote use it arbitrarily and as a last resort or as a means for raising their voices about their concerns (Schmidt,
2009), while others suggested that it has a sharper focus and can be used to target and oust a leader (Tierney, 2007). However, a major gap in this literature is in understanding the implications of the vote on the leader both during and after the vote, and how they make sense of the vote on their leadership. This is a gap this study is designed to fill.

Findings and Themes

Each leader discussed his/her sensemaking triggered by a no confidence vote (NCV), which offered both convergent and divergent factors about each leader, his/her leadership practice and factors that contributed to their votes. The key findings of this study included: (a) known triggers—such as institutional and leadership triggers that created an atmosphere of ambiguity and uncertainty, such as shared governance law that mandated new decision-making structures and identities; (b) crucial blind spots that are caused by groups within the environment who used their own mechanisms for sensegiving to increase awareness about the leader’s actions and violations of expectations, such as the media, to publicly stand against the leadership; (c) implications of the vote on the leaders and their leadership, such as whether they should stay or leave their organization, and (d) lessons learned—these were the salient principles and strategies that leaders remembered and shared throughout the study. Each of these themes was triangulated with the sensemaking or sensegiving of other agents in the contexts of
these organizations to assist in the understanding this phenomenon (Gioia & Chittipeddi, 1991; Smerek, 2009).

**Double-blind-spots.** The most salient findings not reported in other research were found in crucial blind spots of these leaders’ sensemaking and impact this can have on these leaders. For example, this study identified double-blind spots: the first blind spot that is usually present in the environment and contributed directly to the vote as well as the secondary blind-spot that occurs when these votes are given and affect these leaders directly. This finding focused on the interactions between leaders and faculty who were both part of the sensegiving and sensemaking processes in these environments (Gioia et al., 1991). The double-blind-spots were evident in each participant’s stories and were counter-narratives to the mainstream suppositions about the implications and consequences of these votes. This double-blind spot is most vivid in Bill’s experiences. Unbeknownst to Bill, he was unable to see the hidden forces at work in the institution and was caught off guard when it all culminated into a threat of a no confidence vote. Then believing that he would survive this vote with board support, Bill was unable to foresee that the perceptions of the board members were changing with influenced by a new round of board elections. In addition, Bill’s narrative about the vote being unsuccessful and that he actually resigned ran counter to the mainstream media that have placated the point that he received the vote and was later forced out because of the vote. Although Bill maintained that he indeed resigned, the implications of what...
happened to him had such an impact on him that he distanced himself from the role for years before finally returning to it before retiring.

Although it may be difficult to expose all the hidden forces in our processes as members work together in an institution, it may be possible to minimize such risks during certain events. Hindsight is always easier after the fact. For example, if Bill had paid attention to extracted cues and warnings offered to him from members within the institution rather than pay attention to the janitors or newer faculty, this may have slowed down or stopped any hidden triggers about him moving too quickly among constituents. Perhaps, if he didn’t add more to his plate as a new leader, when he agreed to participate in accreditation visits, then Bill may have averted feeding additional perceptions about his leadership. The literature reviewed discussed the persuasiveness and influences of these sensegiving processes, and this study proposes that leaders and institutional players need to focus on these processes and what they may mean for their institutions over time, including how these patterns will influence culture, the sustainability of institutional planning and strategies, etc.

Implications of the vote on the leadership. The two major implications of these votes on the leadership were (a) emotional and personal implications and (b) career opportunities implications. Each participant discussed his or her initial reactions to the vote, and all shared detailed emotional implication of the vote on them and their leadership after the vote. While most leaders reported feeling hurt
and even betrayed by this vote, they also talked about finding coping mechanisms to manage this time in their lives. This may have included spending time with family, staying away from the campus or not talking about the vote at all. In addition, many of these leaders reached out to other leaders or were contacted by other leaders in support, who offered these strategies for dealing with these votes. This study refers to this time between the actual vote and these leaders’ actions of responding or not responding to the vote as their period of silence.

Another implication found in this study that had not been reported elsewhere are those instances where the votes have followed leaders to their next positions or opportunities and how these votes represented a barrier for these participants. Using the literature on these apparent continued shaming and scapegoating patterns, this study suggested an analysis of these leaders’ reactions to these barriers and how leaders make sense of it. A serious implication of these patterns is that boards are concerned about hiring embattled leaders, including leaders with no confidence votes.

Overall, the goal of the study which was to capture of the voices of these leaders through their shared stories about their experiences of a no confidence vote, and this was achieved. The gap in the literature about the factors leading to no confidence votes, the aftermath of these votes, and the impact these votes can have on these leaders has been filled by narratives of these leaders, who broke their silence about their experiences with these sanctions (Lampe, 2002). At times, these
leaders were mostly transparent and candid about certain situations surrounding these votes, and at other times they appeared scripted but overall comfortable in sharing their experiences through storytelling, a method supported by Lampe (2002) to break one’s silence. At the times when these leaders seemed scripted, perhaps, this was their way to maintain legitimacy as a leader, by using individual isomorphic practices, similar to the patterns discussed in the structurations and institutionalism literature (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). This authors asserted that isomorphic practices involved organizations, in this case individuals, using similar scripts like others in their field to protect themselves and buffer against vulnerability from outside of their group, as well as to conform to widely accepted beliefs and values to survive.

This study was also unable to evaluate the effectiveness of these leaders’ leadership, their style of leadership, communication styles and practices. However, each of these leaders were able to freely disclose they brand of leadership, leadership acumen and accomplishments, and the ways in which their actions and behaviors may have informed the perceptions of those sponsoring these votes. Leaders discussed the ways in which their identities informed their practice and choices, as well as how they made sense of their situations. Such identities may have also played a role in the assumptions they made about certain triggers, when as the leader they may have overlooked certain patterns or misread the culture.
This study’s findings are also important to the field for leaders who oversee California’s community college (CCC) system, as well as for aspiring and current leaders. For example, after some reflection, these leaders were able to identify antecedent conditions within their organizations, which over time may have caused the institution to become more unstable and unpredictable, such as shared governance law or the roles of predecessors. A significant finding in this study is that the impact of these votes on these leaders may be more than just an arbitrary process (Schmidt, 2009) or noise-making mechanism against them, about their leadership, or their ineffectiveness in their work (Tierney, 2007). It appears that this mechanism can spiral into a leadership in crisis event, and can have many ambiguous meanings, unpredictable outcomes, and unforeseen immediate and distal consequences on these leaders. Additionally, knowledge about the profound impact these no confidence can have on leaders should be considered carefully and examined in situations where both the faculty and leader’s sensemaking and sensegiving processes can be fully examined.

Furthermore, the results of study provided insights about these leaders sensemaking about the attributable factors and situations that may have had hidden forces behind them and act as triggers that leaders may have overlooked. For example, most of these leader participants discussed the level of resistance they faced during their work, and when these leaders failed to pay attention to these factors and antecedent conditions there may be consequences (McRoy & Gibbs,
2009). These authors found that when leaders isolated these types of incidents and their experiences from the history and culture within these organizations they may be caught off guard by the resistance to their change agendas, for example (McRoy & Gibbs, 2009). In addition, these results also exposed the double-blind spots in these leaders' experiences and sensemaking, wherein leaders discussed both these hidden forces and unforeseen consequences of these votes on their personal and professional careers. For most of these leaders, they had to reconcile the dissonance between what others said the vote should mean and their actual realities of the vote on their lived experiences. Finally, each leader provided some considerations about the lessons they learned from these votes and from their overall careers to help aspiring and current leaders, such as strengthening communication across divisions and encouraging participation from across all groups within the institution, to minimize the occurrence of these votes and to increase transparency and collaboration.

Considering the current climate and concerns in CCC system, this study was unable verify the degree to which these no confidence votes can influence potential leaders and how it can stain the reputations of organizations that use them. Although leadership in any setting has many challenges and opportunities, a common thread among these participants is that they were unsure leaders can avoid getting a vote against their leadership, because these votes can have covert and overt factors that leaders may overlook at times. This study is also asserting that it
may not be enough that leaders depend on the support of their boards to survive these votes. As a result, this study has posited that current and aspiring leaders may need to proactively consider developing policies to regulate this process and utilize legal steps to minimize the impact of these crisis events on the leadership, including looking at tenured contracts, limiting media coverage, and working with boards to provide some type of insurance against these events. Without these types of measures to protect leadership, the leadership gaps may be further impacted and boards find it easier to continuously recycle leaders within this system. However, with more efforts on training leaders and on challenging campus climates and perceptions about leadership, perhaps, these boards and their leaders can better support aspiring and current leaders entering these organizations (Kimmel, 2004) and reduce turnover rates while increasing tenures in these position. Although this study was unable to determine the direct impact of these votes on presidential pipelines, this study does propose that protecting the tenures of effective leaders is paramount for these institutions, and can help in sustaining innovative leadership agendas and strategic plans and initiatives that can mobilize organizations and limit interruptions in leadership over time.

**Recommendations**

A major recommendation of this study is that these votes may need additional regulations for responding to and mitigating these votes against them,
whether it be local to their institutions or by districts, and to oversee how and when these votes may be used during and after the tenure of these leaders. For example, leaders may need their own crisis management policies or laws to support them during times like this, and as one participant, Susan, recommended, perhaps a type of insurance for leaders, such as a leadership tenure process. Therefore, this study is recommending a process to regulate the processes leading up to the vote, with the same legal strength as the Senate Bill 55 (Lowenthal) that is enacted after the vote. Equally, this study recommends the design of a tenure process or contract insurance process to support and protect the leadership after these votes are given. Similar to a type of malpractice insurance for example, such steps may allow leaders the opportunity to enact lawsuits against individuals who try to intentionally and unjustly defame the characters of the leaders and harass these leaders, even after these leaders are no longer affiliated with the institution. Both Susan and Paul experienced former faculty and senates opposing and interfering in their candidacies in new jobs by. Such actions appear lopsided against the leadership, particularly when one considers that faculty are generally protected by tenure in these institutions and may not experience the leadership interfering in their next hiring process with another institution. No other laws or policies were found as a model for this recommendation. As a matter of fact one current college president, speculated that such concepts are being addressed in the current contracts of newer leaders who are assuming such positions (R. Stanback-Stroud, personal
communication, Dec 16, 2015). This may appear to give more power to leaders with significant amounts of power and influence. However, as long as NCVs are being used as attempts to limit the tenures of these leaders, and without clear and legal policies and procedures to guide sponsors of the vote, such benefits to leaders may be pivotal in attracting and retaining leaders in the system and pipelines.

Another recommendation of this study is for the leadership and constituency groups to develop campus culture not only to try to influence the climate but also as a means to check the on-going climate across all networks and divisions in a non-threatening way, but specific for their institutions. Similar plans have been developed routinely across college campuses from using surveys or focus group interviews to fully developed action plans with actionable steps, with some type of leadership risk assessment or crisis monitoring planning.

**Further Research**

Further investigation is needed with current leaders who are also serving in the CCC system to see what other leadership and contextual factors can trigger these votes. This study attempted to invite current leaders but failed to garner any interest or support for this study. Current leaders may feel unsafe sharing this information, particularly if they are not close to retiring or are still engaged with this system in some way. Such studies may benefit from a longitudinal approach, facilitated by an insider participant researcher. In addition, these types of studies
may render different results if information is being gathered synchronous or real-time, such as immediately when a threat of a vote is rumored or directly after the vote is given. Such research could delve into the communication blind spots and strategies that leaders and sponsors of the vote use to develop and share their sensemaking and sensegiving. In addition, more research is needed to determine the media’s role in the sensemaking and sensegiving process and how this can impact leaders and further propagate a crisis on them. In essence, the media can have a more far-reaching impact when the report partial and impartial information, inaccuracies and even rumors without obtaining a collective view of these incidences. As a result, this pattern of using the media should be studied to determine the crisis on leadership.

As an outsider of these colleges and positions, the researcher understands that her knowledge and lens were limited for understanding the frames that leaders used to describe their work or the implications of these votes on their work and environment. Similarly, additional research is needed to understand how other presidents and chancellors also make sense of these votes and whether race, gender, or other attributable factors played a role in the sensemaking processes. In addition, more research could be used to understand how leadership agendas are interrupted and/or sustained during and after these votes are enacted.
References


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doi:10.1080/10668920903388206


Retrieved from Educational Administration Abstracts database.


Rosser, V. (2003). Faculty and staff members’ perceptions of effective leadership: are there differences between women and men leaders?. *Equity and Excellence in Education, 36*(1), 71-81.


United Kingdom History and Tour Archives: Webcite for URL:


APPENDIX A

Protocol #: X14-46R1

RECRUITING LETTER TO PRESIDENTS

Lisa Thomas
San Francisco State University
Dissertation

Dear Potential Participants,

I am a doctoral candidate in the Educational Leadership program at San Francisco State University (SFSU), and have identified you as a potential study participant through directory lists, internet searches, or through your self-identification and interest in participating in the study. I would like to invite you to participate in my dissertation entitled An Analysis of No Confidence Votes Among Presidents in Higher Education.

The purpose of this phenomenological study is to explore the counter-narratives of presidents who experienced a leadership crisis, specifically a vote of no confidence, within the community college environment. I am interested in learning more about the type of leadership that was being practiced in these organizations, along with the factors, including leadership actions (if any), that may have contributed to these crises. A major goal of this study is to increase awareness about this type of leadership crisis in higher education, especially for aspiring leaders who are on the trajectory of becoming senior administrators in higher education.

The criteria required for participation in my study are the following: 1) identify as a current or former college or university president; 2) have worked for at least 1-5 years or more in the same institution in which they received a vote, and at least 1-2 years in the position of the presidency, and 3) have had at least 8-10 years of experience in higher education.

By participating in my dissertation study, you will be asked to commit to a total of two hours and 20 minutes for all interviews. The time commitment will include two (2) formal and in-person or video conferencing interviews (for 60 minutes each), which will take place over a two-day period, between July 2013 and December 2015. I will also be conducting an informal interview for twenty (20) minutes by phone or your chosen video conference medium to establish protocols for the formal interviews. Video conferencing tools could include: Skype, FaceTime, Google Circle, or any other media that you, the participant, are comfortable using. The only recording will be an audiotaped recording of these interviews. I will also be asking each participant to submit a copy of his/her curriculum vitae or resume, during the first in-person session.
It is important to note here that there are minimal risks involved in this study. The confidentiality and privacy of data collected during my study will be paramount. The risk will be minimized by keeping all research data in a device with full disk encryption and password protection. This device will be kept in a secure location in my home office lockbox, only accessible to me, the researcher. All data are required to be stored by the researcher for a minimum of 3 years and then be destroyed. You will be informed and reminded throughout the study that your participation is strictly voluntary; you may choose to not answer any question or discuss any topic that will make you uncomfortable, and you may conclude your participation and withdraw from the study at any time and at your discretion. You will also have the opportunity to review your transcribed interview and make changes as you desire. Pseudonyms will be used when referring to you and your institution throughout the study.

This research is critical in bringing voice to the leadership experiences of presidents in the higher education institutions. The benefits will include, but are not limited to: developing best practices in leadership, informing change within an institutional culture, providing motivation and guidance to aspiring mid-level administrators on the trajectory to senior and executive level leadership, and creating models for mentoring and support networks. Your contribution to this body of research is essential.

If you are available to participate in my dissertation research study, please complete the consent form attached, and be sure to sign and bring it with you during the first interview session. We must have a signed consent form before you can participate in the study. The consent form details the nature and confidentiality of my study. If you have any questions about the process before signing this form, I will be available to meet with you in-person or by phone to discuss this study in greater details. Please do not hesitate to contact me by email lathoma@gmail.com, phone (415) 494-5599, or my dissertation chair, Professor Genie Stowers or gstowers@sfsu.edu, for additional information about this study.

Thank you for your consideration, and I look forward to hearing your story.

Respectfully,

Lisa Thomas
Doctoral Student
San Francisco State University
1553 Holloway Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94132
APPENDIX B

San Francisco State University

Informed Consent to Participate in a Research Study

An Analysis of No Confidence Votes Among Presidents in Higher Education

PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

The purpose of this research study is to explore the counter-narratives of presidents who experienced a leadership crisis, specifically a vote of no confidence, within higher education. I am interested in learning more about the leadership practices in these organizations, along with the factors that contributed to a vote of no confidence. The researcher, Ms. Lisa Thomas, is a doctoral student at San Francisco State University and is conducting research for her dissertation. You are being asked to participate in this study because you are or were a president in higher education, and you have experienced this particular leadership crisis in higher education.

PROCEDURES

All participants will be asked to participate in the following activities:
- Review the purpose of the study using the recruiting letter.
- Review and sign the consent form, if you agree to voluntarily participate in the study.
- Participate in two one-hour interview sessions that will be audiotaped to ensure accuracy, between May 2013 and January 2015.
- Select a date, time, and location to conduct these interviews either in-person or through a secure video-conference medium, such as: Skype or FaceTime, for example.
- Participate in a onetime 20 minutes phone meeting, to establish interview protocols.
- Provide curriculum vitae or resume to the researcher.
- Review the interview transcripts upon request, also known as member-checking, to ensure that each documented story was constructed accurately in the study.
All participants will be asked to commit to a total of two-hours and 20 minutes for the entire study. Each participant will receive a copy of the study in its entirety for final reviews and for further inputs.

Risks
Participation in the study involves minimal risk. One potential risk is loss of privacy. The risk will be minimized by keeping all research data in my home office lockbox, using password protected files that are only accessible to me, the researcher. All electronic data will be kept in an encrypted document on a password-protected computer. Since prospective participants may have continued to be leaders in the field, all recruitment scripts, consent forms, and communications, both in-person or via email, will emphasize the voluntary nature of your participation, and that refusing to participate will have no consequence whatsoever. Another potential risk is the slight chance that campus insiders could infer the identity of participants since the situations surrounding each of these votes are made available to the public, especially if this study is published. All names or identification information of individual participants will be changed or omitted in the study, and all data in the finished report will be presented in an aggregated form.

Confidentiality
All research data will be stored in a device with full disk encryption and password-protection. The device will be kept in a secure location in my home office lockbox, only accessible to the researcher. In addition to these steps for maintaining confidentiality, all electronic data will be kept in an encrypted document on a password-protected computer, used solely by the researcher. The research data will be securely deleted using the Eraser program. All audiotapes of interview data will be destroyed after three years. All data are required to be stored by the researcher for a minimum of 3 years. Checklist data will be considered anonymous and analyzed in the aggregate, and any papers containing data will be destroyed after one year.

Benefits
There are no direct benefits to participants.

Payment
There will be no payment for participants.

Costs
There are no costs to participants.

Alternatives
The alternative is to not participate in the research.

Questions
You have spoken with me, the researcher, about this study and have had your questions answered. If you have any further questions about the study, you may contact the researcher by email at lathoma@gmail.com, or you may contact my dissertation chair, Professor Genie Stowers at gstowers@sfsu.edu.

Questions about your rights as a study participant, comments or complaints about the study, may also be addressed to Human and Animal Protections at 415: 338-1093 or protocol@sfsu.edu.

CONSENT/ASSENT PROCESS AND DOCUMENTATION OF CONSENT/ASSENT

You have been given a copy of this consent form to keep. PARTICIPATION IN THIS RESEARCH IS VOLUNTARY. You are free to decline participation in this research study, or to withdraw your participation at any point, without penalty. Your decision whether or not to participate in this research study will have no influence on your present or future status with San Francisco State University.

Signature _______________________________ Date: __________
Research Participant

Signature _______________________________ Date: __________
Lisa Thomas
APPENDIX C

Protocol #: X14-46R1

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Qualitative Research Questions

Introduction and Background (current position and responsibilities):
1. Please tell me a little about yourself, your responsibilities as a president, and your career trajectory to the presidency. Include any information that you believe will help me understand you, your career in higher education, how you see yourself as a leader, such as your identity, ethnicity, gender, marital status, age, etc.

Leadership Approach
2. Please describe your leadership style(s), approach(es) and practice(s); as well as how you accomplish your presidential/leadership agenda. Consider any number of tasks or items on your agenda, such as allocating resources, hiring, fundraising, etc, to explain your answer. Include any and all tactile approaches, specific processes used, or leadership stance(s) or philosophy(ies) that demonstrate your particular style(s), approach(es) and practice(s).

3. Prior to the vote, how do you think your constituents would describe your overall leadership styles, approaches and practices? Do you believe that they would describe your leadership approach as effective? Why or why not? Do you believe your leadership styles, approaches or practices were supported or resisted by your constituents, and why?

4. Prior to the vote, how would you describe the culture (or climate) within this institution? For example and in your opinion, describe the organization’s climate, lines of communication and relationships among constituency groups and yourself.

No Confidence Vote Incident
5. Please share your experiences with the no confidence vote and how you understand this experience of the vote on your leadership. Include
information about your tenure in the organization, your leadership agenda during that time, what you believed happened, whether or not you were expecting the vote to occur—and if possible—please provide a chronological account of how you experienced this vote.

6. Please share the key factors or incidents that you believed may have contributed and led to the vote of no confidence on your leadership.

7. What other reasons do you believe may have caused or affected this vote against you? In your opinion, for example, were there other antecedent conditions, events or situations that may have also contributed to this vote?

8. Which institutional players or constituency groups do you believe were involved in sponsoring this vote at this time and why? What were their stated reasons for the vote? What do you believe are the possible underlying reasons?

**Leadership Strategies and Lessons Learned**

9. How were you able to communicate or maintain lines of communication during this vote? What strategies do you believed worked or did not work well? In your answer, please describe how and what you communicated with constituents during and after the vote.

10. What leadership strategies did you use during this time? Please feel free to include any leadership styles, approaches or practices you used at that time and whether or not they were effective or not.

11. What strategies did you use to get through this experience and to move your institution through, during the time of the vote? What were your goals during this time and were you able to accomplish these goals or were your strategies effective?

12. What happened after the vote? Please recall, chronologically if possible, the events, meetings, decisions you made in response to the vote.

13. Do you believe this vote can influence students and other constituents in the institution? If so, how? For instance, do you think these votes take the focus off the mission and objectives of the leadership and faculty (such as the achievement gap), when there is such a focus? How do leaders try to keep this from happening?
14. In retrospect, what lessons have you learned as a result of this experience, if any? Would you have done anything differently? What advice would you give to aspiring leaders, who are on the trajectory to senior level administrative positions? How would you caution or mentor them concerning this vote?

Thank you for participating in this study.
APPENDIX D

San Francisco State University Dissertation Permission Letter

October 16, 2014
Office of Human and Animal Protections
San Francisco State University

To the Office of Human and Animal Protections:

Lisa Thomas has the permission of the Educational Leadership Doctoral Program to recruit subjects and/or conduct research for her study on no-confidence votes of college and university presidents. The details of this study have been explained to us and we support the research.

Please contact me for any further questions at 405-4101.

Sincerely,

Robert Gabriner
Director and Professor
Educational Leadership
San Francisco State University
Office: 415-405-4101
Cell: 415-819-3253
**APPENDIX E**

No Confidence Votes in California Community College System (1994-2006) *Updated and Revised by Lisa Thomas*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of Cases</th>
<th>District/College</th>
<th>Year of the vote</th>
<th>(M or F)</th>
<th>Action/Reason</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Mira Costa</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Vote by all faculty citing failure to consult with faculty citing 37 complaints (personnel, building demolition). Key factor was placing popular CIO on leave.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Southwestern</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Victor Valley</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Vote by three employee orgs, “cite illegal actions, mismanagement and hostility towards college employees”, collective bargaining issues cited by pres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Hartnell</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Vote by faculty &quot;misappropriated college resources and failed to recognized faculty needs.&quot; Faculty &amp; admin are in mediation over s &amp; b offer. Article also stated faculty only support 2 of 7 bd members.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Hartnell</td>
<td>1993/1994</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Grossmont – Cuyamaca</td>
<td>3/05</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Vote by Grossmont College Senate over funding inequities between two colleges, lack of consultation with senate, and leadership deficiencies. Vote did not seek removal, but shift in funding allocations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>So Orange County</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Vote by faculty at IV and Saddleback over lack of consultation with faculty and disregard for faculty roles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Palo Verde College</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Vote by classified union, later supported by CTA., to protest negotiation offer, communication.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Compton CCD</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Vote by faculty protest layoff notices; financial dealings of board, CEO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Institution</td>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Compton CCD</td>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Assigned as a Special Trustee to Compton CCD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Mission CCD</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Vote by senate presented “Bill of Particulars” protesting layoff notices and citing lack of consultation with faculty. During collective bargaining negotiations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>West Valley Mission CCD</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Vote was over low salary increases (1% raises), while administrators were getting 3%. Other allegations of nepotism on the part of the chancellor were noted on blogs. Faculty wore pink buttons that said 'no confidence' and marched around the campus. rev. LT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Santa Monica CCD</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Faculty vote protested elimination of programs and cited lack of participation by faculty and other constituencies; called for non-renewal of CEO contract</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Marin CCD</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Vote taken by faculty senate citing financial and leadership decisions, and lack of involvement by faculty in making decisions. Called for trustees to rescind certain decisions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Palomar</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Vote by faculty and classified union re contract negotiations (2 years of negotiations; lack of involvement of union in decisions re fiscal cutbacks)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Diablo Valley College</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Vote related to disagreements on college reorganization and which issues require collegial consultation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Southwestern</td>
<td>2002</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Vote taken by faculty during negotiations; cited &quot;deteriorating relations with teachers and questionable spending&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Chabot-Las Positas CCD</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Vote by faculty senate at Chabot, cited lack of leadership for or support of Chabot College. Collective bargaining differences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Chabot-Las Positas CCD</td>
<td>1990</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Chabot-Las Positas CCD</td>
<td>1994 or 1996</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#</td>
<td>Institution</td>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Reason for Vote</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----</td>
<td>-------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>San Bernardino Valley College</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Faculty dissatisfied with vice president's performance, which reflected on</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>president's leadership. Chancellor of the District received vote against his</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>leadership after college received accreditation warning and mandates.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>San Bernardino Valley College</td>
<td>2015</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Vote taken by faculty after collective bargaining impasse, related to leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>style.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Siskiyou CCD</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Vote taken by faculty after collective bargaining impasse, related to leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>style.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Siskiyou CCD</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Vote taken by faculty union during contract negotiation and in part related to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>part-timer pay. Vote concurrent with grand jury report critical of a settlement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Sierra CCD</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Vote taken by faculty union during contract negotiation and in part related to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>part-timer pay. Vote concurrent with grand jury report critical of a settlement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Sierra CCD</td>
<td></td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Faculty voted no confidence in Chancellor and college president &quot;in confidence&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>fearing adm retaliation; cited limited faculty role in decision-making process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>regarding district reorganization.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>South Orange County</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Vote taken over recurring problems in resource management and perceived lack of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>planning to anticipate and prevent problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>South Orange County</td>
<td>2002/2003</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Vote taken by faculty over two years of contract negotiations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Chaffey CCD</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td></td>
<td>Vote by senate in response to unpopular decisions in hiring personnel, changes in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>organization; cited lack of communication and involvement of faculty in decisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Hartnell CCD</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Vote taken by faculty following yearlong struggle with trustees over the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>appointment to the CEO position as part of major district reorganization.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Imperial Valley CCD</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Vote by faculty following yearlong struggle with trustees over the appointment to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>the CEO position as part of major district reorganization.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Irvine Valley College</td>
<td>1998/1999</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Collective bargaining approaches, personnel issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Foothill-De Anza CCD</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>Foothill-De Anza CCD</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>San Diego Miramar College</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Vote taken during contract negotiations and was related to changes the president was making regarding academic programs and scheduling per district direction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>San Luis Obispo County CCD</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Vote of no confidence in executive cabinet, taken during collective bargaining, negotiations at impasse.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>Solano County CCD</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Vote taken as part of contract negotiations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>Solano County CCD</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td></td>
<td>100% of the faculty president voted against the governing board concerning contracts, spending and overall leadership (rev. LT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>Sonoma County CCD</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Vote taken in aftermath of a faculty firing over concerns regarding investigations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>Ventura County CCD</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Vote by faculty union against chancellor during contract negotiations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>Ventura County CCD</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>West Valley-Mission CCD</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>WV Academic and Classified Senate and Mission Academic Senate: authoritarian, non-inclusive management style; budget cutbacks at college level but not at district level, poor senate representation on district committees.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>Chabot College</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>General dissatisfaction with his leadership style</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>Evergreen Valley College</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Faculty unhappy with leadership style.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>Fullerton College</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Vote taken because of faculty complaints about leadership style, which included failure to work with faculty on planning and budgeting issues and alleged violations of hiring policy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>Grossmont-Cuyamaca CCD</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Vote taken by Grossmont College Academic Senate; grew out of resolutions re: Cuyamaca self-sufficiency plan; Jeanne initially drew criticism for trying to shorten the contracts for Richard Suarez, one of the districts campus presidents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48</td>
<td>Kern CCD</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Vote taken by Bakersfield Academic Senate after article CEO co-authored with Bill Trombley on shared governance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Location</td>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Outcome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>Kern CCD</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Monterey Peninsula CCD</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>Monterey Peninsula CCD</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51</td>
<td>San Joaquin Delta CCD</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Vote taken during contract negotiations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52</td>
<td>San Joaquin Delta CCD</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53</td>
<td>Yosemite CCD</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>F</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54</td>
<td>Yosemite CCD</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55</td>
<td>Chabot-Las Positas CCD</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Vote taken during contract negotiations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56</td>
<td>El Camino CCD</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td></td>
<td>Vote taken against CEO and board during contract negotiations; cited slow pace and disagreement with conversion of FT positions to PR-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57</td>
<td>Skyline College</td>
<td>1994</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Vote taken in response to administrative reorganization eliminating some positions; coincided with fiscal cutbacks.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Community College League of California report on California Community College's No Confidence Votes from 1994-2006 via Cindra Smith and updated and revised by Lisa Thomas
## APPENDIX F

### Data Conversion Table for Study Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Document type &amp; number</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Bill        | 1. County newspaper in mid-1990s  
2. County newsletter in late 1990s  
3. California CC State Office website (n.d.)  
4. Resume  
5. Faculty Union Blogger  
6. State Agency report-early 1990s | 1. This article discussed some of the problems that were unfolding over the athletic team at the institution and how the leader was given the vote  
2. Leader was linked to problems associated with a counselor accused of sexual harassment.  
3. Announced leader's retirement and included his complete biography  
4. Participant provided resume that outlined career path and accomplishments |
| Susan       | 1. Local newspaper-mid 1990s  
2. Institution website news in 2000s  
3. California CC Statewide website-early 1990s  
4. Bill of Particulars-mid 1990s  
5. Resume  
3. State Agency | 1. Leader was given the vote for firing president. President was adamant about not leaving  
2. News about the interim leader's no confidence vote surfaces. News came from previous faculty at another institution and new faculty called for Chancellor's Office to remove her.  
3. Biography of the leader  
4. Bill of Particulars found that outlined reasons such as abuse of power  
5. Participant provided resume that outlined career path and accomplishments |
| Paul        | 1. District newspaper-early 2000s  
2. District newspaper-early 2000s  
3. District newspaper  
4. Resume  
5. State Agency report-early 1990s and 2000s  
6. Online Mentoring Program website | 1. Outlined pink slips incident with institution and that the leader got the vote.  
2. Report about chancellorship candidates and the issue of the vote was raised and participant responded to it publicly.  
3. Report that all chancellorship candidates had received a no confidence vote and this participant was named in the report and accused of being arrogant.  
4. Participant provided resume that outlined career path and accomplishments  
5. Outline of other reasons the leader got the vote  
6. Leader is a mentor to other leaders on this website |
| Linda       | 1. State Agency report mid 1990s  
2. District online newsletters (2 papers)-mid 1990s  
3. Resume | 1. Outline of other reasons the leader got the vote  
2. Outlined the reasons for the vote against the leader  
2b. Outlined what happened after the vote and the actions of the board against the faculty.  
3. Participant provided resume that outlined career path and accomplishments |

Note: This table was created to further protect the privacy of participants by documenting some of the reports, websites or paper traces found on each of these participants.
## Theme Four: Lessons Learned from Participants

### Theme Four: Lessons Learned

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>From No Confidence Votes</th>
<th>About: Leadership</th>
<th>Communication</th>
<th>General</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paul</td>
<td>Give faculty what they want and get out of the hell out of the way</td>
<td>As CEO you do not have immediate respect: you must earn respect</td>
<td>You must walk you talk. Your deeds and words must match</td>
<td>Change does not come easily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Save face. Allow opponents to have an out. Create a win-win situation</td>
<td>As CEO you are a symbolic leader. Your presence to represent you institution is expected at social and other events...</td>
<td>You will not have answers to all the questions-be honest, ask for help.</td>
<td>Empowerment-trust your subordinates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>You have to have faculty involved in that vision, in that conversation</td>
<td>Be visible and accessible to staff</td>
<td>Be a good planner</td>
<td>Focus on ‘us’ not me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Be a visionary</td>
<td></td>
<td>Do not negotiate your values. You cannot sell your values to keep your job or get support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Take care of yourself</td>
<td></td>
<td>You must stay true to your values and principles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A very important thing is to be clear about your board (I felt very supported by my board)</td>
<td>Stay healthy and exercise</td>
<td>Communication is really important</td>
<td>Civility is a virtue of a successful person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Talk to board members</td>
<td>Take care of yourself... and your team</td>
<td>Communication is to be open</td>
<td>Take the time to help others grow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Realize it’s not the end of the world</td>
<td>My strongest [leadership quality] is to have a terrific team</td>
<td>Be willing to share governance... and set up that process... like a Noah’s Ark...</td>
<td>Sometimes you will upset the applecart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Have a good attitude about your team [With an obligation to diversity]. A lot of diversifying the faculty cannot happen without administrative decisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>I credit everything I know to my mother ... If only we could bottle Mama</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Susan</td>
<td>Bill</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Take care of yourself... take more time for yourself  
My mother taught me to do the right thing, and my husband taught me to be politically smart enough to survive when you do the right thing | [Leaders need to understand]: 1. The culture of the institution, 2. The finances of the institution, and 3. The needs of that community and 4. The planning processes that will take that institution there.  
You do need to be collegial; however, you don’t need to abdicate.  
If you want to be a president, know yourself; know who you are, what you stand for, and what you believe in.  
I learned to slow down |
| Know the difference between preference and principle  
To me competency is the basic; you have to have the competencies... you cannot fake it | Don’t get locked into a leadership style, because I think I did initially.  
Being a president cannot be done through a cookbook  
As a leader, do your best to get the best out of people who are around you  
Leadership style for me is eclectic or situational  
Be conscious of the culture |
| Build relationships that will support you  
Build professional networks  
You have to know how to communicate  
Be collaborative  
Be compassionate  
Don’t avoid conflict | Open up communication channels  
Try to enrich communication [on] the campus  
Either they buy in or the don’t |
| Be patient and perseverant  
Be highly visible  
You have to be authentic  
Be a real person  
Do your homework  
As a woman in leadership, I think some of us were maybe too reluctant to make the tough decisions  
Be courageous  
Don’t attack everything that’s not done well, don’t be autocratic  
Do things right  
Don’t assume anything about the culture of an organization  
Pick your fights |
| When you come from the outside, you’ve got to really study what’s going on and believe in yourself  
Surround yourself with people who are different from you |

Note: This list is not an exhaustive list, but an outline of all the lessons learned, values and philosophies share by each CEO participants. Most leaders may have shared their lessons learned when discussing their values, leadership and communication styles, or the ways in which they overcame or survived the NCV against them. Paul also provided a copyrighted list of lessons he learned as a CEO throughout his career.
APPENDIX H

IRB Completion Form

Study Completion Form

Please submit this form to the IRB at the close of the study.

Phone: (415) 338-1093 Fax: (415) 338-2493
E-mail: irbinfo@sfsu.edu
Website: http://research.sfsu.edu/protocol/

Date: 11/3/2015

IRB Protocol # of non-exempt or expedited: Expedited # X14-6R1

Study Title: An Analysis of No Confidence Votes Among Community College Presidents

Researcher’s Name: Lisa Thomas

Completion/Closure Date: 10/26/2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th># Subjects Proposed for Study</th>
<th>3-5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td># Subjects Enrolled</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># Subjects Withdrawn After Enrollment</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># Subjects Completed</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reason for closure: (i.e., end of study, accrual met, etc.)

End of study

Briefly describe any Serious Adverse Events (SAEs) or unanticipated risks encountered in this research. Use separate page if needed.

No serious adverse events or unanticipated risks were encountered in this research.

IRB Response:

[ ] Final Report Received

Comments:

Signature: Date: 11/4/15
APPENDIX I

NIH Form

Certificate of Completion

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) Office of Extramural Research certifies that Lisa Thomas successfully completed the NIH Web-based training course "Protecting Human Research Participants"

Date of completion: 11/17/2014

Certification Number: 1620288.