ABSTRACT

CAMPBELL, HEATHER. The Leadership Identity Development of College Administrators Who Attended Women’s Colleges. (Under the direction of Alyssa Nicole Bryant.).

According to recent studies (ACE, 2007; Bornstein, 2008; Madsen, 2007a; Pope, 2009), women continue to be underrepresented in senior leadership roles in higher education. Yet, women’s distinct approach to leadership is needed in higher education today (Bornstein, 2008; Fine, 2007; Nidiffer, 2001; Phillips and Ummersen, 2003). In order for more women to move into the gendered pipelines of higher education leadership, greater understanding of women’s leadership development is needed. In fact, scant research describes how women higher education administrators develop leadership. Historically, women’s colleges have educated many of our nation’s leaders but there is less clarity about how leadership is fostered in these environments. Using the leadership identity development (LID) model (Komives et al., 2005) as a lens, this study explored how 10 women administrators lived and experienced leadership and developed a leadership identity while attending a women’s college.

The data were gathered through 10 semi-structured interviews and follow-up email interactions. During the interviews, participants guided the conversation and many used symbolic items from their time in college to aid in eliciting memories (e.g., pictures, yearbooks, information gathered about mentors). After the data collection process was complete, the data were analyzed by identifying the experiences and relationships that were relevant to leadership development. The data was then coded according to the LID categories and themes were identified in relation to the LID framework.
The findings of this study suggest that leadership opportunities and role models and mentors were ever-present at the women’s college, fostering leadership identity development. These experiences and relationships made it possible for the participants to broaden their view of leadership and develop their leadership identities.

Participants shared how they think about and call upon memories from their undergraduate experience when they lead and relate to students. The women’s college environment encouraged most of the participants to excel academically and act with integrity. Role models and mentors influenced some of the participants’ career choices and levels of self-confidence. For other participants, role models practiced behaviors that they hoped to emulate.

Findings extended the LID model by emphasizing the role of the environment, informal leadership positions, behaviors and attributes of role models, and informal or no participation in groups in fostering the LID process. The LID model (Komives et al., 2005) does not consider if and how environments play a role in cultivating leadership, but the findings in this study suggest that for these participants, the environment at their undergraduate college made a difference in how they developed leadership. The participants described behaviors and attributes of their collegiate mentors and role models. Unlike the original LID study that focused on college students who were involved in student organizations, the participants in this study were adults in established leadership positions. Some participants did not hold a formal leadership position during college which suggests the possibility that their leadership identity was fostered without being active in an official student organization. The findings also give insight to experiences that contribute to transitioning to interdependence when relating to others. After participants experienced a
challenging situation, several described how they transitioned from trying to achieve organizational tasks alone to relying more on others.
The Leadership Identity Development of College Administrators Who Attended Women’s Colleges

by
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A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty of North Carolina State University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education

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BIOGRAPHY

The researcher is from a small town in North Carolina. She graduated from Wingate University where she received a bachelor of arts degree in English. Upon completing her undergraduate degree, she taught English briefly in her hometown and then moved overseas to teach English as a Second Language to first-year college students. After returning to the United States, she worked in various student affairs capacities at Wingate University while working towards her Master of Arts degree in Higher Education Administration from Appalachian State University. While pursuing her doctoral studies at North Carolina State University, she worked fulltime at Peace College, a women’s college located in downtown Raleigh, North Carolina.
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In closing, I am grateful for the 10 women who participated in this study. Thank you for taking time out of your busy schedules to meet and share your leadership development and women’s college stories with me. I am inspired by your leadership development journeys and how you lead at your respective institutions today.
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**Chapter One: Introduction**

During the last decade, American society has experienced tremendous change. Transformations including how individuals understand gender, use technology, view culture, and prioritize economic factors when making everyday decisions have affected higher education and how leaders respond to the shifting national and international environment. For example, the U.S. is no longer an industrial nation but a country that is part of the Age of Knowledge, and higher education institutions are the “gatekeepers for the knowledge, creativity, and invention” that secures the U.S.’s economic status in this age (Lawrence, 2006, p. 3). As of late, social networking sites have allowed individuals to connect directly with people from all parts of the world, which has forever changed how we interact with one another (Lawrence, 2006). The terrorist attacks on the Twin Towers in 2001 have influenced America’s relationship with the rest of the world; for that reason, Budig (2002) suggests college presidents must now emphasize the importance of civility and tolerance as core values of the academy. Finally, in the last two years, America has moved into a deep recession, and the current financial aid system has the potential to be radically adjusted (Lederman, 2009). Because the United States is changing at a rapid pace and higher education institutions have “far-reaching consequences” (p. 3) for society, considering what type of leadership higher education institutions need during the turbulent twenty-first century is paramount (Lawrence, 2006; Ropers-Huilman, 2003).

Some researchers argue that women bring a unique understanding to leadership and a different approach to the twenty-first century college presidency role (Bornstein, 2008; Fine, 2007; Nidiffer, 2001). Phillips and Ummersen (2003) emphasize that women presidents have
“special,” “different,” and “unexpected qualities” to “offer...her institution, and to her world” (p. 105). Gaining a greater understanding of how this distinct approach to leadership develops will be advantageous for higher education in the twenty-first century, as this may make it possible for additional women to become higher education administrators.

Komives et al. (2005) suggests that leadership “develops over time” (p. 593) and little is known about how it expands. For women, leadership skills and attributes may develop throughout their lifetime and as a result of a myriad of experiences (Madsen, 2007). Yet, because women’s colleges are cited for cultivating women’s leadership (Hardwick Day, 2008; Kinzie et al., 2007), it is important to explore how leadership capacities have been fostered there (Kim, 2002; Kinzie et al., 2007; Langdon, 2001; McCandless, 1999; Whitt, 1993; www.womenscolleges.org). The Hardwick Day (2008) research found that when comparing women’s college alumnae to graduates of flagship public universities and liberal arts institutions, during the majority of the last four decades, women’s college students held more leadership positions and learned more about being a leader, working as a team, and making effective decisions than their co-educational counterparts. The researchers also report that women’s college students gave more presentations in class and were more involved in campus media and student government. Also, women’s colleges graduates value having the authority to make decisions and being in a leadership role to provide direction to others (Hardwick Day, 2008).

Although women’s colleges are small in number, they have educated many of our women leaders. For example, Mary Lyon, founder of Mount Holyoke College, viewed a women’s college graduate as a “pathfinder, a pioneer, and a contributor to society” (Rice &
Hemmings, 1988, p. 557). However, Riordan (1994) described the evidence for single-sex higher education as inconclusive because researchers have not accounted for the types of students who may attend women’s colleges. Oates and Williamson (as cited in Rice and Hemmings, 1988) stated college admissions selectivity and prior academic achievement are more important factors than the college environment for predicting career achievement. Some would argue that the women who attended these institutions during the 1960s and 1970s were already high achievers when they came to women’s colleges (Riordan, 1994). The environment and relationships at a women’s college may not have influenced the leadership development of these women because they may have come into these colleges predisposed to being a leader.

Interestingly, as women have gained more access to higher education, the number of women’s colleges has decreased gradually, while the number of women attending college has grown significantly (Gender Equity in Higher Education, 2006; Harwarth, Maline, & DeBra, 1997; www.womenscolleges.org). Now, both women’s colleges and co-educational institutions have the responsibility of preparing women to be leaders in the world.

Nevertheless, the benefits of women’s colleges should not be disregarded. Wolf-Wendel (2003) stated that, although there is skepticism surrounding the effects of attending a women’s college, when the “totality” of the women’s college literature is considered, the positive effects of women’s colleges on graduates are seen (p. 40). To compensate for the doubt, however, it is critical to understand how women’s colleges positively affect women. Exploring how the relationships and experiences at a women’s college fosters leadership will
afford more women the opportunity to understand and then offer their unique, much-needed approach to leadership for the benefit of higher education and society.

**Problem**

Because college presidents direct and “mold the character” of the institutions they lead, the most qualified presidents must be at the helm (Shapiro, 1998, p. 66). Notably, women presidents may have a more relational approach to leadership that is advantageous during the ever-changing, twenty-first century (Bornstein, 2008; Morrill, 2007). Yet, there is scant research on how women administrators develop leadership for their positions in higher education. Madsen (2007a) states that the “research on high-level women leaders in higher education is limited,” and there are not qualitative studies that address the leadership development of these women leaders (p. 116).

No studies illuminate how the undergraduate collegiate experience impacts and shapes a higher education leader’s leadership development. Research suggests that women develop as leaders while at women’s colleges, but it is not understood how the skills, attitudes, and values associated with women’s leadership develop there (Kim, 2002; Kinzie et al., 2007; Langdon, 2001; McCandless, 1999; Whitt, 1993; www.womenscolleges.org). For example, even though Kinzie et al. (2007) state that women’s colleges foster an environment “that fuels women’s understanding of self and others” and describe that self-knowledge and working successfully on a team are skills associated with successful careers and leadership, they do not describe how this type of leadership develops (p. 160). Also, a study conducted by the Women’s College Coalition claims that women who attend women’s colleges develop
as leaders, but the study does not explain the how and why of this phenomenon (Hardwick Day, 2008).

Researchers argue that women are not increasingly moving into the college presidency role because of “pipeline inadequacies, barriers to the legitimacy of women presidents, and leading in a turbulent external environment” (Bornstein, 2008, p. 163; Madsen, 2007a). To substantiate the Bornstein (2008) claim, the American Council on Education [ACE] 2007 researchers found that since the 1990s there has only been a small increase in the number of women assuming the college presidency role and equality has not yet been reached (ACE, 2007; Bornstein, 2008; Pope, 2009).

Moreover, women have made progress in various fields, but progress is slow and limited because of “gendered organizational structures, perspectives, and expectations” (Bornstein, 2008, p. 163; Madden, 2002). Dowdall (2007) and Phillips and Ummersen (2003) put forward that women higher education leaders must present themselves better than, work harder than, and be smarter than their male counterparts to compete for the same roles. These observations illustrate that higher education is a male-dominated culture and structure that is challenging for women to lead in, navigate, and succeed in.

In summary, it is unclear whether women will reach equality with men and be prepared for senior leadership roles. Because of this, we need to listen carefully to the stories of women administrators so that we can know what experiences and relationships contributed to their leadership development.
Purpose

The purpose of this narrative study was to understand the leadership development experiences of women administrators who attended a women’s college. Because the number of women’s colleges has decreased to 53 and women’s colleges foster leadership, it is important to hear the leadership development stories of the increasingly small population of women leaders who graduated from women’s colleges (Kim, 2002; Kinzie et al., 2007; Langdon, 2001; McCandless, 1999; Whitt, 1993; www.womenscolleges.org). By using the narrative approach, women administrators had the opportunity to construct meaning and share their feelings, which ultimately “elicit[ed] voice” from these graduates (www.womenscolleges.org; Marshall & Rossman, 2006). The phenomenon is generally defined as understanding the women’s college experience of college administrators through the lens of the Komives et al. (2005) Leadership Identity Development model (LID). College administrators were asked to share their stories regarding their leadership development at a women’s institution.

To contribute to the conversation surrounding the relevance of women’s colleges, this study sought to understand the benefit of women’s institutions by exploring the leadership identity development process of alumnae of women’s colleges, focusing on the personal experiences of women administrators who attended a women’s college.

This study aimed to answer the following questions:

1) How did women administrators live and experience leadership while attending a women’s college?
2) How did women administrators develop their leadership identity while attending a women’s college?

**Conceptual Framework**

In order to understand how women develop leadership, I used the Leadership Identity Development model [LID] to frame my study (Komives et al., 2005). Prior to the development of the LID model, Komives, Lucas, and McMahon (2007) proposed the Relational Leadership Model, which defines leadership as people working together to accomplish or make a difference for the common good. The LID model of leadership development is based upon the assumption that those with a leadership identity exhibit behaviors that are inclusive, ethical, purposeful, and empowering of others (Komives et al., 2007).

Within the Leadership Identity Development model, Komives et al. (2005) determined that various categories influence the development of a leadership identity. The researchers found that as people progress in developing a leadership identity, their view of leadership changes from understanding leadership as a position in an organization to seeing leadership as a process of implementing change, which does not require holding a position in an organization. They discovered that part of developing a leadership identity is developing self, which includes deepening self-awareness, building self-confidence, establishing efficacy when working with groups, applying new skills, and expanding motivation for leadership roles. How people engage in a group and learn from being an ongoing member influences leadership identity. Developmental influences, including adults, peer influences, meaningful involvement, and reflective learning, foster leadership identity development as well. Lastly,
the researchers put forward that as people develop leadership, how they relate to others changes. For example, as people develop and interact with a group, they become less dependent and more interdependent on others.

The grounded theory that emerged from the Komives et al. (2005) interviews also suggests that there are six stages in developing a Leadership Identity:

1. Awareness: recognition that leaders exist
2. Exploration/Engagement: intentional engagement in group or organization activities that involves assuming responsibilities in the group
3. Leader Identified: realization that groups are comprised of leaders and followers and holding the belief that the leader is a defined position in the group
4. Leadership Differentiated: acknowledgement that anyone can be a leader and do leadership; awareness that leadership is a process between and among people (The purpose of a person holding a leadership position shifts from being responsible for the outcomes of the group to facilitating and shaping the group culture.)
5. Generativity: commitment to a larger purpose that includes mentoring and enhancing others’ leadership capacity
6. Integration/Synthesis: recognition that leadership is an element of one’s identity and is a daily process; confidence to work effectively with other people in diverse contexts; acknowledgement that a person can be a leader even if not in an official leadership role.

Using the LID model as a conceptual framework allowed for an in-depth understanding of how women’s leadership develops, as the model focuses on the
experiences, attitudes, and interactions that contribute to developing leadership capacities. Notably, the LID model assumes that those with a developed leadership identity embrace relational leadership, and researchers argue that women presidents have a more relational approach to leadership (Bornstein, 2008; Fine, 2007; Nidiffer, 2001). Therefore, this framework was ideal for this study because both the framework and assumptions about women’s leadership coalesce in assuming that leadership is a relational process.

Methodology and Rationale

The focal point of this dissertation study was to gain a deeper understanding of how women leaders who attended women’s colleges developed leadership. I chose to employ the qualitative method, specifically the narrative approach. Through listening to the participants and then responding to how they make meaning of their past experiences, I learned more about their individual stories, which in turn provided insight into how the women’s college environment and the relationships formed during their undergraduate experience cultivated leadership development (Marshall & Rossman, 2006; Weick, 1995).

Merriam (2002) suggests that in order to understand qualitative research, one must recognize that meaning is socially constructed by “individuals in interaction with their world” (p. 3). Further, she notes that qualitative researchers are looking to understand these meanings in particular contexts and time periods. According to Creswell (2007), qualitative research is most appropriate when a problem or issue in a particular setting or context needs to be explored. He explains that qualitative research empowers participants to share their stories and gives opportunity for their voices to be heard.
Qualitative methods align with my purpose of understanding the leadership development of administrators who attended women’s colleges, and the quantitative approach would not yield the rich data that would lead to a greater understanding of this experience. Further, because qualitative methodology allows for understanding the leadership process in a given time and context, I was able to ask questions and learn about how these women developed as leaders in a particular context (women’s colleges) and during a specific time (while undergraduates).

The qualitative research design fits with my research purpose because I looked to understand college administrators’ experiences, and the best person to tell about a personal leadership experience is the person who lived the experience. The qualitative method and narrative approach allowed for participants in the study to share their stories and give voice to their personal experience. As Creswell (2007) notes, narrative study is fitting when the intent of the study is to “capture detailed stories or life experiences” of one life or of a small number of people (p. 55). As described by Savin-Baden and Van Niekerk (2007), narrative inquiry uses stories as data, and these stories are collected as a means to understand the experience as it is lived and told.

**Significance of the Study**

Although some studies present information about the educational background of and degrees types held by college administrators, no studies describe how the undergraduate experience shapes a college administrator’s leadership development process. To date, no studies focus solely on the leadership development of women administrators who attended women’s colleges. The women administrator and women’s college literature aids in
understanding women’s leadership, but to have a more complete understanding of the leadership development process of college administrators who attended women’s colleges, stories from their undergraduate experience at a women’s college were explored. This narrative study of understanding how women administrators developed leadership while attending a women’s college has the potential to influence higher education practice, the structure of higher education institutions, professional development programs, leadership programs and curricula, and leadership theory.

My study explored aspects of women’s leadership, which will aid in improving how higher education leaders lead. Morrill (2007) suggests that by studying the best literature on leadership, colleges and universities will practice leadership better. A greater understanding of how women develop and understand leadership will give women the opportunity to practice leadership by embracing their relational, collaborative, and participatory leadership style that is fitting for academic settings (Bensimon, 1991; Wright, 2008). Women’s approach to leadership is needed in the turbulent twenty-first century (Bornstein, 2008; Fine, 2007; Nidiffer, 2001) and learning more about how women develop this type of leadership will ultimately positively affect higher education institutions because learning more about leadership will assist institutions in embracing the relational leadership approach.

The stories I presented in this study will serve as models for aspiring leaders to emulate. For example, based on the findings of this study, women could seek out similar experiences and relationships to assist them as they develop as leaders. Because there are far fewer women in college president roles and their development of leadership is not fully understood, it is impossible for a substantial number of women to prepare to be presidents
because they do not know how to prepare for and develop the necessary leadership capacities for this role.

Some researchers argue that higher education institutions are hierarchal and challenging for women to navigate and achieve success. For example, women presidents are not equal with their male counterparts and how they develop as leaders is not well understood (ACE, 2007; Bornstein, 2008; Madsen, 2007a, 2007b; Pope, 2009). Further, Wright (2008) suggests that African American women are underrepresented in leadership positions in higher education because of the “historical and contemporary system of hegemony within higher education” (p. 116). Women only assume 23 percent of college presidency roles (ACE, 2007; Pope, 2009), suggesting continued gender inequalities. An increased understanding of how women develop leadership may pave the way for more women to have opportunities for crucial career experiences, which would increase their readiness to assume college leadership roles. A rich and in-depth depiction of how women administrators developed leadership will inform how to structure higher education institutions so that women have more opportunities to become college administrators in the future.

With a greater understanding of how women’s leadership development occurs, training sessions, professional development conferences, and staff development activities could be created and implemented to strengthen women leaders. In other words, if we know how women develop leadership, we can design programs and learning outcomes to assist women in learning how to become leaders.
Even though there are not as many women’s colleges as there were in the 1960s, still these institutions play an important role in higher education (Harwarth, Maline, & DeBra, 1997). Brown (2009) describes that women’s institutions are still relevant. Miller-Bernal (2000) states that women’s colleges provide opportunities for women to develop their leadership skills, and my study will shed light on how curricular and co-curricular experiences within the women’s college context cultivate women’s leadership. Harper (2006) notes, a great deal of research has found that graduates of women’s colleges are different than graduates from co-educational institutions, but she describes that it is time for women’s colleges and co-educational institutions to focus on how women’s colleges are different (Harper, 2006). She suggests that future research should try to understand how women’s colleges benefit students and how this knowledge can be applied to higher education. She goes so far as to recommend that co-educational institutions should learn from and take advantage of the uniqueness of women’s colleges.

My study is of value to faculty, staff, and administrators at women’s colleges and co-educational institutions, as the findings and conclusions presented in this study have the potential to inform programs and curricula at these institutions. Professors at women’s colleges and co-educational institutions should consider the information presented in this study to guide their efforts to foster women’s leadership development. Wolf-Wendel (2003) notes that by learning more about the characteristics and experiences of successful graduates who attended women’s institutions, the worth of the experience will be illuminated, and in so doing, co-educational institutions can learn from these colleges to create better programs, environments, and learning initiatives for women.
Lastly, this research extended the understanding of the LID model (Komives et al., 2005). As I coded and sought to interpret the data collected, the stages and categories of the LID model were reflected. Because theories are developed and expanded incrementally, this research could broaden the scope of the LID model beyond understanding how college students develop leadership to also understanding how the environment of an institution plays a role in one’s leadership development and how experiences in adulthood can influence leadership development (Marshall & Rossman, 2006).

**Personal Biography**

Marshall and Rossman (2006) explain that “the researcher is the instrument” and, consequently, must determine how she will situate herself in the research (p. 72). In this section, I explain my understanding of leadership, how it has evolved over time, and how it is informed by personal experiences, stories of others’ experiences, literature, and reflection. Next, I explain how my work at a women’s college influences how I relate to this research.

**Understanding leadership.** At this point in my story, I understand leadership as something that changes and evolves over time. Further, although I have reviewed various leadership theories and concepts for classes, completed an internship in my masters program, and written on the topic of leadership development, there are some areas of leadership that I am still working to understand. For example, the social change model of leadership and relational leadership model include positively affecting others as a component of leadership. Yet, other definitions of leadership describe that leadership is simply having followers. It is clear that there are various definitions of leadership and within most of these approaches there is not a model for understanding how leadership develops. This research topic intrigues
me because other than the LID model for this research, I have not studied or seen other models that explain how relational leadership develops.

As Komives et al. (2005) discusses, the Relational Leadership Model and the Leadership Identity Development Model are grounded in the idea that anyone can be a leader. I, too, think this is true, and therefore have chosen the LID model as my conceptual framework. The belief that anyone can cultivate their leadership abilities affects how I approach this study. When interviewing the women, I will assume that the women administrators were not born with certain leadership capacities. Rather, I believe that they are on a journey of leadership development that has been influenced by various experiences, situations, and people along the way. I have come to this conclusion by reviewing various leadership theories and concepts, by observing individuals in leadership roles, and by experiencing leadership roles.

**Undergraduate leadership development.** The concept of leadership has interested me since my undergraduate career. As an undergraduate student, I was involved in student government, residence life, and a variety of campus organizations. When reflecting upon my personal leadership journey during the collegiate years, I become conscious of the role that key collegiate experiences as well as relationships and interactions with faculty and staff played in developing my leadership capabilities. For example, as an undergraduate I experienced leadership by serving as student government president and resident assistant. I also had several key mentors and advisors who spurred my leadership growth. Realizing that undergraduate experiences and relationships enhanced my leadership capabilities during
college causes me to question what types of experiences and relationships might help others develop leadership. I come to this research with the thought that being involved in co-curricular activities does affect one’s leadership development. Instrumental student government advisors encouraged me to develop and practice certain leadership skills. Because I believe certain experiences and mentoring relationships fostered my leadership development while in college, I am curious to understand how others expand their leadership potential.

**Leadership concepts in academia and work life.** A cornerstone of my life story has been applying the theory that I learn in an academic setting to my work life. This is one factor that has led me to this study. For example, in my master’s and doctoral program, I have taken classes surrounding the topics of leadership. After learning certain concepts, I used these theories as frames of references when working with others in the work environment. For example, in my master’s program, I learned about the Kouzes and Posner (2002) model of leadership in which leaders model the way, inspire a shared vision, challenge the process, enable others to act, and encourage the heart. After reading about these principles and discussing them in class, I used these same principles to guide how I led my area. For example, I held a retreat at the beginning of the semester so that collectively we could determine the direction of the semester. Also, I tried to encourage the heart of those I worked with by truly listening to them and encouraging them to pursue what they were passionate about. When advising the student government executive council, I tried to ask the right questions and point them in the best direction, rather than doing their projects for them. These examples illustrate how connecting theory to the practical is an ongoing habit for me.
Women’s College experience. The dissertation project is another example of how I enjoy connecting research and literature to my work life. For instance, I currently serve at a women’s college and am reading literature that discusses what makes women’s colleges unique and valuable, and through the literature review process, I have learned more about the history and value of women’s colleges. I share this new knowledge with the colleagues and students with whom I work.

Also, because I work at a women’s college, I have a greater understanding of the women’s college culture. On a daily basis, I observe and take part in the culture of a women’s college. I believe that I am an appropriate researcher for this topic because I may have a better sense of the culture of the women’s college given that I have worked at a women’s college for over four years. Because I have had prolonged engagement at a women’s college and an understanding of the context, my study may be more credible and the participants may be more likely to share their stories with me.

Conclusion. With the amalgamation of past academic and work experiences and co-curricular involvement, I am very interested in developing college students as leaders, and as of late, because of my experience of working at a women’s college, I desire to have a deeper understanding of how college women at women’s institutions develop leadership. In a sense, my prior academic and work experiences have culminated in this research project as now I am using multiple aspects of my past and present to frame my understanding of how women develop leadership.
Organization of Study

Through the lens of the Leadership Identity Development model, I sought to understand how college administrators who attended women’s colleges developed a leadership identity. In this chapter, I introduced the topic, discussed why it is necessary to better understand these women’s stories, and explained the conceptual framework that guided this work.

In the following chapter, I will present and discuss literature that relates to the leadership development of college administrators and the conditions and outcomes of women’s colleges. The second chapter will also describe the conceptual framework that informs my understanding of the leadership development process.

In chapter three, I will explain why narrative inquiry was the most appropriate approach for my study, make clear how I chose the participants for my study, and outline how I collected and analyzed the data. I collected data through interviews and email conversations.

Chapter four will be dedicated to presenting the findings of my research. I will construct individual narratives for each participant that will be organized in the following ways: biographical information, choice of major, environment, influential relationships, and career path. In the final section of chapter four, I will create an aggregate narrative that uses the experiences and relationships of the individual participants to illustrate the leadership identity development process at a women’s college.

In chapter five, I discuss the findings of the study, describe how my research is similar to and extends literature, and make suggestions for future research.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

The purpose of this narrative study was to understand college administrators’ lived experiences during their undergraduate careers at women’s colleges. Each administrator’s story illuminated how she developed as a leader while attending a women’s college. This review will show that there are fundamental intersections in the literature on the leadership development process of women’s administrators, the leadership development at women’s colleges, and the LID model. This study aimed to answer the following questions: How did women administrators live and experience leadership while attending a women’s college? How did women administrators develop their leadership identity while attending a women’s college?

In order to understand how women administrators developed as leaders while attending a women’s college, three critical areas of literature were reviewed: the leadership development process of college administrators, leadership development at women’s colleges, and the LID model. The primary goal of this literature review is to illustrate that there is a nexus among the concepts found in the bodies of literature on women administrators, women’s colleges, and the LID model.

In this chapter, I will describe studies that examine how women administrators develop leadership and demonstrate that little is known about the collegiate experiences of women administrators. Next, I will offer a brief overview of women’s colleges and their history. Then, I will describe past studies of women’s colleges and explain how the findings illustrate the importance of leadership yet do not describe how leadership development occurs in these environments. In the third section, I will describe the Leadership Identity
Development model developed by Komives, Longerbeam, Mainella, Osteen, and Owen (2005).

**Understanding Women Administrators**

The sixth report of American College Presidents by the American Council on Education (2007) noted that the number of women presidents more than doubled from 1986 to 2006; however, it is concerning that the rate of change slowed during the 1990s. In addition, women were not represented equally at all types of institutions. For example, women were most likely to lead at community colleges, followed by baccalaureate colleges and master’s colleges and universities. Women only led 13 percent of doctorate-granting institutions in 2006, which is significant when compared with the fact that in the same year women led 34 percent of public baccalaureate colleges. Further, ACE researchers note that other than at a small number of public baccalaureate, special focus institutions, and private associate colleges, the number of women assuming the presidency has slowed at all institutions since 2001 (ACE, 2007).

In addition to comparing the number of men and women presidents, it is also relevant to understand how women presidents of today compare with current men presidents and how women have progressed since the 1986 study. For example, the ACE study found that women presidents did not remain in office for as long of a term as men (ACE, 2007). Women presidents in 2006 were more likely than the women in 1986 to have previously served as a president or chief academic affairs officer. In addition, women were more likely than males to have earned a doctorate (ACE, 2007). Marital status and child-rearing continue to be the prominent differences between men and women presidents (ACE, 2007). In 2006, 89 percent
of male presidents were married and only 63 percent of female presidents were married (ACE, 2007). Further, more women in 2006 reported that they were divorced, separated, or widowed. Even though women were 68 percent less likely than males to have children, more women stopped working to care for children or a spouse than their male counterparts (ACE, 2007).

Twenty-one percent of women’s college presidents were men (ACE, 2007). Only 60 percent of women’s colleges presidents (women or men) were married (ACE, 2007). Yet because 80 percent of women’s college presidents were women, 25 percent of women’s college presidents had never been married. This is much higher than presidents on the whole (ACE, 2007). Further, the academic background of women presidents was different from the average, as women’s college presidents were more likely to have earned a doctoral degree than all other college presidents (ACE, 2007).

Understanding How Women Administrators Develop Leadership

Astin and Leland (1991) cite that “leaders emerge from the critical interplay of personal values and commitments, special circumstances or historical influences, and personal events that motivate and mobilize people’s actions” (As cited in Madsen, 2007, p. 99). When considering the literature that informs how women prepare for higher education administrative roles, it is clear that multiple situations, environments, and people affect how they develop as leaders. In this section, I review the categories of early influences, mentoring, educational background, and career to emphasize that the themes found in this body of literature are related to some of the findings found in the women’s college literature and conceptual framework.
Early Influences. Early relationships made a difference in the leadership development of college presidents. In her study, Madsen (2007a) discusses the childhoods of women college presidents in relation to their leadership development. She interviewed 10 women and found that as children, all of the women loved learning and encountered a variety of individuals and activities that influenced their leadership development. Specifically, aunts, grandmothers, and teachers were influential as mentors. Also, the women studied did not necessarily hold leadership positions while children yet they commented that they were self-confident children. Although this study is not focused on the leadership development of women’s college graduates, it does illustrate that early influences are an important part of leadership development.

Several studies describe how family relationships influenced the leadership development of college administrators. Wright (2008) studied African American college and university presidents. She found that family was an important aspect of African American women developing a positive self-image. Vanhook-Morrissey (2003) also studied college presidents and found that a “respect for hard work” developed as a result of being from a working class family (p. 76). Toman (2008) too studied the childhood and adolescent experiences of women presidents. All of the participants’ in her study stated that their families expected them to pursue higher education. Some participants cited parents or grandmothers as the source of their ambition. Waring (2003) also found that parental support helped women presidents develop into leaders, and two participants in her study mentioned that they received significant support from a grandmother and an aunt. Brown and Cubillo (2003) considered women educational administrators from nine different countries.
interviewing the administrators, the researchers found that paternal and peer support was critical. The women in this study noted that their parents and particularly their fathers were instrumental in their educational and career decisions. The women stated that their families were very supportive of their educational development.

Waring (2003) noted that research on women presidents has “ignored how the personal histories...may influence their conceptions of leadership” (p. 42). These studies are noteworthy because in addition to illustrating these women’s understandings of leadership, the findings emphasize how important family members are in encouraging women to pursue a career in educational leadership, while highlighting the important role of relationships in developing women’s leadership.

Wootton (2006) studied women administrators. She interviewed six higher education leaders and discovered that the participants in her study had the tendency to be leaders early in their life. She described that one participant had her first leadership experience when she was the president of her sorority during college and other participants were asked by administrators to pursue upper level administrative positions early in their career.

Mentoring. In this section I describe the role that mentoring plays in cultivating women administrators’ leadership development. According to Toman (2008), all five women in her study pursued administrative roles because of encouragement from others. These conclusions coincide with other findings; the research done by Madsen (2007a) found that mentoring played a very important role in the leadership development of college presidents.

Brown (2005) surveyed 91 female presidents of independent colleges about mentoring relationships and the role these relationships played in their career advancement.
The results of the questionnaire showed that 20.9 percent of the respondents were encouraged by their mentor to seek the college presidency role. Over 72 percent of the participants said they participated in some type of professional development program that improved their administrative skills. She found that most presidents had a primary mentor who assisted them. Also, nearly two thirds of the women were primarily mentored by men. Brown (2005) suggested that the results of this study illustrate the importance of mentoring and because these presidents experienced the positive impacts of mentoring, they should seek to mentor future presidents, both men and women.

Steinke (2006) described that the participants’ mentors were especially important during undergraduate and graduate school. She stated that mentors were crucial in “recognizing talents and encouraging the cultivation of these gifts” (p. 69). Further, mentors encouraged the women to achieve tasks that they thought they could not do, modeled leadership, and suggested certain skill sets for the women to learn. This finding is consistent with the results of the Krause (2009) study. She found that the mentors to the participants in her study “saw something in these women that they did not see in themselves” (p. 137). In addition, Vanhook-Morrissey (2003) found that mentors and role models influenced their career decisions, pursuit of further degrees, and advancement in community colleges. Mentors encouraged professional development, provided opportunities for career development, and assisted the women in learning and developing self-confidence. Dissimilar to these studies, Crawford and Smith (2005) interviewed seven African-American administrators and found that their participants were not mentored and “nurtured” (p. 65).
The researchers described that these women believed that they were not advancing in their careers because there were no mentors to support, encourage, and praise their good works.

**Educational Background.** Several studies describe the undergraduate careers of college administrators, but no studies offer in depth descriptions for how the undergraduate years shaped administrators’ leadership development. Waring (2003) found that presidents of liberal arts colleges had traditional liberal arts degrees and half of the presidents she studied from community colleges had professional degrees (e.g., a nursing degree) at the undergraduate level. In addition, ten of the women had doctorates in education, which is a higher concentration than the majority of college presidents. Toman (2008) noted that there is an increasing amount of literature on the career paths of women presidents, but there is little research that discusses the childhood and adolescence of these women. She mentioned that four of the participants in her study cited college as a time of growth and development, and three of her participants attended women’s colleges.

Vanhook-Morrissey (2003) found that the women presidents valued formal and informal education. All of the women in her study pursued their doctoral degrees while working full time at a community college. Also, the women presidents noted that because of additional higher education, they gained more knowledge and self-confidence. Specifically, the women stated that the doctorate prepared them to be a community college president. Informal learning experiences allowed these women to benefit from supportive relationships and to develop networks with community college leaders. Vanhook-Morrissey (2003) noted that informal learning experiences aided these women in career development and relationship building. In Steinke’s (2006) study, she discovered that several of her participants described
the importance of higher education in preparing them for the college presidency role. Several participants noted that postsecondary education began their careers in higher education and “opened doorways to critical experiences that eventually directed them towards the presidency” (Steinke, 2006, p. 70-71). One participant noted that her undergraduate years were very impactful because she was in the first class of women to be granted admission to her university. She noted that this experience forever changed her and prepared her for being the minority as a woman faculty and administrator. Another participant noted how important it was to pursue a doctorate. This participant realized that she would not be able to pursue other higher education administration positions unless she held a doctorate (Steinke, 2006). All but one of the women in Madsen’s (2007b) study had a doctorate. Krause (2009) examined the career trajectories of presidents and chief academic officers. Of the 10 women who participated in her study, eight had their Ed.D. or Ph.D. Although these studies do not detail how the women’s collegiate experience affected their career path, they do illuminate the types of degrees women presidents have (Madsen, 2007b).

**Career Paths and Self-confidence.** Several studies suggest that there is not a clear career path for women presidents. Madsen, (2007b) focused on career paths of 10 women presidents. She found that the women she interviewed had a non-linear career path and that all did not seek out the presidency. She found that they worked hard in current jobs and then were promoted. Several women admitted to not thinking of the presidency as a possible job until they were a dean or vice president. Her results suggest that there are various paths that can lead to top college and university positions. Steinke (2006) studied eight women presidents who were the first women to serve as presidents on their campus. She identified
the factors that led to these women pursuing the college presidency role. She found the women in her study did not follow a prescribed path to the presidency. In fact, one of her participants noted that she wanted to show other women that there was not one set path to the presidency. She also found that many of the participants in her study assumed this role because they desired to serve and help others.

Vanhook-Morrissey’s (2003) study found two factors that positively influenced self-confidence: mentors and increased job responsibility. The women in her study described that they did not want to always be a college president. Rather, as the women performed well with additional job responsibilities, their self-confidence and self efficacy increased. Then, as their confidence increased, they set higher career goals, including the college presidency. In addition, according to the researcher’s assessment, five of the women interviewed displayed “self-confidence” and “self-esteem” (p. 287).

These studies are significant because the findings show that even though there is not a precise career path for women presidents and senior administrators to follow; developing self-confidence prepares women to lead.

**History of Women’s Colleges**

Although there is a long and rich history of women’s education in America, for the purpose of this research, I will primarily seek to portray the story of women’s colleges during the 1960s and 1970s, the time period in which many current women presidents and administrators were attending college. To give background information on the story of women’s colleges, I will briefly summarize the beginnings of women’s colleges. Then, to gain a clearer understanding of the women’s college environment during the 1960s and
1970s, I will describe higher education and the state of women’s colleges during this time period.

According to Lucas (1994), during the first half of the nineteenth century, women’s education was not valued because educating women risked them becoming educated beyond their domestic station in life. Regardless of this bleak outlook, in the 1830s a small number of women academies opened, mostly in the East, including Troy Female Seminary and Mount Holyoke Seminary; however, of the women’s institutions that were founded, it is uncertain whether they were truly post-secondary establishments (Nidiffer, 2001). After some women’s colleges were created, Oberlin opened its doors to women in 1840 and allowed men and women to learn together (Lucas, 1994; Nidiffer, 2000). Despite some institutions transitioning to co-educational learning environments, Miller-Bernal (2000) postulates that if it were not for women’s colleges, women would not have been educated in the nineteenth century.

After World War II, the face of higher education changed and because of veterans returning to America and the “baby boom,” more students entered college, which affected the educational paths of women (Harwarth, Maline, & DeBra, 1997). Also, during the middle part of the twentieth century, the majority of U.S. students were enrolled at universities. Yet, this number was followed closely by smaller, residential liberal arts institutions, including women’s colleges. In the 1960s and 1970s, the number of public institutions increased, some male-only institutions opened their doors to females, and women’s colleges either merged with male or co-educational institutions, closed their doors, or became co-educational institutions themselves (Harwarth, Maline, & DeBra, 1997). Between 1963 and 1993, smaller
colleges experienced the smallest amount of enrollment growth; many women’s colleges suffered during this time. (Harwarth, Maline, & DeBra, 1997; Tidball et al., 1999).

The role of women’s education evolved from the end of World War II until 1960; graduates of women’s institutions received a liberal arts education and practical training with some of these women pursuing careers and others practicing “the more common role of homemaker” (Harwarth, Maline, & DeBra, 1997, p. 14). Further, during the 1960s and 1970s, women’s colleges exceeded the goal of their founders, providing women access to higher education, and were thereby able to shift the conversation to women’s participation in higher education overall (Harwarth, Maline, & DeBra, 1997). Tidball et al. (1999) concurs with Harwarth et al. (1997) by raising the question, “[what is the] quality of that access”? (p. 29).

Over time, the number of women’s colleges has gradually decreased. In 1960, there were 200 women’s colleges. By 1993, this number dropped to 83 (Harwarth, Maline, & DeBra, 1997). In 1963, women’s colleges enrolled 17 percent of the small college population, and in 1993, they only enrolled 6 percent of this population. This number has continued to decrease, and as of 2009, there are only 53 women’s colleges in the United States (www.womenscolleges.org).

In this section, I described the beginnings of women’s colleges, elaborated on how the purposes of women’s colleges changed over time, and explained how the number of women’s colleges has progressively decreased. In the next section, I will describe the environment, relationships, and outcomes of a women’s college education.
Leadership Development at Women’s Colleges

The writers of the women’s college literature assert that women’s colleges prepare women to be leaders; however, even though this notion is cited throughout this small yet significant body of literature, additional areas need to be further understood. In this section, the literature is classified into the following sections: environment, relationships, and outcomes. The importance of environmental factors and relationships is cited throughout the women’s college literature as a means to strengthening a woman’s leadership capacities. Next, I focus on the outcomes of a women’s college education that include self-confidence, achievement, and leadership. I selected the subcategories of environment, relationships and outcomes because aspects of these categories are consistent with the findings in the women president literature and categories of the LID model. Organizing the literature in this manner illustrates that there is a nexus among the three realms of literature.

Environment. Kinzie, Thomas, Palmer, Umbach, and Kuh (2007) used data from the National Survey of Student Engagement to determine if the environment at women’s colleges is more effective for learning than that of a co-educational institution. The results of their study indicated that women’s colleges foster an environment “that fuels women’s understanding of self and others” (p. 160). For example, women at women’s colleges reported that the women’s college experience encouraged them to interact with others who were different than them and gave them opportunities to have dialogs with people from diverse backgrounds and ethnicities. The results of the Duncan et al. (2002) study also support the notion that the environment at women’s colleges is beneficial to women. Duncan et al. (2002) researched and compared the effects of attending Smith, an all-women’s college,
and attending Radcliffe College, a coeducational learning environment at Harvard, during the 1960s. They compared these institutions to see if the classroom environment had long-term effects on the graduates. The researchers asked the participants to complete a questionnaire about their college experience, families, careers, and more. The researchers found that Smith graduates were more likely to mention that the environment was supportive.

In 2002, Kim compared women’s colleges to co-educational institutions. She found that women who attended women’s colleges were more likely to be involved in campus demonstrations, campus work, diversity awareness programs, and honors programs. Her findings are important because at co-educational institutions males may be more dominant and women students would not be able to participate in these types of leadership activities. She found that women’s institutions are committed to developing women and “women’s feeling of power in a women-majority environment” (p. 469). In addition, Kim (2001) employed a quantitative method using data from two national college student surveys to find that the student and faculty climate at women’s colleges is more “socially active, altruistic, and community oriented” (p. 308). Moreover, Tidball et al. (1999) suggest that women’s institutions continue to offer residential, liberal arts curriculum that “take women seriously” (p. 29). This type of learning environment in turn affords women’s colleges the opportunity to “provide the nation with more women leaders…a higher proportion of achieving women than…co-educational counterparts” (p. 29). In addition to the overall environment of women’s colleges, the environment at women’s colleges fosters leadership development by providing opportunities for women students to experience leadership in various leadership roles.
Kim (2002) noted that although the types of leadership activities that the women’s college students participate in may not be that different than their peers at co-educational institutions, the “totality” (p. 469) of their involvement could make a significant difference in their intellectual development during and after college. Wolf-Wendel (2000) identified that colleges providing opportunities for leadership influenced the success of women students. The institutions she studied provided many opportunities for undergraduate students to be involved in co-curricular activities, which helped the women “develop strong leadership skills, kept them active in their institutions, and generally facilitated their overall success” (p. 334). Further, some of the institutions studied noted that women students were “obligated” to hold all of the leadership positions because no men were on campus to fill these positions (p. 335). Miller-Bernal (2000) researched women students’ experiences at four institutions; a women’s college, a coordinate college, a long-time co-educational institution, and recently converted co-educational institution, and she found that women at women’s colleges benefit through the leadership opportunities available at women’s colleges. In conclusion, Rice and Hemmings (1988) stated that additional study must be done to understand the “experience” (p. 557-558) of attending a women’s college, and future research must deal with how this environment affects women’s achievement.

**Relationships.** Consistent with Rice and Hemmings (1988), Wolf-Wendel (2000) found that providing positive role models is a key aspect of student success for women students. She discovered that all five institutions she studied stated the importance of alumnae, students, administrators, faculty, and others serving as role models (Wolf-Wendel, 2000). She explains the importance of role models in helping students believe that, “I can do
that, too” (p. 330). Further, the respondents stated that it was important to have women in positions of power at the institution.

Bank and Yelon (2002) longitudinally studied students who attended Central Women’s College. The researchers found that in addition to there being more leadership opportunities for women at Central Women’s College, faculty encouraged students to be successful academically and to get involved on campus. Bank and Yelon (2002) noted that Because Central Women’s College is not an elite institution, the faculty attention to involvement is key and it is possible that the encouragement of the faculty and the opportunity to take on leadership positions increased self-confidence. Miller-Bernal (2000) also found that if women have a strong relationship with a mentor (man or woman), their level of self-confidence improved. She suggests that women’s colleges may benefit their students by giving students the opportunity to have women faculty as role models.

In closing, Langdon (2001) stated that four items influence the current dialogues regarding the value of contemporary contributions of women’s colleges. Two of these items are role modeling and mentoring and “fostering diverse and challenging leadership opportunities” (p. 16). In this section, I described studies that emphasize how relationships and environments that provide leadership opportunities cultivate leadership development.

Outcomes. The women’s college literature illustrates that there are many positive outcomes associated with a women’s college education, including self-confidence, career attainment, and an increased interest in social activism.

Self-confidence. Wolf-Wendel (2000) noted that because women do not compete with men for leadership positions and can hold all of the leadership positions, women gain
self-confidence when attending a women’s college. Astin (1993) noted that attending a women’s college positively influences leadership development, and Langdon stated that this improves confidence (As cited in Langdon, 2001). The Kim (2002) study illustrates that involvement in leadership activities at a women’s college not only increases intellectual development, but it also increases intellectual self-confidence. As in the Kim (2002) study, Wolf-Wendel’s (2000) study cited the importance of gaining confidence through participation in leadership activities.

Miller-Bernal (2000) discovered through her case study research that a woman’s self-confidence increases at a greater rate at an all-women’s institution. Also, she initially assumed that women at women’s colleges who were most involved in student activities had the greatest improvement of self-confidence; however, she did not find this to be true, and she suggests that this may be a result of students participating in too many student organizations and not being able to perfect any of their roles in these organizations. As a result, they were unable to improve self-confidence.

Bank and Yelon (2002) found that self esteem increased for CWC students but like Miller-Bernal (2000), they found no positive relationship between increased self esteem and improved grade point average. The researchers noted that self esteem improved over a long period of time. Consistent with the idea that self esteem improves over an extended period of time, Bank and Yelon (2002) found that students who left the college after attending for only one year had no improvement in their self esteem level.

Riordan (1994) explained that critics of co-education cite that women’s cognitive development in co-educational institutions may be “depressed or impaired” (p. 486).
Therefore, their educational and occupational goals and ultimately attainment may be lowered, and their self esteem and self-confidence may be not as fully developed. In the Duncan Wentworth, Owen-Smith, and LaFavor (2002) study, the researchers compared Smith and Radcliffe graduates. Smith College is a women’s college and Radcliffe College is a coordinate college of Harvard University (i.e., Students at Radcliffe took some courses at Harvard.) The researchers found that Radcliffe graduates were more likely to mention decreased self-confidence and experiences of sexism, which may indicate that classroom environments and being loosely associated with a men’s institution may influence self-confidence levels and gender perceptions.

**Educational achievement and career attainment.** Rice and Hemmings (1988) found that graduates of women’s colleges during the 1970s were higher achievers than those who graduated from co-educational colleges during this decade. The Smith (1990) study compared women’s experiences at women’s colleges to women’s experiences at a co-educational institution. After studying 705 women at co-educational institutions and 175 at women’s colleges, she concluded that attending women’s colleges relates positively to educational aspirations and educational attainment. Smith (1990) found that institutional type significantly affected interest in graduate and professional school, cultural awareness, tolerance of different beliefs, and degree earned.

Duncan et al. (2002) hypothesized that Radcliffe graduates would more frequently mention raised aspirations; but the researchers found that Smith students were just as likely to have raised aspirations. Further, the researchers noted that a possible explanation for this is Radcliffe students may have perceived their status in a Harvard classroom as less
empowering. Overall, graduates of both schools were working at fairly high levels and their incomes were at a comfortable level.

**Social activism.** Further, the goal of Kim’s (2001) study was to discover if women’s college students’ desire to influence social conditions more than students at co-educational institutions. She found that by attending a women’s college, students are more likely to develop a desire to influence social conditions. Kim (2001) concluded her article by noting that the results of her study could explain why there are a high number of United States politicians and influential leaders in the United States who are women’s college graduates. Additional qualitative research could provide additional meaning and understanding to this phenomenon. Specifically, studying women’s college graduates who are higher education leaders will likely support Kim’s work as a goal of my study will be to understand why these women choose to be leaders as a result of their undergraduate experience at a women’s college.

In this section, I outlined the literature that pertains to women’s colleges and leadership development. First, I provided a brief history of women’s colleges. Next, I described how the women’s college environment and the relationships formed in this environment influence leadership. Then, I reviewed the various outcomes of a women’s college education. In the following section, I describe the conceptual framework of this study. After presenting information from both bodies of literature, in the concluding remarks of this chapter, I describe the nexus of ideas found in the women administrator and women’s college literature.
Conceptual Framework

Relational Leadership Model. The foundation of the Leadership Identity Development model is based upon the assumption that individuals exhibit characteristics associated with the Relational Leadership Model (Komives et al., 2007). The first aspect of the Relational Leadership Model is purpose (Komives et al., 2007). The authors define purpose as a group or organization committed to a goal. In addition, a critical aspect of the Relational Leadership Model is that all group members should be able to articulate the purpose of the organization. The vision of the organization is not solely created by the leader but, within this model of leadership, all group members participate in developing the shared vision (Komives, et al., 2007).

Next, the Relational Leadership Model is inclusive, which means “understanding, valuing, and actively engaging” various views, styles, lifestyles, and people (p. 85). As part of understanding, group members will respect others and think of ways to connect group members, rather than focusing on the differences. Further, it means truly listening to group members and involving all members. To sustain the organization, group members will recognize the skills of each group member and take the time to develop future leaders. Being inclusive does not mean that all differences go away; rather, it means that these differences allow for creativity, energy, and increased shared purpose. Moreover, inclusiveness requires engaging key stakeholders who may be outside of the organization. This is crucial because a group must realize that they cannot bring about change on their own; it requires working with others to create positive change (Komives et al., 2007).
Komives et al. (2007) describe that relational leadership is empowering. In other words, individuals know that they are an important part of the organization. Komives et al. (2007) note that the concept of power must be understood in order to promote an empowering environment. People with various forms of power (e.g., positional, authority) must be able to share power, and people within the organization who do not have formal power, should be willing to assume an active role in the organization.

According to Komives et al. (2007), relational leadership is also ethical. These researchers define ethical leadership as leadership that is undergirded by values and standards. Further, they believe that these standards guide a group’s or individual’s behaviors. In a group or organization setting, they believe that “leaders and followers act out of a sense of shared values” (p. 98). The authors assert that ethical behavior is at the core of leadership; without ethics, the behavior being exhibited is not leadership.

Finally, the Relational Leadership Model is about process (Komives et al., 2007). Within this model, individuals work together to accomplish change, and this process of collaborating creates “energy, synergy, and momentum” (p. 103). The researchers note that process can be defined as collaborating, reflecting, giving feedback, having civil confrontation, building community, and making meaning. In the act of working together to create change, group members are aware that leadership is a process.

In this section, I briefly described the Relational Leadership Model. This model of leadership contributes to a more complete appreciation and understanding of the LID model, as the students who were chosen for the LID study were chosen based on the fact that they exhibited behaviors that are consistent with the Relational Leadership Model.
Leadership Identity Development Model. After holding in-depth interviews and realizing that there was not literature that focused on how leadership develops, Komives, Casper, Longerbeam, Mainella, and Osteen (2005) developed the LID model using a grounded theory approach. The researchers held three in-depth interviews with a small group of college students and asked them about their life history and about their experiences of working with others. In addition, the researchers asked students to reflect upon how and why their view of leadership changed over time (Komives et al., 2005).

Upon completion of the research, Komives et al. (2005) proposed six stages of developing a leadership identity:

1. Awareness: recognition that leaders exist
2. Exploration/Engagement: intentional engagement in group or organization activities that involves assuming responsibilities in the group
3. Leader Identified: realization that groups are comprised of leaders and followers and holding the belief that the leader is a defined position in the group
4. Leadership Differentiated: acknowledgement that anyone can be a leader and do leadership; awareness that leadership is a process between and among people (The purpose of a person holding a leadership position shifts from being responsible for the outcomes of the group to facilitating and shaping the group culture.)
5. Generativity: commitment to a larger purpose that includes mentoring and enhancing others’ leadership capacity
6. **Integration/Synthesis:** recognition that leadership is an element of one’s identity and is a daily process; confidence to work effectively with other people in diverse contexts; acknowledgement that a person can be a leader even if not in an official leadership role.

When people progress through the six stages of LID, there are also categories of leadership development that influence an individual’s leadership identity: developmental influences, developing oneself, group influences, changing view of self with others, and changing view of leadership. In this section, I will describe each category in detail. When explaining the essence of each category, I will also elaborate on the characteristics of each category per LID stage. I have intentionally described the LID model by category because based on the review of the literature on women’s colleges and women administrators, it is clear that some of the categories that influence LID are key aspects of the women administrator and women’s college literature.

**Developmental influences.** The researchers found that at different stages of developing a leadership identity “developmental influences,” which include adults, peers, and meaningful involvement, promote LID. Within each stage of LID, developmental influences play a role in cultivating people’s leadership identity. For example, in the awareness stage, adult figures (e.g., coaches, church leaders, parents) affirm individuals’ leadership identity. As people transition to the exploration stage, they begin to watch and observe adults. In the next stage of exploration/engagement, individuals continue to receive affirmation from adults and others will begin to see them as a leader. Throughout the LID process, developmental influences are an important component in people’s paths to
leadership identity. Lastly, “…staff, key faculty, same-age mentors” aid individuals in meaning making and reflecting upon experiences (p. 3). This notion of developmental influences is striking because when critically analyzing the women administrator and women’s college literature, this aspect of relationships being an important piece of leadership development is also found in these bodies of literature.

**Developing oneself.** Developing oneself is a key aspect of the LID model and includes self-awareness, self-confidence, and interpersonal efficacy. Developing oneself is apparent in each stage of the model. First, in the awareness stage, individuals become aware of national and authority figures. As people progress into the exploration/engagement stage, personal skills are developed, strengths and weaknesses are recognized, and self-confidence is strengthened. Upon transitioning from the exploration/engagement stage to the leader identified stage, people recognize leadership capabilities and begin to narrow down the experiences that they choose to focus on. For example, rather than being members in all organizations, people will choose to participate at a deeper level in one or two organizations. As individuals emerge from the leader identified stage, they will model others, struggle with delegation and continue to understand that the leader is the one in charge, while fluctuating between leader and follower roles. In the leadership differentiated stage, people learn to trust and value others. In addition, individuals are comfortable being a member and not being in control. Moreover, individuals begin to understand that they can influence others as members and as positional leaders. People value servant leadership and begin to desire to serve society. (Komives et al., 2005a). A salient theme in the women administrator and women’s college literature is women administrators are self-confident and women’s colleges develop self-
confident women (Bank & Yelon, 2002; Duncan et al., 2002; Kim; 2002; Miller-Bernal, 2000; Vanhook-Morrissey, 2003; Wolf-Wendel, 2000). If women become more self-confident at women’s institutions and women administrators need to be self-confident, it is important to understand what types of experiences and relationships at a women’s college contribute to increased self-confidence, as having a greater understanding for how self-confidence develops could aid in the development of future women leaders.

**Group influences.** Group influences (i.e., taking part in groups, learning from membership, and changing group perceptions) advance LID. In the awareness phase, individuals may be uninvolved or an inactive follower. When people transition to the exploration/engagement phase, they may decide to be involved in the group. During the time when individuals explore a given group, they may engage in a variety of interests, but as they progress to the leader identified stage, they will narrow their interests and begin to realize that the leader and the group have a job to do and it must get done.

As people transition to the immersion portion of the leader identified stage, (i.e., “the “practicing or living with the identity”), they may involve members to get the job done or stay closely connected with an identity based group (Komives et al., 2005, p. 607). The important transition between leader identified and leadership differentiated is individuals begin to meaningfully engage with others and look to group members for resources. During the leader differentiated stage, people may learn group and team skills while realizing that there is a bigger picture or collective whole. Individuals will begin to value teams and connecting with others. As people proceed towards the generativity stage, they will begin to try and fit in with the organization vision. Then, people will help to sustain the organization
and focus on areas that they are passionate about. Near the end of the stage, people will begin anticipating transitioning to new roles in the organization. Finally, individuals will progress to integration/synthesis, will see that organizations are complex, and imagine how to engage with different organizations (Komives et al., 2005a). The women’s college literature describes that women’s colleges provide more opportunities for women to be involved in campus organizations. Given that being involved in a group fosters leadership identity development, these experiences could lead to a more solidified leadership identity at an earlier point in their life and provide a trajectory to post-graduation leadership roles, including college administrator roles (Kim, 2002; Miller-Bernal, 2000; Wolf-Wendel, 2000).

Changing view of self with others. The LID model suggests that people who are developing their leadership identity will change how they view themselves in relation to others. During the awareness and exploration/engagement stage, people may still rely on others and be quite dependent. When individuals evolve to the leader identified stage, they may begin to transition to be more independent, rather than dependent. As people move towards the leadership differentiated, generativity, and integration/synthesis stages, they will become increasingly interdependent with others.

Changing view of leadership. Lastly, individuals with a developed leadership identity have a changed view of leadership. In the awareness stage, individuals think that others are leaders and they are not. As they advance to the next stage, they begin to think that they want to be involved and do more in the organization. In the leader identified stage, they begin to think that a leader “gets things done” and as they immerse in this stage, they believe that they are the leader and that others should follow them. In the leadership differentiated stage,
people begin to realize that they should be a participatory leader who contributes to the organization as a follower or a leader. Further, they realize that leadership is happening everywhere and that all are responsible for doing leadership. As they approach the generativity stage, they realize that they are a member of the community and must foster the leadership development of future leaders. Once people reach the integration/synthesis stage, they realize that they can accomplish change by working with others from any place in the organization. One study from the women president literature relates to this category. Bornstein (2008) notes that in order to unclog presidential pipelines, women presidents must foster the leadership development of future leaders. This is an example of generativity because current leaders give back through encouraging other women to be leaders.

In this section I explained how individuals progress through each stage of the LID model and described each category of the LID model. In addition, I highlighted some key points of intersection between notions found in the LID model and theories or ideas seen in the review of the women administrator and women’s college literature. In the next section, I offer a rationale for using the LID model as the conceptual framework for this study.

**Rationale.** I chose the LID model as my conceptual framework for several reasons. The LID model is structured so that how people develop leadership can be understood. By using the LID model as my framework, I had opportunity to gain a deeper and richer understanding of how these women administrators advanced in their leadership abilities at a women’s college. This framework suggests that people experience various categories and stages when developing a leadership identity, and, by using the LID model to analyze the
stories collected from the women administrators, I saw how the experiences, environment, and people at the women’s college influenced the leadership development of these women.

Using the LID model as a framework for this study allowed for a greater understanding of leadership development because as the women reflected and told their stories, they made sense of their undergraduate leadership development journeys by describing what types of experiences and relationships contributed to how they understand leadership today. Weick (1995) suggests that people make sense of their experience, by understanding “distinct events,” of their lives and “by stepping outside the stream of experience and directing attention to…what has already passed” (p. 25). Using the LID model as a framework for my study encouraged participants to make meaning of their past lived experiences by asking them to pay “attention to that which has already occurred” (p. 25-26). According to Weick, looking backward from a certain moment affects what is “discovered” when looking back (p. 26). As participants responded, “a plausible stimulus” was defined, and they made sense of their undergraduate leadership development process (Weick, 1995, p. 26).

The LID model was an appropriate framework for this study because unlike other leadership theories that emphasize the traits and skills of a leader, the LID model focuses on how leadership develops. For example, the leadership attributes associated with the Social Change Model are “a conscious and congruent person who can collaborate with others, who can become a committed participant in the shaping of the group’s common purpose, who can help to resolve controversy with civility and be a responsible citizen” (Bonous-Hammarth, 2001, p. 38). Kouzes and Posner (2002) offer five practices for leaders: challenging the
process, inspiring a shared vision, enabling others to act, and modeling the way. A citizen leader is defined as someone who moves others to action to “improve conditions” of others while recognizing the importance of a community (Cuoto, 1992, p. 12). Even though Northouse (2007), describes that “skills and abilities…can be learned and developed” (p. 39), no models of leadership other than the LID model explain how people are to develop as leaders. Because of this, the LID model was the only appropriate model to use for this study of understanding how leadership develops.

In conclusion, Komives et al. (2005) assert that much of the leadership research focuses on certain populations, behaviors, settings, and outcomes. Their study aimed to understand how leadership identity develops over time and to “understand the processes a person experiences in creating a leadership identity” (p. 594). Because there is not significant literature that explains how women administrators develop leadership, by using the LID as my conceptual framework I was able to add to the more recent conversation of understanding the process by which college administrators develop leadership (Madsen, 2007b; Madsen, 2007a).

Conclusion

Mary Lyon, founder of Mount Holyoke College viewed a women’s college graduate as a “pathfinder, a pioneer, and a contributor to society” (Rice & Hemmings, 1988, p. 557). If women administrators are “pathfinders,” understanding their collegiate leadership development experiences may lead to insights about the women’s college environment, women administrators, and the LID model (Komives et al., 2005, 2005a; Rice & Hemmings, 1988, p. 557). In this chapter, I reviewed literature that relates to women’s colleges, women
administrators, and the conceptual framework. The goal of reviewing these areas of literature was to illustrate that amongst these topics, there is a nexus of key ideas. Because of the common themes or concepts found between the various literatures, it becomes evident that leadership is a complex topic that needs additional research.

The women’s college literature discusses that women’s colleges should embody leadership development and explains that many do; however, very little research explains what this looks like and how this process affects women upon graduation. In order to understand how these experiences aid in developing leadership, we need to learn more about these experiences and how they foster leadership. Both the women administrator and women’s college literature speak to the importance of mentoring as it relates to leadership. When considering the women’s college literature, the writings point to mentoring and positive women role models as key distinctions of women’s colleges. In addition, the women’s college literature notes that many women who graduate from women’s colleges are high achievers because of the mentoring relationships (Rice & Hemmings, 1988).

Many women administrators noted that either as children or now as adults they are self-confident leaders. Also, as described in the women’s college literature, women’s colleges foster the development of self-confidence. Therefore, as related to women’s colleges and women administrators, future research is needed to provide greater understanding surrounding this aspect of self-confidence as it relates to leadership. For example, how can future administrators acquire this attribute and how does self-confidence develop at women’s colleges?
Although the literature about women administrators considered the educational background of women administrators, it did not take into account whether women administrators attended women’s colleges. Not accounting for the type of institution that women administrators attended illustrates that there is a clear gap in the literature and future qualitative studies should focus on understanding how the women’s college experience affects the leadership development of college administrators.

In closing, it is clear that aspects of the women’s college literature and the literature on women administrators corroborate on the notion that relationships and environments are important to developing leadership. This study lent itself to gaining a greater understanding of both of these aspects. It is unclear how the environment of women’s colleges influences the leadership development of women administrators. This study shed light on this important factor. Riordan (1994) names ten rationales that make women’s colleges a better academic environment than co-educational institutions. Two of these justifications are the following: women’s colleges provide more role models for women, and more leadership opportunities are available for women at women’s colleges. To better understand these and other theories that relate to the benefits of the leadership development process at women’s colleges, my study addressed how women’s colleges prepare women to be administrators of higher education institutions.
Chapter 3: Methodology

The purpose of this narrative study was to understand the lived experiences of administrators who attended a women’s college. As the number of women’s colleges decreases, and the number of women attending college increases, women in leadership positions must foster the leadership development and career aspirations of women students. (Gender Equity in Higher Education, 2006). By listening to the women administrator’s stories, I discovered how they developed as leaders while attending a women’s institution. Specifically, by taking a closer look at the individual stories of women leaders, I learned how the experience at a women’s college contributed to their leadership identity (Komives, Longerbeam, Mainella, Osteen, & Owen, 2005). This study aimed to answer the following questions: How did women administrators live and experience leadership while attending a women’s college? How did women administrators develop their leadership identity while attending a women’s college?

This chapter describes how I studied this topic. In this chapter, I will explain why the narrative approach was the most appropriate design for this particular type of study. Next, I will delineate the population and sample selection. In addition, I will outline the information I needed to complete this study and will explain the overall research design. As this chapter continues, I will discuss how I collected and then analyzed the data. Also, I will describe various ethical considerations, issues of trustworthiness, and limitations of the study.

Rationale for Narrative Approach

The narrative approach was most appropriate for this study because how women administrators developed leadership during college could be explored thoroughly by
examining individual stories. In order to understand how women administrators developed leadership, we first must consider what types of experiences and relationships contributed to their leadership development. The participants in my study made sense of their women’s college experience and the relationships found there by telling stories about their experience.

Polkinghorne (2007) describes narrative research as the act of studying stories. By carefully listening to the administrators and analyzing all of their narrative data, I gained an in-depth understanding of their leadership development through the stories that they constructed about their experiences (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). Interestingly and applicable to the purposes of this study, Moen (2006) argues that throughout people’s lives they have experiences and dialogues with the world around them and themselves. He argues that it is impossible to separate all of these experiences and therefore suggests that in order to make sense of these complexities, people must make sense of their experiences through a smaller unit (e.g., the narrative). Giving the participants the opportunity to discuss their experiences, made it possible for them to understand more about their women’s college experience and how they developed as leaders while there.

Giving “voice” is a key part of the narrative approach. Chase (2005) describes the narrative approach as a method focused on hearing the “biographical particulars” of a person’s life through the voice of the person who lived the experience (p. 651). In addition, the process of claiming voice is an “interaction between the individual’s beliefs and experiences” and the social context that the individual is in. Further, because there is a “multitude of voices present” in the narrative, an individual’s story cannot be separated from the social context (Moen, 2006, p. 5). Understanding that multiple voices are present in a
story and that these voices represent a particular context is critical in my study because the
narratives shared by the participants gave insight to the leadership development experience in
a given context (women’s colleges). Narrative inquiry contributes to the understanding of
“sociological questions about groups, communities, and contexts through individuals’ lived
experiences; this approach lends a deeper understanding of the leadership development of
women administrators and the contexts in which they experienced leadership development
during their collegiate careers: women’s colleges (Moen, 2006; Marshall & Rossman, 2006,
p. 118).

Narrative inquiry is the only qualitative research approach that allowed for
understanding the particulars of individual stories while also elucidating the context where
the stories took place. The narrative approach was the best method for this study because I
sought to learn about the experiences and relationships that contributed to individuals’
leadership development journeys, gain a clearer sense of the context where these women
developed leadership, and give voice to the women’s college experience.

Participant Selection

According to Creswell (2007), in qualitative research, researchers must be
“purposeful” in their sampling because the sample chosen “inform(s) an understanding of the
research problem and central phenomenon in the study” (p. 125). Participants were chosen
for this study based on three criteria: gender (female), attendance at a women’s college, and
leadership as a current college or university administrator (Creswell, 2007).

To select my participants, I contacted the Women’s College Coalition
(www.womenscolleges.org) to obtain a list of women’s college graduates who are college or
university presidents. There was not a well-defined list, but I did learn about potential women presidents who could participate in this study. In addition, I perused college websites and news articles to generate a potential participant list. After gaining IRB approval and compiling a list of nearly 12 potential participants, I contacted each person by email to invite her to participate in the study.

I also used the snowball sampling strategy (Litchtman, 2006). I employed the snowball sampling strategy by including the following statement in the initial email that I sent to college administrators: “If you know of and are willing to share the names of other college administrators who may be willing to participate in the study, please email me the names of these women.” No participants were found through this method.

Because not all of the 12 women responded, I began searching for additional potential participants to participate in the study. I primarily reviewed two higher education governing body websites. After reviewing these websites and learning more about the women administrators listed on their sites, I contacted eight additional women and two of these women agreed to participate in the study. Overall, eleven women who attended women’s colleges and are college or university administrators responded to the invitation and ten agreed to participate in the study.

**Data Collection**

In summer 2010, I began collecting data for this study. Although the narrative may include various forms of data: interviews, archival material, journal records, photographs, letters, and casual chatting, I used interviews, photographs, and emails as my primary sources of data (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Creswell, 2007; Marshall & Rossman, 2006). These
methods allowed me to “elicit voice,” which validated how women administrators make meaning of their undergraduate experiences (Marshall & Rossman, 2006).

Baddeley and Singer (2007), argued that our life story is “not simply an expression of the underlying construct of identity, but it is the fundamental way in which we know ourselves and to a large extent are known by others” (p. 177-178). Further, by using the narrative method to study identity, individuals can “step back and draw inferences and lessons” from their stories (p. 178). As the women told me about their life history during their college years, they reflected upon lessons and drew inferences about leadership and their women’s college experience.

Because this study involved evaluating the leadership development process through the categories and six-step leadership identity process identified in Komives et al. (2005), the interview procedures in this study reflected aspects of the Komives et al. (2005) study. However, the researchers in the Komives et al. study used a structured interview approach, and in this study I used a semi-structured approach because I asked additional questions of the participants as themes emerged. Further, I adjusted the questions to reflect the new information that I received in each interview.

**Interview Context.** After receiving informed consent from each participant, I recorded each interview and kept field notes as I interviewed. After I finished each interview, I reflected upon the interview experience and wrote notes about what I learned. The field notes allowed me to keep accurate record so that when I analyzed the data, I had written notes to use during the data analysis.
Interview sessions were conversational. This gave me opportunity to probe the women’s experience and allowed for flexibility so that the participants discussed topics that they are most interested in sharing (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). By allowing each participant to guide the conversation, I heard the most important aspects of their story. To ensure that the data collection process was as trustworthy as possible, I made an effort to interview each participant in person. One participant’s geographic location did not allow for me to meet with her in person, so I interviewed her through a telephone conversation. To ensure a quality interview experience, I asked the participant to select a quiet place for the interview to occur, asked the interviewee to complete a consent form, and explained the purpose of the study to the participant (Creswell, 2007).

When I had face-to-face interviews with the participants, I used the technique that Clandinin and Connelly (2000) describe as memory boxes, which are a collection of items that trigger memories. To trigger memories, I asked each participant to bring a special item from their collegiate career that we could discuss or to bring their college yearbook so that we could look through it together. These memory triggers assisted the participants to remember key aspects, experiences, and relationships from their collegiate years.

**Interview.** The interviews were in-depth and semi-structured. I began each interview by telling the participant that her stories would guide the conversation. I asked the participant to tell me about her undergraduate experience. Having a broad, open-ended first question allowed the administrators to start the conversation with the aspects of their story that were most important to them. As the women led the conversation, they elaborated and discussed whatever part of their women’s college experience was in the forefront of their mind.
Further, by asking the administrators about their life experiences during college and by giving them opportunity to expound upon their relationships during college and their curricular and co-curricular experiences, I learned more about their leadership development.

After asking the initial question, I followed up with some of the following broad questions: When you reflect back on your undergraduate experience, what experiences helped make you the person you are today? How did the relationships developed during your undergraduate years, influence who you are today? How did attending a women’s college influence who you are today? In the second section of the interview, I asked questions that primarily focused on how the administrators work with others and experienced leadership in the women’s college setting. For example, I began this part of the interview by asking the following question: Please tell me a story about how you experienced leadership while an undergraduate. After the administrators shared a story, I asked them some of the following questions: In the experience you described, how did you interact with others during this experience? In the last section of my interview protocol, I asked questions that primarily related to how the women’s leadership may have changed while in college. I began by asking the administrators to describe how they understood leadership when they entered college, and then I asked them to describe how they understood leadership when they graduated from college. Next, I asked them what factors led to their changed understanding of leadership. In addition to the questions that are guided by the Komives et al. (2005) outline, I asked the participants several closing questions that prompted the participant to share information that we did not cover already.
As the women administrators told stories and reflected upon past experiences, they made meaning of past life events (Moen, 2006; Weick, 1995). As the participants talked about experiences and relationships from their undergraduate career, they gave voice to women’s leadership development, offered details of their story that were analyzed for deeper meanings surrounding the topic of leadership development, and provided data that was studied to better understand the context (women’s colleges) of their leadership development stories.

**Reflection.** Because these women were very busy and did not have time to meet with me several times, at the end of the initial in-depth, semi-structured face-to-face or telephone interview, I asked the participants if they had time for an additional email conversation.

Then, after the initial interview, when I corresponded with participants through an email conversation, I asked them to complete a critical incident reflection or answers additional questions. In this reflection, I asked them to reflect upon a time when they experienced leadership during their undergraduate career. I asked them what they were doing during this experience. In addition, I asked them some of the following questions: How did they feel during this time? How did the experience affect them? What did they do as a result of the experience, and how do they feel as they are thinking of it now? During the email communication, I asked for participants to reflect on the stories they shared in the first interview (Savin-Baden & Van Niekerk, 2007). This reflection was an opportunity for the participant to share new insights through an email conversation.
Data Analysis Procedures

This study was designed to understand the meaning of the life events within women administrators’ undergraduate experience. To gain a richer understanding of the women’s undergraduate careers, I analyzed their stories. Because in-depth details and descriptions of stories provide insight into the lived experiences of individuals, Polkinghorne (2007) argues that the narrative approach does not require an “explicit interpretative section” (p. 482). In addition, Clandinin (2007) notes that there is not a prescribed way to interpret narratives. However, Riessman (2008) discusses that there are different approaches to narrative analysis. She describes that “good narrative analysis prompts the reader to think beyond the surface of a text” and “move toward a broader commentary” (p. 13).

After each interview was complete, the recordings were transcribed. So that I would not become disengaged with the data over an extended period of time, I expedited the transcribing process by sending some of the interview recordings to a professional transcriber, who transcribed the texts word for word. To ensure accuracy and familiarity with the interview text, upon receiving the completed transcriptions from the transcriber, I listened to each interview and when necessary made corrections. Also, I transcribed several of the interviews word for word.

I facilitated the analysis by focusing on understanding each participant’s story first and then by analyzing components of their stories second. Polkinghorne (2007) notes that the interpretation step involves developing themes and a story plot, “understanding other texts,” and revealing the “impact of the social and cultural setting on people’s lives” (p. 483).
First, to gain a deeper understanding of the stories, plots, and to create initial themes, the first stage of analysis reflected the story model that is presented in Creswell (2007). Consequently, I aimed to understand each participant’s narrative according to characters, setting, problem, action, and resolution (Creswell, 2007).

After understanding the stories holistically, I looked through each participant’s story to determine what elements of the LID process were present in the story. Doing so illuminated how these women developed leadership. Coding using the LID model entailed considering LID categories through the epiphanies, events, and themes that were evident in the various stories. As detailed in Chapter one, the six stages of LID are awareness, exploration/engagement, leader identified, leadership differentiated, generativity, and integration/synthesis. Within the LID model, there are various categories that influence a person developing a leadership identity: changing view of leadership, developing oneself, group influences, developmental influences, and changing view of self with others (Komives et al., 2005). By looking at the data in this manner, I saw that there were trends and themes that emerged within the various stories, which speaks to the commonalities of the women’s college experience and the leadership development that takes place there.

Lastly, Because narrative interpretation is “less rule derived” than other quantitative and qualitative methods, as a coding scheme, I looked for additional themes and patterns and coded according to themes that emerged (Polkinghorne, 2007). In this phase of coding, I reviewed the texts and interpreted the data according to themes that emerged.
Presentation of Data

After I coded the data, I presented the information gathered in several ways. First, I offered a narrative of each woman’s story and used the Creswell’s (2007) model as my guide by focusing on presenting the data according to characters, setting, problem, action, and resolution while remaining focused on the research questions related to understanding how leadership developed during the undergraduate experience. I organized the narratives into the following sections: biographical information, choice of major, influential relationships, environment, and career path. Depicting the data in this fashion aided in understanding the individual stories of each woman.

After utilizing this approach, I presented the data as an aggregate narrative based on the LID model. Because I concluded that most of the participants were in stage two or stage three of the leadership identity development model while in college, I presented one narrative that focused on the commonalities amongst the narratives. I arranged the aggregate narrative to reflect how the leadership development categories of the LID model were present in the stories I collected.

Trustworthiness

I used several techniques to increase the trustworthiness of my study. First, as described by Meshlar (1990), I used exemplars to increase the credibility of my research. Before contacting study participants, I set up an appointment to meet with one woman who studied college presidents for her dissertation. During my conversation with her, I learned from her research experience. I inquired about the methodology she used and asked for suggestions on how to best interact with women administrators.
In addition, I contacted Madsen (2007a, 2007b), and we corresponded through email about my topic. She researched the leadership development of college presidents and offered suggestions for understanding women presidents’ leadership development. Lastly, I conversed, emailed, and received resources from the president of the Women’s College Coalition. During our interactions, I learned her perspective on women’s colleges. I believe that both of these women served as exemplars because they understand women presidents and women’s colleges, respectively.

Marshall and Rossman (2006) propose that one can increase credibility through peer debriefing. They note that this technique will limit bias, as the person peer reviewing will question, discuss, and determine if the analysis makes sense. For this study, my dissertation advisor met with me on a regular basis to discuss the data I collected and my analysis of that data. Also, I met with and discussed my data analysis with one of the researchers from the Komives et al. (2005) study. After we met, I reflected upon her comments, which gave me a greater understanding of the LID model and my coding scheme, and I decided to incorporate some of her suggestions.

I used two primary methods for data collection: in-person semi-structured interviews using memory triggers (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 114) and email correspondence for the purpose of reflecting on a critical incident of leadership development (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008). These methods were chosen because the individuals I interviewed do not have a lot of time to participate in studies, so I want to make the research process as meaningful and as efficient as possible. The methods outlined above allow for some flexibility while increasing credibility.
I employed member checking. To make the data most trustworthy, I sent the participants the interview transcripts and asked for their feedback. Six participants responded to my follow-up email and five participants gave me feedback that informed how I approached the data collected. One woman asked me to correct an acronym for an association that she mentioned. Three women asked me to delete information or consider making information more broad so that their identity or other women’s identities in their stories would not be revealed. The member checking process caused me to adjust how I identified each woman in the study (i.e., senior administrator instead of vice president or president). It reminded me to pay close attention to the text and to make every effort to ensure that the anonymity of the participants remained constant. For the candidates who responded to the email, asked them to review the data multiple times.

**Ethical and Political Considerations**

Once participants were chosen, I considered how I relate to other persons who are different than me; realizing that women administrators are at a different stage in their life helped me to better relate to them. I am younger than all the individuals I interview so this could have created an interesting dynamic, and I realized that I needed to be aware of this. At this point in my career, I have read some literature about the college presidency and administrators roles, but I have not experienced it. Therefore, I realized that going into the interview process I needed to be aware of the assumptions that I have. To address this concern, I journaled and talked about the interview process prior, during, and after data collection (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000).
Not only did I need to think about my age and experience level, but my life-work balance is quite different than the women who I interviewed. I realized that I have certain expectations about how women administrators balance family, work, and health, but I could not allow these ideas to supersede the themes and ideas that the administrators presented.

In an effort to emphasize that the participants and I were co-inquirers, I reminded the participants that their stories are truly their stories. I said phrases such as, “let me make sure I understand what you are saying” or “let me make sure that I am hearing you correctly. Did you say…?” Moreover, to gain rapport with the participants, I listened carefully to their stories and asked their permission to participate in the study before beginning the interview process. I also explained the purpose and process of the study before they agreed to participate in the study. To further develop co-inquiry, I briefly talked with many of the participants about why I am interested in their experiences, including the fact that I work at a women’s college and have witnessed how the women’s college environment positively affects students. Also, I talked with the women about how important their story is and how it is an example for future women leaders.

**Limitations**

The LID model (2005) is based on the assumption that leadership is relational. Although this is a noteworthy model, it does not include all definitions of leadership. Understanding leadership through one lens frames the study from a specific perspective that is not comprehensive.

Because the participants in this study are in a stated and clearly defined leadership role, it is possible that an erroneous assumption regarding women’s college graduates could
be made: graduates only exemplify leadership if they are in a given position. This postulation could limit the understanding of leadership because rather than any member of a group or organization assuming a leadership role, this study focuses on individuals with a clearly stated leadership position. However, because this study is qualitative research, it was not intended to be generalizable. Therefore, it must be noted that the purpose of this study was to understand leadership development in the context of one leadership role: women administrators who attended women’s colleges.

Also, because it was possible that I would not have as rich of an interview experience if I did not meet and talk with each woman president in person, upon suggestion of my dissertation committee, I chose to broaden the scope of my study to include senior women administrators and deans as potential participants in my study. Broadening the participant pool made it more likely that I would meet with each woman in person to have a rich and in-depth interview experience. Follow up emails helped with this matter as well. In addition, even though one woman could not meet in person, it was still important to hear her story. And, because a phone conversation was the only way to talk with her, it was better than not hearing her story at all.

As the president of the Women’s College Coalition mentioned, it was important for me to consider college choice and the time period when these women went to college. To balance this concern, I reminded myself that the purpose of this research was to gain greater understanding of leadership development as it relates to women administrators. If I were only looking to understand leadership development at women’s colleges, I would have likely interviewed current or recent graduates of women’s colleges, but because I was interested in
understanding how a particular type of women’s college graduate (college or university administrator) developed leadership, I interviewed graduates who completed their undergraduate studies many years ago. Also, I believe there is value in studying women in established leadership roles, as they have likely had many leadership opportunities. Further, by interviewing college administrators, I gained a greater understanding of the type of leadership that is needed in the twenty-first century.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I outlined the methodological steps of this study. In the first section of the chapter, I explained that the narrative approach is fitting for this study because it gave voice to women administrators who attended women’s colleges, illustrated the context of the women’s college, and depicted the stories of the women administrators. Next, I described the sampling and data collection strategies and followed with the data analysis process. Lastly, I explained trustworthiness procedures, ethical and political considerations, and limitations.

By employing the narrative approach, I gained a rich understanding for how women developed leadership at women’s colleges. Further, these insights illustrated how women higher education leaders developed leadership. Programs can be implemented and policies can be adjusted so that more women will have the opportunity to lead during the ever-changing twenty-first century.
Chapter 4: Findings

According to The White House Project Report: Benchmarking Women’s Leadership (2009), women have not attained a “critical mass” of leadership positions in the United States (p 113). For example, women represent over half of the students in higher education, yet The White House Project Report (2009) outlines that women of academia “still lag significantly behind men in status, salary, and leadership positions” (p. 16). To address this inequality in higher education, it is necessary to understand how women administrators develop as leaders. In this narrative study, I aimed to better understand how the experiences and relationships formed during a woman’s undergraduate career contribute to her leadership development. Specifically, I worked to understand how graduates of women’s colleges developed as leaders during their undergraduate career. In the study, I sought to answer the following questions: 1) How did women administrators live and experience leadership while attending a women’s college? 2) How did women administrators develop their leadership identity while attending a women’s college?

The data for this study was collected through ten semi-structured interviews. Nine of the interviews were done in person and one interview was conducted over the phone. The purpose of the interview was to learn about each woman’s undergraduate experience as it related to leadership development. To elicit memories, each participant was asked to bring a memory box item (e.g., yearbook) from their undergraduate years. Additional data were collected through follow up questions sent through email. After the interviews were complete, the recordings were transcribed. Then, each interview text was analyzed using the process that is described in Chapter Three.
Ten women administrators took part in the study. To protect anonymity, pseudonyms were chosen for each woman, and each woman’s undergraduate institution is referred to as “Women’s College,” though they attended different institutions. The participants represented seven position types, four decades, eight majors, five varying types of advanced degrees, five types of undergraduate involvement, and six women’s colleges in different areas of the United States.

Table 4.1 – Participant Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Pseudonym</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Undergraduate Years at Women’s College</th>
<th>Undergraduate Major</th>
<th>Graduate Degree(s) and Further Training</th>
<th>Undergraduate Involvement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lisa</td>
<td>Senior administrator</td>
<td>1965-1969</td>
<td>Political Science</td>
<td>MA and Ph.D. in Political Science</td>
<td>Worked in kitchen, house chairman, member of political science club, member of SANE, worked on Robert Kennedy campaign</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Position</td>
<td>Years</td>
<td>Field</td>
<td>Degree/Program</td>
<td>Activities and Responsibilities</td>
</tr>
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<td>----------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karen</td>
<td>Dean</td>
<td>1986-1990</td>
<td>Physics</td>
<td>M.Ed./ Educational Leadership and Ed.D./ Higher Education Administration</td>
<td>First-year class vice president, class president every other year, referred to as &quot;Karen College,&quot; called upon for admissions events, meeting with officials, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judy</td>
<td>Senior administrator</td>
<td>1971-1975</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>MA, Ph.D./ English; Harvard Institute for Educational Management; two courses in history of student personnel services</td>
<td>First-year class president, freshman hall proctor (RA), secretary of legislative board, student government president</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarah</td>
<td>Senior administrator</td>
<td>1997-1999</td>
<td>Mass Communications</td>
<td>MBA</td>
<td>Very involved with at Junior College, graduated as valedictorian, transfer representative on SGA, Women’s College TV, worked on traditional fall activity, played tennis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Position</td>
<td>Years</td>
<td>Major</td>
<td>Degree</td>
<td>Note</td>
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<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rachel</td>
<td>Dean</td>
<td>1964-1968</td>
<td>History</td>
<td>Ed.D./Higher Education Administration</td>
<td>Editor of yearbook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pamela</td>
<td>Dean</td>
<td>1985-1989</td>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Ed.D./Higher Education Administration (ABD)</td>
<td>Heavily involved in black students association, volleyball player, recently received distinguished alumnae award</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amy</td>
<td>Senior admin</td>
<td>1971-1975</td>
<td>Math and Economics</td>
<td>MBA</td>
<td>Tutoring, wishes she would have been more involved and traveled abroad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan</td>
<td>Senior admin</td>
<td>1971-1975</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Ph.D./English</td>
<td>Badminton, very active in major, “book worm,” took semester off to travel through Europe</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.1 Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Major</th>
<th>Degree</th>
<th>Additional Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mary</td>
<td>Senior administrator</td>
<td>1968-1972</td>
<td>Music</td>
<td>Ph.D./Musicology</td>
<td>very involved with major, played organ and picture in <em>National Geographic</em> during college 200th birthday celebration, marshal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katherine</td>
<td>Dean</td>
<td>1971-1975</td>
<td>Home Economics</td>
<td>Ed.D./Occupational Edu-</td>
<td>Hall proctor (RA), SGA legislative board or judicial board, home economics club</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>cation, double minor in</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Special Education and</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Adult and Community</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>College Education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The majority of this chapter is devoted to the presentation of the data collected. Table 4.1 is a summary chart that includes biographical information, degree information, and involvement experiences. After outlining participant information in the chart, I will describe each participant’s story by detailing the characters, plot, and resolution of her story, while focusing primarily on how she lived and experienced leadership as an undergraduate (Creswell, 2007). This portion of the chapter will be structured so that each woman’s story will be represented individually, as this illustrates the value of each woman’s story and voice. Next, I will describe how these women developed their leadership identity during their undergraduate years. I will present this portion of the data as an aggregate story that gives a
common voice to the undergraduate leadership identity development experience of these administrators. In this story, I will write in first person and take quotation excerpts from each woman’s story.

Both research questions were answered through the data collected. Related to question one, most of the participants described how leadership positions and relationships influenced how they understood leadership as an undergraduate. Some women elaborated on the environment and the expectations of the women’s college that fostered their growth as leaders. Yet other participants noted that leadership was not mentioned or discussed while they were in college, but they felt more confident and became more capable speakers, took risks, and led because of their experiences at their women’s college. Regarding question two, most of the women’s stories suggest that the experience at their women’s college positively influenced their leadership identity development. For many of the women, they spoke of involvement experiences and mentors that influenced their growth as a leader. Some women mentioned how their view of leadership changed because of their experiences. In the below sections, I describe how these women experienced leadership and developed as leaders while undergraduates at women’s institutions.

Lisa

**Biographical information.** Lisa grew up in the north east and was the first in her family to attend college. When considering what college to attend, Lisa recounts that there were several choices for her: the public women’s college, a private women’s college, or secretarial school. Since Women’s College was part of the state system with tuition of only
$200 per semester and because it was only an hour away from her home, Women’s College was a “logical place” for Lisa to pursue her undergraduate degree.

**Choice of major.** Although Lisa considered majoring in pre-med, she chose to major in Political Science. Her favorite faculty member encouraged her to consider this major. She notes that he was politically active, had a commitment to undergraduate education, and was an “outstanding teacher.” Although Lisa had many good faculty members as teachers, her most memorable undergraduate experience was working with her favorite faculty, who became her advisor, on her honors thesis.

**Influential relationships.** Faculty and peers influenced Lisa’s development. Ultimately, Lisa chose to pursue graduate school so that like her favorite faculty member, she could have “the best job in the world,” teaching. Although he did not say to Lisa, “What do you want to do with your life?” she describes that he really cared about her and students and that because of him, she began the path that she is still on today.

Peers also played a role in Lisa’s development. She notes that two women students were “most influential.” Prior to our interview, she googled these women, brought the print outs about the women to the interview, and in her research, she confirmed that both of the women she looked up to are now very successful. One is a Federal District Court Judge and the other is a president of a women’s college in the northeast. She remembers that both women were very smart and that she knew “that they were going to do big things.” She goes on to describe them and how they influenced her and her view of leadership.

They were very helpful. They were good mentors and they kind of helped us navigate. I think I became the kind of house chairman that I was because of what
Daisy did. It's amazing to think that a circuit court judge let people stay out after curfew, but they were just – they were very smart, but they really cared about people, and they had I think the right sense of what leadership in that sphere was all about.

**Environment.** Lisa describes several key involvement experiences that contributed to her leadership development. While in college, she worked in the kitchen, was a hall monitor, and actively participated in the political science club. First, she mentioned working in the College kitchen and the lessons she learned through this experience. She notes that

> When you put on a uniform and you serve people you lose your identity. I could be serving a group of students that I knew and it was as [if] I was invisible. That taught me to really appreciate what people do in those kinds of jobs.

Lisa was also a house chairman and her duties included looking after the students who lived in her house and monitoring curfew. From this experience, she states that she learned how to “separate out the technical responsibilities of the role from what is the role really designed to do.” For example, if her housemates were not in by 11:00 p.m., she would not turn them in unless they had not told her where they were. She saw that the purpose of this position was to care for her residents and to help them be successful.

In my discussion with Lisa, she acknowledged that one of the advantages of attending a women’s college was that “you had to assume leadership roles.” She mentioned that although she did not think about leadership while in college and did not hold leadership positions, other than majorette captain and head of the nursing club in high school, she did broaden her view of leadership as a result of her involvement experience at Women’s College. She states:
I think I did learn a lot in college about leadership. I didn't know what it was then, but I think we talk about it now as servant leadership. And part of it was what I kind of learned from the people who were leaders, if you will, in dining services working with their colleagues and what I learned through the political process in working with the Robert Kennedy campaign and what that was all about in terms of what he was trying to do and so forth.

Certain aspects of Lisa’s experience at Women’s College are similar to other participants’ experiences and relationships at women’s colleges. For example, Lisa has a difficult time describing how the undergraduate experience at Women’s College influenced her because much of what she was involved in as an undergraduate related to “the politics of the day and [her] involvement in some of that.” She notes that “We’re all a product of the time in which we attended college.” However, she also describes the environment and how it influenced her. More than once in our discussion, Lisa mentions that because no men were around, you had to speak up and be involved on campus. She also discusses that since there were only women students, they did not have to worry about whether speaking up in class would make them look too smart to have a date on Saturday. She further describes the environment as “free and open” with high academic standards. When describing the culture of the women’s college, she mentions that a lot of people who graduated from the women’s college were successful and that this could have been because there were so many women faculty who were role models.

Career Path. Although Lisa decided early on as an undergraduate that she wanted to teach college students, she said that she never “made a conscious decision” to move into
college administration. In fact, she took seven years off from academia and held various positions in government offices. When she returned to academia, she only became the interim head of her department because the dean asked her to do so when the head of the department resigned unexpectedly. However, she took the position because he gave her the freedom to “clean some things up.” In this position, she was the highest ranking woman administrator, and there were no mentors for her, so she decided to do the ACE Fellows program which broadened her view of leadership and her confidence. Although Lisa was concerned that taking the seven years off from academia would hurt her chances of being an upper level university official, she found that those experiences in Washington prepared her to be a higher education leader and allowed her to move readily into these roles. Specifically, she is familiar with government processes and knows how to negotiate because of this experience.

Lisa describes that her undergraduate experience impacted her career path:

But the Women’s College experience was really important to me, because I mean if I had not gone to college and if I had not been in an environment where the classes were small and people were really pretty actively engaged in intellectual pursuits and in what was going on around us, and if we hadn't had the kind of support of faculty that we really did have, who knows. I mean my high school guidance counselor wanted me to go to Secretarial School in New York.

Karen

Biographical information. Karen spoke very fondly of her undergraduate experience. She says that she decided to attend her women’s college because it was beautiful,
and she did not feel comfortable attending a large public university. Before entering college, Karen knew that she was interested in math and science, and she ultimately decided to major in physics and minor in math. Neither of Karen’s parents have a four year degree, which influenced how active she was early on, but she said that she settled into the nurturing environment that was just the right distance from home.

**Influential relationships.** Karen describes how the student affairs professionals mentored and impacted her life, leadership, and career. Because of her co-curricular involvements and work with them each summer, the dean of students, associate dean of students, and director of student activities, profoundly influenced Karen. She mentions that as soon as she got to know them and learned what they did, she thought, “Whoa! This is the kind of job I want!” Karen’s primary mentor, the associate dean of students, was older and never married. She went to Women’s College and then returned to work there. Karen remembers that she was very caring, wanted students to have the best experience at Women’s College, and was honest. Karen states that her mentor “was one of those that I so admired her accomplishments, her kindness, just how she worked and how the aura of who she was.”

Karen goes on to describe that she bases how she interacts with students today according to how her mentors treated her while she was in college. For example, Karen articulates that one particular moment “defined for me what I wanted to do.” She describes that during Parents Weekend, a friend from home died and the dean and associate dean were the ones who sat her down, talked calmly with her, and helped her pull herself together to get through the weekend of activities. For Karen, this was a defining moment that influenced her career path. She sees this experience as the “kernel” that led her to work in student affairs.
Environment. Karen describes how the environment at Women’s College was different than that of high school. For example, there were only a few women in her upper level math classes in high school, but at Women’s College, women could major in whatever they liked. In high school, men always won the student council positions, but at Women’s College, women could run for whatever they wanted, and “there was no one to say you can’t do it.” She realizes that she did not have to compete with men or worry about being perceived as a geek because she liked science.

Karen’s description of the environment at her women’s college is similar to other women’s descriptions of their women’s college environment. Initially, Karen’s perception of Women’s College was that it was only for students who came from rich families, but she soon found out that this was not the case and that all types of women from various socioeconomic classes attended Women’s College. However, because she grew up on a farm and neither of her parents had a four-year degree; she felt that she had to “fight for the right to be there.” She questioned if she was smart enough to attend this elite women’s college. Karen also describes the environment as safe, governed by strict rules (e.g., curfew, men could only visit on Friday and Saturdays, had to leave room key), and sheltered.

Another aspect of the environment that resonates with Karen was the idea that “you could do anything you want to do.” She believes this was an overt campus message, but she also believes that upon looking back at the women’s college experience, she and her friends learned that “being educated does not only mean that you have to be only a professional woman. Umm, that you can still be educated but yet still be a great functioning part of society and being a mom is still really good…” Like other participants, Karen recognizes that
society may have influenced her undergraduate experience. For example, she recounts that getting married later in life and striving to do well professionally, may have been a function of living in the 1980s. Karen states:

You know I’m not real sure if it was the mentors or just the late 80s….you know, the working girl model, at that time was, if you go to college and you succeed and you do these things then you need to go and be a business woman….that was the model in the late 80s…if you went to college, you were to go be, do great things.

Karen was very active in co-curricular life at Women’s College. She was vice president of the first year class and each year following, she was president. Karen comments that because of her leadership positions she was able to interface with various college administrators. She recounts that she was one of the lucky ones who stepped out and said, “Sure, I’ll do it.” Although she was not ready to be president her first year, she decided she was ready to be in charge of things, so she ran for president her sophomore year. Karen attributed who she is to her co-curricular involvement. Although everyone probably assumed that she was a stellar student, she referred to herself as “Karen College,” who gained a lot from her co-curricular involvements. She sites that her leadership experiences helped her learn how to speak in front of people and talk with them. She said, “that really defined who I am more, much more so than the academic side.”

Karen comments that her view of leadership changed from when she entered Women’s College to when she exited. Her perceptions of leadership changed as she saw women running a university with such a large endowment. She recounts that these women
were confident, awarded scholarship money, were nice, and moved the university forward. Prior to her experience at Women’s College, Karen thought that women were moms and grandmas, and aunts…and teachers, strictly teachers, umm rather than educators…I think that shifted a lot to see that they, you know, that being in those roles, didn’t necessarily mean that they were not feminine.

Also, Karen notes that how she led changed from her first year to her senior year. She acknowledges that she learned to delegate more as she progressed in her leadership experiences. For example, she did not delegate as much during her first two years, but during her senior year, she was on academic probation because she was one credit hour short from being a senior. Therefore, a stipulation for getting off probation was showing that she was not trying to accomplish everything by herself. This situation required Karen to delegate and change how she led.

**Career path.** After graduating from Women’s College, Karen used her undergraduate major and taught high school and middle school physics. Karen taught for three years and then returned to graduate school, initially studying high school administration, but by the end of her first semester, she changed her track of study to higher education administration. Prior to being the Dean of Students, Karen was a professor of education at the same institution and then took time to stay at home with her children. She did not plan to return to work to be the Dean of Students, but the University called and asked her to serve as interim Dean, and then she applied to be the permanent Dean.

In summary, Karen describes how the Women’s College experience influenced her and her friends:
I would say they all—something while they were there transformed them from—it gave them more confidence. It gave them a sense of who they were, umm, and how they deal with the rest of the world. And I think a lot of them would talk about the Honor Code and that sense of integrity. Umm, you know you may not always be the very top or may not always be the leader but having integrity is better, you know, and that that to me is a big way to show somebody’s leadership ability is if they have integrity. So I would say that they would all say they wouldn’t necessarily be the same person today. They wouldn’t be able to do what they could do if they had not gone there. I would definitely think that.

Judy

Biographical information. Judy chose Women’s College because her mother “was such a proponent of Women’s College” and thought it was a great school. Two of her aunts attended Women’s College, and Judy’s sister thought that “Women’s College was a better fit” than another school Judy was considering. Judy says, “I didn’t have any real clue, but I thought, “Well, I’ll try it.” She thought that if she did not like it, she could transfer, but after only being at Women’s College for a week, she realized, “I love this college!”

Choice of major. For Judy, she came into college thinking that she would major in English, but she says she “sort of resisted it for awhile.” She states that she knew English was her “destiny,” but she wasn’t ready to decide yet, and she declared her major as English during her sophomore year.

Environment. Prior to coming to college, Judy was very active in 4-H and ran for some leadership positions and won and ran for other leadership positions and lost. She states,
“I had come out of a high school where boys were the presidents and girls were the secretaries, and that had always rankled with me; I didn’t think that was the way life should be.” When Judy came to Women’s College, “it was all self-nomination.” During the first months of Judy’s undergraduate career at Women’s College, she chose to run for first-year class president, and she won. She describes this experience as a “springboard” to leadership and an “exercise in courage.”

Because she was first-year class president, she was a member of the Student Life Committee which included the class presidents, the student government president, and the dean of students. Judy’s work on this committee led to her further work in SGA, which she eventually became president of during her senior year. Judy connects her involvement with SGA to her career now. She says she tells students that,

Had I not done those things, I truly don’t believe I would be doing what I’m doing now. It wasn’t a direct line, it wasn’t that you had to be freshman president and Student Government president before you could be a chief student affairs officers in a college, but it helps. It helps a lot to have had that involvement and that sense of purpose and that sense of engagement and that sense of commitment.

Judy’s described her leadership style as collaborative, and she believed that an experience during her undergraduate was an early lesson in this type of leadership. During her junior year, Judy got mono and was unable to lead a traditional campus competition that was part of her student officer responsibilities. Through this experience, she realized that she did not have to lead every activity and be seen as the leader by her peers. Other students could also lead activities.
Another important aspect of Judy’s view of her leadership development during college is how she viewed her level of involvement and the importance of that involvement during her undergraduate career. She recounts,

We thought we ran the school. We did. We thought we did. We didn’t. But we ran our part of the school very independent of the College itself. That was a tremendously empowering experience.

**Influential relationships.** People from Judy’s curricular and co-curricular experience impacted her development. One woman that Judy describes in depth is the SGA president from her first-year in college. To her, this woman seemed perfect, and she was amazed as a first-year that the SGA president knew she was alive. Another student that impacted Judy’s leadership development was the SGA president from the following year, as this woman was a hall proctor for first-year students during Judy’s first-year and was SGA president when Judy was the secretary of the legislative board. Judy says she learned a lot about leadership by watching the leaders who were a year or two ahead of her.

In the curricular realm, the English faculty influenced Judy. She describes them and their role in her life as follows:

They were tough women, but their commitment to students, their commitment to the discipline, and their commitment to the college were palpably clear to me, and I would guess some people would say the same of me….And we all need models; we all need those role models who show us the way.

**Career path.** Judy’s career path was not well planned. Even though Judy declared her major as English during her sophomore year, she initially planned to be a third grade
teacher. She recalls, “I just thought that was a great grade and that was because of the teacher I had, Miss A., a great teacher.” However, Judy remembers her decision about choosing her career path as follows: “soon after I was here as a student, I thought, ‘I want to teach in college.’”

After Judy graduated from college, she immediately attended graduate school. She chose to study English and completed her Masters in two semesters. However, she considered attending divinity school, and she remarks,

And my life would have been every bit different if I had done one of those. But I might have ended up in the same place doing relatively the same thing. There are many paths to college administration, which is good news.

After completing her Masters in English, Judy talked with administrators at Women’s College about whether she should pursue an Ed.D. or a Ph.D. because by this point, she knew she wanted to be a college administrator. All of the people she asked suggested that she should “stay in the Ph.D. program and finish that, and then I could go in pretty much any direction in the college.”

While in graduate school, Judy became involved with the English Graduate Student Association and started a specialized advising program for undergraduate students studying the humanities. As a result, Judy wrote an article for a career services journal, and the director at the Women’s College read it.

Judy hoped that her career path would lead her back to Women’s College. At first she said that she hoped to “teach in a small liberal arts college in a town with a major university.”
In fact, Judy’s first interview to work at her alma mater took place in London and was more theoretical in case a job did open up for her there.

After completing her coursework for the English Ph.D., Judy moved across country and began working at Women’s College as the director of the professional communications program who oversaw a minor and helped students get internships. As Judy worked at Women’s College, she became very involved with students and their organizations. Ten years after starting, she became a full professor. Then, Judy headed the search committee for the vice president of student development and at the end of the search process, the president asked her to be the vice president, and she accepted. Now, Judy has been in this position for 16 years.

For Judy, she connects her career path and leadership development to her initial involvement at Women’s College.

So it’s been a continuing education for me, from the time I turned in that first form saying I’d like to be a freshman class president, and I think I’ve been pretty good at getting the most out of the opportunities I’ve had.

She acknowledges that for her, leadership development has been much like the 4-H motto, “learn by doing.” She says, “And in large measure, my experiences in leadership have been learned by doing leadership. She recalls that by having “experiential learning” opportunities through 4-H, church, grammar school, student government, working through bureaucracy during graduate school, and then “coming up the ranks from very junior faculty member to college vice president,” she says she’s learned because “I’ve aspired to office and held office.”
Judy suggests that there are different paths to leadership. She describes the path to leadership as follows: “And so I think that recognizing that there are many paths toward knowledge and leadership, some of which are because you might have had a course in a particular thing.”

Sarah

**Biographical information.** Sarah’s story is slightly different than the other participants in this study. Prior to attending Women’s College, she attended a private, two year, residential college. However, for the purposes of this narrative story, I will primarily focus on Sarah’s story during her two years at Women’s College. Sarah chose to attend Women’s College because she received a transfer scholarship and an academic scholarship, and she could play tennis. She also states, “I really go on how I feel and I felt really comfortable at Women’s College.”

**Environment.** Sarah describes that Women’s College fostered an environment of empowerment and achieving whatever you would like to do. She states:

As a women’s college, it’s a very unique environment and a very focused environment. More academically rigorous than I expected, because I think they’re fighting that stigma of, you know, we teach women how to cook and clean and be good wives, So, I mean, it was way more rigorous than I thought it was gonna be. But I think that they give women a sense of empowerment. I mean, you can do anything that you want to do. And so, I mean that’s what I got.

Sarah goes on to describe what she appreciated about the Women’s College environment:
I also really appreciate and enjoy the opportunity and the experience that I had at Women’s College and the sense of empowerment that I felt and the focus. I mean, I really think there’s a lot to be said for an environment where—you know, women only become catty and evil towards each other when they’re vying for a man’s affection….and I really enjoyed just eliminating that element at Women’s College. And we could just focus on sisterhood and education and empowerment. So, I mean, I really do appreciate it.

Sarah articulates that when she thinks about leading, she thinks about her Women’s College experience and not Junior College. Junior College made her think, “I can do it.” Yet, the expectation at Women’s College is …you can be great. It’s not just any more you can do it, you can do it and be really great at it and do incredible things that you didn’t even know you could do. So, Women’s College really was where I learned to reach way higher than I had ever reached before.

Sarah considers her Junior College experience as a “springboard,” and then upon entering Women’s College, she “got really involved also.” At Junior College, she started the Young Republicans club, was president of Phi Beta Kappa, and was treasurer for SGA. Sarah said, “So, I mean, I think it started here (Junior College), but then carried over and developed as I got older and more mature and more grounded in who I was and what I had to offer.”

Sarah also competed in pageants, which she believed aided in her development of confidence and public speaking abilities, but she says that “It (self confidence and public speaking) wasn’t completely solidified, but I had the beginnings of it. I had a foundation. But
they (Women’s College) definitely helped me build on that foundation. She cites that her major increased her self confidence and public speaking abilities.

Definitely the major, ‘cause it was Communications. So, you know, had to do a lot of public speaking and presentations and a lot of on-camera work with Women’s College TV, and so, through all of those activities and through the interaction with certain professors.

In addition to helping Sarah develop as a leader, Sarah also believes that Women’s College prepared her for what she would experience in the workforce as a woman. She says, “They really taught me how to – I mean, I think they prepared me to have a tough exterior, so that I could deal with things that I ran into like a president patting me on the head.”

For Sarah, her view of leadership changed while she was in college, specifically during her Women’s College experience. She describes that,

Women’s College helped me, I don’t want to say question leadership, but they taught me that not every leader is right. And you have to be strong enough to decide what leaders you follow and what leaders you say this is not right and I’m not following you, so, I mean, or what leaders you question. And I think part of that was just maturity, but then, also, part of it was them trying to help me become strong and independent. So, I think it started—you know, I mean, I think it really developed there.

**Influential relationships.** Different professors impacted Sarah’s development at distinct times during her undergraduate career at Women’s College. One of those people was a communications professor. Sarah co-wrote a paper with her and they presented the paper at
the National Association of Broadcasters Convention. Sarah recounts that “she (Dr. Cox) was really the person that I think made me feel like I could do anything I wanted to do.” Although Dr. Cox never told Sarah that she could do anything she wanted to do, Sarah realized that she could do anything by watching Dr. Cox’s example of taking on large projects, balancing work and family life, and not being intimidated in meetings with the president of a television company.

A professor of theater impacted how Sarah viewed leadership. She remembers that he pushed students to “think for ourselves” and “question the institution.” He made her realize that she could question authority and decide what she thinks is right and go in that direction. In summary, “he just wanted us to be strong and independent and not be afraid to blaze new trails, if we really truly felt that that was the direction we needed to go in, so.”

Regarding the gender of the mentor, she states,

I think that strong women to serve as models for those women is really important...men are great professors too….But the women are the ones who really stick out in my mind. And I think it was because I was looking for a role model….I met women there who saw something they wanted and went after it. And damn it, they got….and I was like, ah, these women are incredible.

**Career path.** Immediately following graduation, Sarah worked at a local television station but she did not like the hours or the pay, so in thinking that “there has to be more in the world than this,” she left the television station and returned to school to get a second undergraduate degree in education. She chose this course of study because she had “fallen in
love with learning all over again and wanted to share that love with other people.” However, after one semester, she decided to get her MBA and changed her course of study.

After graduating with her MBA, she contacted her junior college about teaching business courses, and they hired her to replace someone who was going to retire. For Sarah, the initial decision to come back to Junior College was not a selfish one. She explains,

I think I wanted to come back to Junior College to teach because it means so much to me in a really critical point in my life, and I wanted to try to empower students the way that I had been empowered….So, I think I wanted to come back here to teach, so I could help empower students and help make a difference in their life.

However, three weeks before she was to start as an assistant professor, the professor decided to not retire, and they offered her a newly created position: director of enrollment management. She explains this change in her career path.

I didn’t understand at that point why my direction was taking that turn, my life was taking that turn. It was just by chance that I ended up in this profession. It wasn’t really a conscious decision. It just kinda happened.

Sarah decided to take the position because she knew she could “sell Junior College,” and because they gave her a mentor to teach her about enrollment management. Sarah acknowledges that she’s “really been fortunate to have a lot of really strong and extremely successful mentors in different phases” of her life.
Rachel

Biographical information. Rachel is from the north east, and she explains that her Women’s College was for blue collar people who did not get into one of the seven sister schools. Rachel was first introduced to Women’s College when she attended a governor’s school there that focused on encouraging women to be leaders. A women’s association sponsored the event, and she was nominated through her high school. Rachel was the first person in her family to attend college.

Environment. Although we looked through the yearbook for the mission of Women’s College, Rachel recounts that the mission of Women’s College was to develop women leaders. She has a “feeling” that “it might say leadership.” Rachel remembers that most of the administrators and faculty of her college were women. She also talks about how Women’s College helped her realize that “women were strong and women could do all these things.”

Even if faculty and staff did not directly talk about or teach leadership, Rachel explains that at Women’s College, women were taught and expected to do many things. Rachel discusses how women’s college graduates speak their mind. She says that “we were encouraged to speak our minds and we weren’t, we didn’t hold back…” She says Women’s College taught her to have “a very high expectation of my work.” Women’s College graduates were expected to give. She explains that at Women’s College she and her peers were taught to “do a really good job and to write well and to speak well and umm, to be able to add lib and just get up and talk and…” She says, she was taught to think. She describes that,
…if you are outspoken and relatively smart and you make sense to people, you kind of volunteered for all sorts of things and then you find, you look around and you go, oh man (laughter)….How did I get here?...Umm, so, a, you know I think that we were not afraid to take that on.

She was cognizant of women students having all of the leadership roles on campus. She says that they did not think about leadership.

We just did it. I think maybe that’s what it is…with women’s colleges. Cause there were no guys to do anything. You didn’t really think about it. You just did it…if something needed to be done, one of us had to do it. You know?

Regarding student organizations, she comments, “They were all run by women and there were no guys to compete with for umm…leadership roles on campus. Whatever it was, it was going to get done on campus; it was going to get done by women.”

When I asked Rachel about the Women’s College experience and what that means. She says, “Well for me, as I said, it meant umm, getting to be umm, I’m the one that edited this yearbook.” She goes on to explain that “I would probably not have stepped forward to do that if I were at a co-ed school.”

For Rachel, she says she did not think about becoming a leader, “this is what your parents expected you do.” She further notes that “we expected to, to be leaders among women.” If she thought about leadership at all, she explains:

I think we were expected back then if you went to college and you graduated from college, you were a very small percentage of the population and so as a result I think
if I thought about it at all, I would have said, well, I’m college educated, I’m supposed to be, you know, somebody doing important things or whatever.

For her, she says, “I kind of really more by accident than anything fell into a leadership role on the campus.” She says that she remembers feeling like a leader when she was involved with the yearbook. Regarding this experience of being the yearbook editor, she says, “But I mean if I had not been at Women’s College, I’m not sure I would have been selected or that I would have done it.” After talking about this experience, she reflects,

But being at a women’s college, you learn you can do things you didn’t think you could, you know. Umm, it isn’t just about being a student because you can’t let somebody else…you can’t just step back and let other people do everything.

Rachel exhibited “courage” when she applied to attend Harvard one semester. Although she chose to return to Women’s College, she explained that she would not have had the courage to apply had she not done as well at Women’s College.

Influential Relationships. She describes that “we got used to asking if you needed help or advice. You went to women,” since most of the faculty and administrators were women. For Rachel, a relationship with an upper-class student was critical in getting her to step out to be the editor of the yearbook. Her friend asked her to be on the yearbook staff and then the following year her peers voted for her to be editor of the yearbook.

Rachel remembers looking up to people who she thought were good and effective leaders. While in college, she looked up to students. For example, she talks about looking up to her roommate and another person on the honor board. She believes they were better leaders and more organized than she was.
Career path. When Rachel first graduated from college, she began working at another institution in the financial aid office. Her first job in higher education was because her husband at the time worked for State University, and her work study job was in financial aid. For her, choosing to work in higher education was something she “kind of fell into” and “it worked out.”

Rachel mentions because of being a woman, “I did get a door slammed in my face on a couple of occasions.” For example, she applied to a doctoral program at an Ivy League and was not admitted. That year only 15 men were admitted to the program, and Rachel had a 4.0 GPA. She also applied to another Ivy League school but was not admitted. She did end up at another Ivy League, and through all of this she noticed that at co-ed institutions, all of the deans were men. Although she was admitted to a higher education doctoral program, she dropped out of it, because at that point, she did not want that degree. She wanted a clinical psychology degree.

Upon returning to work for the university college (i.e., evening, adult continuing education program) part of her alma mater, she found someone who inspired her “to not give up and to keep on pushing” and that was a 38 year old vice president of student affairs. In fact, Rachel said, “When I’m 38, I want to be Barbara.” During a meeting, when Barbara explained that she was going to merge colleges, Rachel spoke up and gave her opinion against the proposal. Afterwards, Barbara offered her three jobs.

Shortly after this time, Rachel resigned because she was about to have a child and, because maternity leave was not a policy yet, she stayed home. She found that staying at home boring, so she started a women’s newsletter, and she said that “I was instrumental in
putting together a group of women faculty, and I taught the first women’s studies course at State University.” Barbara continued to invite Rachel back to work, but because her Rachel’s husband became ill, she had to support her family and stay in dead-end jobs, as it was more important for her to provide for her family and spend time with them rather than climb the job market ladder. During her career, Rachel did not think about how to exhibit her leadership qualities because she was in “dual mode all the time.” She was “caretaker, support, family support.”

At a later point, she was working at a community college, and they offered to pay for her to attend a doctoral program that was not fully accepted as a worthwhile program, but because the program was not well respected, she turned this opportunity down. At 54, when Rachel’s children were older and she was divorced, she returned to get her doctorate and worked fulltime at the institution while doing so. While finishing her doctorate, she accepted her job at her current institution.

As Rachel recounts what she and her classmates did after graduating. She says, “I don’t think any of us really set out umm, necessarily to become leaders, we just did.” She notes that becoming outspoken while at Women’s College could be what propels her and her peers to be leaders in their various fields today. She believes that graduates of women’s colleges are “not afraid…to be out there.” They do not shy away from leadership, and she says, “if we did stuff, we did it right. We did it well.”

Pamela

Biographical information. Pamela began her collegiate career during the spring 1986 semester. Pamela considered attending another private university in the city where she
was from, but they did not accept applicants for the spring semester, and Women’s College was in the same town and they accepted spring students. Therefore, upon a friend from high school’s suggestion, Pamela visited Women’s College and decided to attend. When Pamela entered Women’s College, she was married and a young mother. She recounts that she was the only traditional-aged African-American student in her class. For these reasons, she did not have to live on campus. Although she considered transferring after the first semester, once she began her semester at Women’s College, she decided that she could “start some things on campus” and be a “mover and shaker.”

**Choice of major.** When Pamela first started at Women’s College, she was an economics major but in her third semester, she was overwhelmed and changed her major to Communication because she thought she wanted to be in a newsroom and be an anchorwoman. She believes that having to speak and write in her major prepared her for the job in admissions.

**Environment.** According to Pamela, a women’s college develops individuals and “in developing those skills, I think you’re naturally prone to be a leader.” For Pamela, she has questioned the role of her personality and how the Women’s College experience made her what she describes as a “hell raiser.” Because Pamela was involved in high school, she states that she had leadership capabilities but they were reinforced at Women’s College.

Pamela describes that there were certain expectations at Women’s College. Pamela remembers that the expectation of a Women’s College woman was that if she “has her hands in” a project, an organization, or an office, it should be better. She states,
I guess in a nutshell, it was just the expectation. It was the expectation that being in this Women’s College environment that you would be a leader, whether it was the job, or in your community as a community volunteer, the expectation was that you were going to leave there and do great things.

To Pamela, the Women’s College environment encouraged and expected that students could do it. She describes that the Admissions materials gave an introduction to this expectation. Additionally, the classroom environment reinforced these expectations and encouragement. The classroom was oriented to the female perspective, which Pamela views as a reinforcement of the “you can do it” expectation. Faculty members related in a certain way to students and talked about graduate school, which was a reinforcement of these expectations.

She credits the women’s college for making her question everything. For example, she describes that including students in the governance process taught them to ask questions. So you would go to a meeting, depending on what committee you were on, and faculty members and administration would be there, and you were encouraged—you had the same vote as them in a lot of ways, so [you] got that reinforcement of speaking your mind.

As Pamela continued to reflect on how the Women’s College experience reinforced that it was okay for students to question, she realizes that when she spoke up about and gave her opinion about diversity and recruiting, “People didn’t chastise me, or the administration didn’t blackball me because I spoke up.” She describes that what Women’s College did was
reinforce what students were told women’s colleges did and that was encouraging students to “speak up and speak your mind.”

Pamela says that she was very active in the Black Students Association and although she did not start the organization, she did “re-organize it.” A critical event during her undergraduate career was after reading a description of Black Students Association in the paper that misrepresented the organization, she wrote a letter to the editor that questioned what the College was “really doing to increase diversity on campus.” She believed that if the College could not articulate the purpose of the Black Student Organization, that the College would “continue to have problems, and student like me are to going to continue to choose not to come here.” After this letter to the editor, the Dean of Admissions called Pamela to her office, and told her that she could be more impactful than any of the Admissions staff.

When Pamela reflects on her undergraduate experience, she did not think that her understanding of leadership changed as a result of her undergraduate experience, but she did talk about several leadership-type skills that she developed while at Women’s College. She describes that the Women’s College experience gave her a foundation in problem solving and how to approach problems. She states that she does not like things to “fester” and she would rather “deal with a problem head on,” which she believes is a Women’s College “thing to do.” She credits Women’s College for encouraging her and giving her the opportunities to practice having delicate conversations with people. She comments that “at Women’s College, I had to develop other leadership skills, in terms of navigating the system.” Some of these skills include giving her opinion and resolving conflict. “As a student she would carefully consider how she talked with administrators about the black student experience at Women’s
College. She attributes Women’s College for the foundation of her confidence building. She says, “it started the journey of ‘I can do it.’” She describes that,

Women’s College certainly built that foundation of feeling confident about myself and not questioning if I should be sitting at the table kind of thing, and feeling good about walking into a room of people and holding my own so to speak.

During our conversation, she describes how students interacted with one another. Pamela remembers that no one was shy at Women’s College and that everyone gave their opinion and pulled their weight. From this, she suspects that her philosophy of “Okay, have I gotten everybody’s input? Is everybody involved that should be involved and can be involved?” could be a result of the Women’s College experience and how everyone interacted with one another.

In summary, Pamela describes how the Women’s College experience shaped her and developed her leadership skills.

I was always encouraged to participate and be involved, whether it was a campus association, whether it was a committee meeting, whether it was some type of athletics, whatever it was, at Women’s College, you were encouraged to do that.

**Influential relationships.** Pamela remarks that role models are an important part of the Women’s College experience. “Because you had so many role models you could see kind of how things could be accomplished and it wasn’t that difficult.” She goes on to describe how seeing successful women come back to campus, helped her connect the dots to realize that “if I do all this and I have this experience here, I can be the first Supreme Court judge at such and such place, and I can run *Time Magazine*, and I can be the college president.” She
explains that these role models showed her how the Women’s College experience fostered that idea of that she could do it, and that it was that experience that was the “foundation” that prepared her to sit in the board room with men.

When I asked Pamela about role models, she said that she did not have any at Women’s College because there were no black female professors at Women’s College. However, she did mention that she had role models and mentors in her church and community. She does acknowledge that without question faculty members encouraged her and gave her positive reinforcement.

Upon further reflection, Pamela recalls that the first black person to attend Women’s College influenced her Women’s College experience. This woman graduated in 1972 and is now a minister. Pamela said that when she talked with her and listened to her, she realized how difficult it was for her. Pamela thought “this ain’t nothing, if she can deal with that!” She goes on to explain that “having someone like her that I could look to to say, ‘if she can do that, then I can do this,’ I think probably influenced me in a way too in terms of my leadership.”

She described that she wishes she “could point to more tangible things,” but she states that it was

…the subtleness of the environment that nurtures your leadership skills in the sense of a lot of classes requiring certain projects, requiring you to be standing in front of the class making speeches and doing different things. I would say the relationships that you form…with faculty members. You truly do feel comfortable with your
faculty members because they encourage you to come talk to them, they have things at their house.

**Career path.** Pamela has worked in Admissions Offices for over 20 years at five institutions. Prior to graduating, she was not sure what she would do. For a short while, she worked at Wachovia until Women’s College called her.

She was then hired by the Admissions Office to run a component of a grant that was aimed at enhancing diversity. She realizes that she was recommended for this job because she was in the Admissions Office asking, “What are you doing? What do the numbers look like?” Also, there was a staff member in Admissions who talked with the dean and suggested that she should hire Pam. Pamela acknowledges that administrators and faculty helped her get the job in Admissions.

Pamela worked at Women’s College for four years and then she realized that in order for her to move up in admissions, she would need more experience. She then left and worked at a State University for two years. During this experience, she decided that she needed to pursue a Masters degree. She then moved back to her hometown and worked at the HBCU in her hometown for a short while. Then, Women’s College allowed her to have a 20 hour per week Admissions position while working on her Master’s degree. Soon thereafter she was offered a position in financial aid and an associate director position at HBCU University.

Pamela realizes that she would not be who she is today if it were not for Women’s College. When she speaks with other minority alumnae, she shares this idea with them.

…”we wouldn’t be the women we are today without Women’s College,’ it’s that whole encouragement of becoming a leader, the encouragement of the expectation is
that you’re going to do great things. And again, those great things can be the boardroom or the community center, and that’s something that we got reinforced to us all the time at Women’s College. And, again, we saw it when the women came back and said, ‘This is what I got at Women’s College, those leadership skills, being able to articulate, having the type of faculty that taught me things that when I got to graduate school I was prepared, so I made the better grades, so I got the better job,’ those kind of things. So let’s celebrate that aspect of Women’s College.

Amy

**Biographical information.** Amy is from the south east and when she graduated from high school, she did not want to attend the same colleges that her high school friends planned to attend. She recalls, “I really don’t wanna do that. I think I wanna go someplace different.” She looked at several out of state women’s colleges but chose Women’s College because she felt more comfortable there. For Amy, Women’s College was a new experience with new people that was challenging academically and required assertiveness. Although Amy did not say if she was the first in her family to go to college, she did note that it was a big sacrifice for her family to pay for Women’s College.

**Environment.** She says she benefitted from “all that you read about the benefits of single-sex education.” She double majored in math and economics. She chose math as a major because she

...had always loved math; that was my favorite subject, and somewhere along the way, I think somebody said, “Well, if you don’t know really what you want to do with your life, then pick a major that you like, and it will work out. And it did.
For Amy, the environment at Women’s College was more focused on academic achievement rather than being involved on campus and developing leadership. Although she valued her undergraduate experience and appreciates the concept of leadership now, she describes that leadership was not a “buzz word” then like it is now.

I don’t remember. I don’t remember thinking about leadership. You know back then leadership was not the buzz word that it is now. It was not the big – you know the university where I work is now saying, “We want to be the leadership institution, and we want to [add] leadership components to all of our curriculum, and we wanna have all of this focus on leadership.” I think it’s really good because it’s like your paper. I think we need to be focused on that. I mean there’s a lot that people – you know we need to know the science and the math and all the details.

Amy describes the emphasis at Women’s College was preparing for graduate school and achieving academically. “There was a lot of focus on grades and academic strength and that kind of thing – preparing for graduate school, if that’s what people were doing.”

Another important expectation of Amy’s Women’s College experience was the Honor System. She describes that it impacted her more than any other aspect of her collegiate career. “I know something that I can’t believe I didn’t think about it first thing – that probably made the biggest impression on me at Women’s College, and that was the honor system.” She explains how tests were taken on their honor, exams were taken on varying days, doors remained unlocked in the residence halls, and all violations of the honor code were reported.
Amy was not as involved with co-curricular types of things, but she was very focused on academics and studied most weekends. She recounts,

You know, I was trying to think about that, and I don’t remember very much. I did some tutoring, and I know I was, but I don’t remember. I don’t remember. I think some of that is probably part of a regret and part of you know something I would do differently. I think I was really focused on grades and the academic side more than the rest of the experience, so I don’t remember.

When I asked Amy to talk more about how she developed assertiveness, she gave an example of a time when she was struggling in a class and had to ask the head of the math department for assistance. She says, “and I would just go to her office and meet with her until I understood the material, you know. She was gonna teach it to me one way or another. I was trainable; I was convinced of that.” Amy recounts that Women’s College had the greatest influence on her self-confidence. “I think it did. I think it helped to build confidence, self-confidence, and I think that’s probably the biggest key.” She talked about to intentionally increase confidence, faculty members would “challenge what you thought” and give you opportunities “to think and sort of defend your opinion.”

**Influential relationships.** Amy describes the importance living arrangements, as the structure of housing gave her opportunity to look up to upper-class students to hear what their plans were.

…the dorms were mixed up by classes. It wasn’t the freshmen here and the sophomores here – all classes were mixed up together, so there were a lot of – you know there was a lot of opportunity to hear the upperclassmen talk and what they did.
She goes on to describe that she knew the expectations of doing well academically and preparing for graduate school because of the seniors.

...Probably because of what the seniors were doing. You know we lived with them on the hall, ‘cause everybody was all mixed up together, so you knew what the seniors were doing. You heard where they were thinking about going to graduate school or what kind of jobs they were getting.

**Career path.** After Amy graduated from Women’s College, she began working at a bank and worked for them five years. Because she was not making a lot of money and was still single, she decided to pursue her Master’s degree. She attended a private institution and received her MBA there. From that experience, she highlights that her self confidence and ability to understand increased in capacity there.

...the confidence that I learned in an MBA school too – that was real helpful there, because I had to understand. It was a much more independent learning environment; not nearly as caring as undergraduate school was.

Amy chose to work at West University because the man she was engaged to was from the western part of the state, and she thought that she would like to work at this institution, which was near his hometown. Twenty seven years ago, she began working at the University where she currently is in a senior level position. She worked her way up through the system when opportunities were presented to her. She has been in her current position for four years. She describes how a career path in higher education is not well prescribed.

Right. There’s not – I think at least in West University – and some of the other people that I’ve talked to in higher ed, and you can probably relate to this – we really don’t
have very well-defined career paths for people. At the bank, when I started there, I went in as a trainee. You work as a trainee for a while, and then you go to this department and you work, and you kind of have a path. But in higher ed. I don’t think we do; I don’t think we do a very good job of that.

**Jan**

**Biographical information.** Jan was from the rural Midwest and attended a private women’s college in the north east. She only applied to the Women’s College she attended, and she “had no idea how bold a thing that was to do.” Jan describes that she was ready to change environments and not be in the high school environment anymore.

I was extremely eager to get out of an environment that was dominated by high school boys, intellectually. And the idea of being in a women’s college appealed to my feminism at that point, appealed to my desire to study among people who were like me and just get rid of the high school boy crap I was so tired of.

Because a number of institutions had begun going co-ed, the Women’s College had begun recruiting good students from “unusual places,” like the Midwest. However, her “background was not quite the same academically as a lot of the other Women’s College students background were.” She admits that she may have not been well prepared. Jan says she chose her English major because she “just loved to read books.”

**Environment.** When I asked Judy how attending Women’s College influenced who she is today, she says:

I’ve always thought that the two really powerful things about being at a women’s college are umm, the expectations that you encounter there and
the role models you encounter there. I’ve always felt like those were really, really powerful. At a women’s college, you are much less likely to encounter gendered expectations about what you’re going to do. Varsity athletes are women, the physics majors are women. I mean at a women’s college, it’s all open to you, and the expectation is you can do any of those things if you want to. And if you can’t, it is not because you are woman.

An example of a Women’s College expectation is Jan’s experience playing badminton. She recalls that prior to college she did not think she was an athlete. She was taught that girls only played “games.” She describes that…”for me because growing up in a public school in the Midwest before Title IX, no one ever expected me to be an athlete. Nobody ever thought [I] could be an athlete.” Then, when she attended Women’s College, the she realized that the expectation changed:

… they said all women can be athletes. All women can. So let’s show you how and so you went through all of these tests and all of a sudden I could be an athlete, I could!… but umm, they expected that I could be fit and I could be athletically successful, when I didn’t expect that of myself… It was huge in terms of self image.

From Jan’s perspective the Women’s College environment was full of expectations:

Umm, substandard work just wouldn’t pass, just wouldn’t pass. And there was no idea that women were less good at math or women were less good in science or anything like that, right? I mean there was no watered down course work. Umm, there was an expectation embodied in our honor code that you would behave like a grown up…You would deal with your problems constructively. You would deal with people
straightforwardly. You would take responsibility for your actions. You’d be held accountable. Umm, and again, I think there is something gendered to that, I mean it was this expectation that you had become a young woman and you were [to] behave like an adult citizen not like a silly girl.

Jan believes that “women’s colleges really help break women out of a fear of doing the unusual thing.” A primary example from Jan’s undergraduate experience is a conversation that took place during orientation. She and some of her new classmates were talking after dinner, and the women she was talking with talked about how they scammed companies, but this did not sit well with Jan, so she had to “make a choice between allegiance to something that seemed important to me and umm, allegiance to what was the norm around.” She chose to speak up and say she did not agree.

Jan’s experience was very much centered on academic life. She remarks that she was an “extremely, extremely academically focused undergraduate.” She says she was a “book worm” and “was very campus focused.”

**Influential relationships.** Teachers and role models played an important role in Jan’s development. Jan describes role modeling at her Women’s College as,

Seeing women of all personal styles, all personal values, women who were mothers and not mothers. Women who were 80 and women who were 30. Umm, you know women who lived unconventional lives and women who lived very conventional lives, the role modeling is just tremendous and the expectation piece is tremendous.

Jan talks about one of her primary mentors:
...one of my main role models and still a lifelong friend spoke at my inauguration here. It is Sara Smith…She was president of Women’s College for about 20 years, chair of the board of directors at another women’s college. Umm, an amazing, amazing woman who was absolutely dedicated to cultivating the younger women around her.

She says that her mentor was “never threatened by other people’s strength, and when Jan returned to work at her alma mater, her mentor would lead by example. Jan notes, that she wanted “to emulate her because [she] was so universally admired and so effective. Umm, she took an interest and she never let you off a hook.” For example, when she worked at her alma mater, she describes that she would be allowed and supported by her mentor to go to a conference, but when she returned from the conference,

if I ran into her at the coffee shop, she would ask me what I had learned at the conference and ask me how I was going to apply it, right?...It got woven into the relationship and there was always follow up.

Jan states that the teachers at Women’s College were demanding.

…umm they were extremely demanding teachers, who seemed to have faith that I could meet their demands. They didn’t make it easy for me, you know, I never liked teachers who made it too easy for me, easy self esteem was not what I was after. Umm, so the teachers I responded to were often people who set a very high standard but they just sort of radiated confidence that I could do it, maybe not the first time and maybe not perfectly but I could do it.
Career path. After Jan graduated from undergraduate, she worked in a bookstore for a year and considered going to law school and pursuing a Master’s in English. She chose to pursue a Master’s degree in English. She then chose to attend a university in her home state because they paid for her education, and she did not have to accrue debt. Once she completed her Master’s degree, she received a fellowship to a public university and she went there to get her Ph.D. in English. When I asked Jan if she planned to be a faculty member upon graduation, she explained:

I think that is what I assumed, but I tell you I was not very much focused on what would come after. I was just, umm, so absorbed in the study and so fascinated by it. I umm, I would have said to you at the time, I mean I wanted to do this degree and maybe it will lead to being a faculty member, but even if it doesn’t, this just is so absorbing and you know I love the work so much that I want to do this.

After completing her degrees, she taught at a private college, but once she had a difficult pregnancy and had a child with special needs, she had to tell the institution that she had to take an indefinite leave of absence. She was then called by her mentor to teach a class at her alma mater. She then returned to her alma mater to be a faculty member and then later became an administrator.

Jan did not plan to be an administrator, and she likens the experience of choosing this path to her choosing English as a major and or playing badminton in college:

Well, it was, you know, it’s going to be like doing English or like doing badminton, and I know that sounds odd if people are more planful about
their lives than I was. I had the opportunity to take on a couple of administrative tasks when I was in the English department.

Jan notes that there is “no doubt” that the expectations from Women’s College have “shaped who I am, in and outside of my current job.” She says,

Umm, it’s who I am personally, who I would be in any job I’ve ever held. There’s no question that they’ve shaped that. Umm, they also might, my trajectory which is deeply connected to Women’s College has also made me not afraid to try things.

For example, prior to being the president of a college, she ran a national organization. Then before that job, she “ran a consortium of colleges.” She realized that she would be good at what she loved and not good at what she did not love. She sees herself differently than other people in academia; she knows that she could do multiple things besides academia. She thinks that doing things she loves and trying new things comes from attending Women’s College, and she realizes that “choosing a women’s college is an unconventional choice.”

Mary

Choice of major. Mary was a music major at Women’s College and chose to attend Women’s College because of the major.

…it had a very, very strong music department and an old tradition. It was a church related school that emphasized music – the Moravians – and so it seemed to be the best place for me to get the curriculum I needed.

Environment. Before arriving for orientation, Mary worried about her decision but when she arrived for orientation, she says she felt better. “I really agonized but then I got
there. It hit me that I’d done the right thing.” By the time she was a senior, she was the only student in her major.

Mary describes that her Women’s College experience was, the “ultimate bubble.” Although there were riots at campuses in the late 1960s, her Women’s College was referred to as the “hot bed of student rest” instead of unrest. She describes her campus experience as follows:

Small, single sex, very small classes. Umm lots of personal attention and realistically you’re not going anywhere once you get off of campus. You don’t have a car. There is no public transportation. I did not go home a single weekend the whole four years I was there. Although my home was just about two hours away, but I never went home. From her perspective, the Women’s College experience was quite exclusive. She found that the academic rigor of Women’s College was more challenging than graduate school. The Admissions Office said, “we don’t really have to recruit because people find us and if they want this experience, they find us.”

She explains that the Music Department was a smaller bubble than the Women’s College bubble, and the faculty did not want students to be involved in other activities. As a result, Mary explains that she was not as involved as she wanted to be.

… the music department wanted to be tiny, Women’s College was a tiny bubble, but they wanted to be a miniscule bubble…And they discouraged us from doing anything other than being in the music building. It’s like well do you want to be good or not.
Mary describes how her major has helped her in her current position as a chief academic officer and leader. She discussed how the study of music helps order her mind and work in solitude and with others.

…You learn to do a lot of individual work, so you learn to work in solitude…effectively and then you learn group work because you’re required to do a lot of ensembles….you have those individual lessons, you know that you develop that…one on one and then the big group as just a regular classes….So, everyone would be required to study an hour or two a week with one on one…like with your individual professor like someone would come here and have a voice lesson with Dr. Brown….once a week, and then they were also required to do several hours of week with the ensemble. We had to prepare for that too, so those are two different levels of preparation…And I just see some parallels now that I’m, you know, a member of a lot of groups and facilitating a lot of group discussions and I think it is a, has enhanced my philosophy of leadership….I’ve even read an article about this…a chief academic officer, which is what I am…like an orchestra conductor that you are, a leader of peers…and that’s really what I am. You know all the faculty have Ph.D.’s all of them are terminally qualified…but a chief academic officer is a leader of peers, and I think that the music, the ensembles prepared me for that…

Although Mary says that Women’s College did not foster leadership development and was not encouraged by the 50 and 60 year old men who ran the college, she does discuss how being single gendered did influence how she developed as a leader.
I think what was good about it that has helped me develop as a leader [was] there was no competition. You know five females in the class, we were just competing…with each other and there were no males in the class, so I never even thought am I male versus a female? …You know that just wasn’t even part of the context…of the day. But they, no they didn’t encourage us to be leaders.

**Influential relationships.** Mary recalls that she had significant relationships with friends and faculty. She describes that she had too much attention from some faculty members.

Well I certainly had good friends in that type of environment…and friends, and really frankly had more attention from the faculty than I wanted when I was a college student. It, I just thought this is crazy. My, my organ professor had an intercom put in the organ practice room and he would come at night and listen to us practice and make sure that we were doing it and monitoring it and he would call us in the residence hall.

Mary recalls that there were men and women in administrative leadership roles, but many roles were assumed by men.

Yes, there were some women in administrative roles but an interesting thing [was that] it wasn’t just Women’s College but other women’s colleges because most of them had male presidents… And most of the higher positions went to males…We did have a female dean of students… But male president. Male chief financial officer, most of the trustees were male. Umm, a lot of my professors were male and sadly one
of the things we all noticed was that some of these male professors had negative attitudes towards women.

Mary did have a meaningful professor who served as a role model for her.

Maybe my voice professor was my favorite professor, Ms. Jackson, and she’s still alive but not teaching…anymore of course. [She was] just very, very vibrant and uh, and they gave me a full hour. That was not my major but I got a full hour lesson a week which is really unheard of… And, and that helped me. It, it was just good for me to be around her. She was a good role model and, and a very strong lady.

**Career path.** After Mary graduated from Women’s College, she got married and pursued her Master’s degree while her husband studied law. After both of them graduated, they moved to Miami where he practiced law, and she began working on her Ph.D. in Musicology.

Mary was a faculty member for many years, chaired the music department, and then was asked by the provost to take on some part-time administrative responsibilities as assistant provost. Mary did not plan to be an administrator as “…it really wasn’t on my radar. I didn’t think I’d develop as an administrator until I came to this university and was given some part-time administrator duties.” She recalls that from that point on, “there was just no turning back.” However, there was a condition for her taking on these responsibilities. She wanted additional training, so she attended the ACE institute for new chief academic officers, and she says she does as many institutes as she can.

She believes studying music prepares people for higher education administration “because it orders your mind in so many different ways.”
Mary never thought she would do a position like this.

…As I reflect back on my life I never had a vision when I was a student that I would do what I’m doing now…It was so out of my realm of thinking and no one ever said to me as an 18 or 20 year old, hey music prepares you for everything…I try to tell our students that and I’ve told many people that now that music does prepare you for everything and truly whatever discipline you have prepares you for everything…I try to tell our students that and I’ve told many people that now that music does prepare you for everything and truly whatever discipline you have prepares you for everything…If you have that good solid liberal arts background and now although my degrees are in music, I write all day and I do math all day.

**Katherine**

**Biographical information.** Katherine was the first in her family to receive a four-year degree. Her mom graduated from a two year institution and her dad never finished high school and joined the military. He valued education, and there was never a question whether Katherine would go to college. It was always assumed that she would. Although she was from a small county in the southeast, her parents wanted her to pursue higher education. They did want her to be in a safe environment though, so Women’s College was a good choice for her. She considered other women’s colleges in another state and thought about two-year schools, but she did not want to be too far from home, and she did not want to transition twice, so she only applied to Women’s College.

… well, I applied early decision and a, and when you did that at that time, you promised not to apply anywhere else…Until the decision was made and so I applied early decision, I found out early October. I’d been accepted so it was a done deal…I didn’t have to worry about umm, applying other places or wondering if I got in and
all of that and I felt comfortable with Women’s College…it was a safe place to be.

Umm, at that time anyway, particularly where I was coming from, it was an elite school.

Katherine began college in 1971 but because of stress and the rules, she returned home after several weeks, attended community college and then returned to Women’s College the following fall.

**Choice of major.** When Katherine first arrived at Women’s College, she was an English major but after two weeks, she knew that this was not the major for her. She recalls that the professors in the English department were Women’s College graduates, who attended graduate school, returned to teach at Women’s College and did not have families. Because of her family background, Katherine knew that home economics was the right major for her. She describes, “And coming from that background on a farm and having the Home Ec. Piece…was just what I always knew I should have been doing…” She knew that this major would prepare her to be an extension agent, which is what she wanted to do at the time. She thought the home economics major would “lead me right into the direction that I wanted to go.”

**Environment.** As Katherine and I look through her yearbook, she highlights campus traditions, but she also discusses how she appreciated campus security and the feeling of a safe campus.

I always thought the security was very neat. Mr. Swift and if you ran into him in the mall or somewhere he knew you were a Women’s College girl. Of all the girls there,
he would speak to you and you’d know he was looking out for you. Even off campus.

So that was…That is nice.

She really appreciated the family atmosphere and that someone always knew where she was

…you know you signed in and you signed out. Somebody always knew where you

were…Umm, if you went out. Oh if we were going to the mall, you signed out where

you were going and when you would be back. Of course that was before the days of

cell phones…Umm, and that was comforting to know that somebody will know

where I am and if I’m not back, when I say I’m supposed to be back…they’ll be

concerned about me and they’ll look for me.

When Katherine returned to Women’s College after being away for a year, there was

no residence hall space available, so she lived next to the nurse and was on the second floor

of the infirmary. That year she was the hall proctor for that freshman residence hall.

Katherine recalls an experience that showed her she could do whatever she wanted to
do. During her sophomore year, one of her professors called her and asked her to hold the

class because she, the professor, could not attend that day. Katherine describes the experience

as one that empowered her to complete a task.

…I remember I was living in the infirmary, which was right next to the building

where all of my Home Ec. classes were and I was ahead on my project so I decided

that morning I’m not going to class (laughter). I remember it so clear and my phone

rang about 15 minutes before time for class to start. She said, “Katherine something’s

come up and I can’t get to class. Would you please go hold my class for

me?”…. (laughter) On the one morning I had decided to not to go. “Yes ma’m. I’d be
glad to‖ (laughter)...So, she saw something in there...And I loved to sew. I had spent all my high school years sewing, so I had the basics down...And lots of girls that was not their thing they maybe were into the foods and nutrition piece of it...And that is why they were in Family and Consumer Science or Home Ec. that it was then, but she gave me that opportunity that little push, and I pulled it off.

Katherine was on the legislative board or the judicial board, she could not remember, and she was involved with the home economics club, but she says, “I was never a real big club type person.”

**Influential relationships.** For Katherine, the most impactful relationships were meeting people from different places. She recalls,

You know I grew up in a very small town in the eastern part of the state on a farm. And to meet and interact with people who grew up in cities and to me Western City was a city...Mid-town was a city. That was big city to me and my roommate was from Western City. My suitemate was from Mid-town and then my other suitemate was from Capital City, Florida. So, it just meeting people that had a different lifestyle than mine.

Meeting people from different places and being exposed to different ideas made Katherine more open minded and gave her the courage to try new things and to live further away from her family than most members of her family did. She notes that her sister lives in the same town they grew up in and only a mile away from her mom.

An important relationship for Karen was her home economics professor who was her advisor and head of the home economics department. She describes her professor as
nurturing and balanced. Her advisor worked, had a family, and returned to school to pursue her doctorate degree

…umm, and so she was just a nurturing, kind person, but she was able to do her professional career as well as have her family and that was important to her. And she was able to go back to school with a family.

Another significant relationship of Katherine’s was with a professor in the home economics department who only taught there for two years. As she turned the pages in the yearbook, she found Dr. Small and stated, “This was Dr. Small. and she came in ohhh, either…my senior year or my junior year. She was maybe there two years, and I really liked her a lot. She was the first person that had the doctorate.”

For Katherine, Dr. Small illustrated that there were all types of possibilities for women.

…I think she let me see what women can do…I was just impressed with the, the things she had done and she, I was interested in fashion design. That was not me either, but I enjoyed it a lot…But she helped me—where to work and what to work for…And even though I never went in that direction, she helped open the windows for me…And see that there are things outside of the capital city, which I thought the capital city was huge…But, she opened those windows and I, I saw where she had been and where she was coming from, which I don’t remember that now, but just that she had made it, through a doctorate and I didn’t even know what that really was.

Career path. When Katherine graduated from Women’s College, she knew she wanted to teach or be an extension agent but because of a poor economy, there were not jobs
at that time, so Katherine began working at the public mental hospital with special needs adults. While working there, she completed her student teaching, went back and took some courses so that she could be licensed in special education, and met her husband.

Katherine taught in at Title 20 program for several years, which prepared mentally retarded adults to move from the mental hospital to “community settings.” After several years, she began working with severely and profoundly handicapped children at a center. Then she taught non-categorical resource for a year at a middle school. At the end of the year, in May, she had a baby and decided that there was something else she wanted to do.

Since she had a semester of a scholarship left, she returned to school to work on her master’s degree. As she was completing this degree, her husband, a “super encourager,” suggested that she continue on to get her doctorate, so that she would have “insurance” if anything ever happened to him. After she graduated, she thought she would work with special needs adults in community settings. While completing her dissertation, she worked in the education department and assisted as they were getting re-accredited.

She began teaching part-time at her current institution and then became a fulltime instructor, who moved up through the ranks. She was asked to be the “acting dean” when the dean retired, and then she became the permanent dean. She says that it “never crossed my mind” to become dean. She goes on to explain that, “It wasn’t something that I went after. It just happened. God had a plan for me and as He opened the doors, I was able to go through those doors.”
Leadership Identity Development Narrative

**Introduction.** During their undergraduate years, all of the participants in this study had experiences and relationships that influenced their leadership identity development. In the following aggregate narrative, I use data from various participants to construct a representative narrative of leadership identity development that is organized according to the LID categories. By intentionally structuring the narrative this way, more power is given to their stories and voices, as I am representing how multiple women developed as leaders and not just one.

The intent of the aggregate narrative is to demonstrate that there are commonalities amongst the participants’ leadership development journey. Although not all women experienced each category of the LID in the same way, the quotations chosen give examples for how the women developed. Because I found that most of the women were either in stage two, exploration/engagement, or stage three, leader identified, of their leadership identity development process while they were in college, it is logical to present the data in an aggregate form that highlights the salient commonalities amongst the stories.

Although the aggregate narrative represents the voices of the majority of the participants in my study, there were several participants whose stories have aspects that are quite different than those represented in the aggregate narrative. For example, Amy and Mary were not nearly as engaged in campus activities as most of the other participants. Some women were focused primarily on academic studies and not as involved as were others. Mary describes that the environment at her women’s college was condescending to women; this characteristic was not evident in any other story. For some women, being a leader on campus
was expected but for others it was simply a by-product of being a single-sex institution rather than being an expectation in the environment. Rachel describes that no one at her women’s college talked about leadership; rather, women were the only ones to fill the positions.

**Developing Self.** I credit my Women’s College experience for so much. I became more self confident and aware of my abilities, skills, and weaknesses because of the experiences, the relationships formed, and the overall environment at Women’s College. Really, “I think it helped to build confidence, self-confidence, and I think that’s probably the biggest key” that made a difference in my life (Amy). This increased self confidence played out in the academic setting and in my life outside of the classroom. Because of my increased self confidence and understanding of my skill set, I had the courage to step out and be a leader on campus. I wasn’t worried about speaking up and being “perceived to be a geek if I were in a science class because all the other people in the science class were also women” (Karen).

“We had to be assertive. You know, we had to meet with the teachers” (Amy). Once I had to muster up enough courage to ask my professor to meet with me and give me one-on-one tutoring for math. I had opportunities to share my opinions with faculty and administrators, and they valued what I said. I credit attending Women’s College as my “foundation of feeling confident about myself and not questioning if I should be sitting at the table… and feeling good about walking into a room of people and holding my own so to speak” (Pamela). I learned at Women’s College that “I can do it” (Pamela). In addition to that, I learned to do things well and to work hard. When I put my mind to a task, I do my best and the project is better because I worked with it. I would say this is true for my friends from
Women’s College, too. We were taught to do things well and that we could do anything that we wanted to do.

There were plenty of opportunities to get involved, and I’m not sure that I would have “stepped forward to do that if I were at a co-ed school” (Rachel), and it’s not that we sat around and thought, I want to be a leader. We just “did it” (Karen). We had to assume all of the leadership positions because there was no one else to do them.

**Group influences.** For me, I tried to get the most out of my undergraduate experience. I was involved with my major and participated in my major club. During my first year at Women’s College, “I co-wrote a paper with her [my professor]” and presented it with her at the “National Association of Broadcasters Convention” (Sarah). I participated in SGA as well, and when it came time to plan for our fall traditional events, I felt like I was the one who had to spearhead everything. When I was preparing for family weekend my sophomore year, my perspective was that I had to do it all.

I did a lot of it. I delegated a few things, but not much… and it was usually to people who I knew well, who were already good friends, and if I didn’t know them as well as somebody else, I would have given the job to a friend, quicker than someone else…To discern who really would be the best person…They could probably do it fine. Probably could, but I don’t know them, so I won’t give it to this person. I was much more directed and those types of things, but I still did a lot of stuff myself (Karen).
All in all, I’m glad that I was involved in student government and my major club throughout my college career because these experiences were “more instrumental in all the different kind of things I learned to do while I was there” (Karen).

By being part of committees that included faculty, staff, and students, I learned that it was okay to “speak my mind” and “ask questions” (Pamela). In my student organization groups, I realized that everyone plays a part in making the organization work to achieve its purpose. For example, people in my club would say, “I’ll do this, okay, you’ve got this part” (Pamela).

**Developmental influences.** I was involved on campus and my self-confidence increased as a result, but really none of this would have happened if I did not have peer mentors and faculty and staff members who believed in me and mentored me. I owe so much of who I am to the mentors and role models in my life.

I lived on campus and upper classmen lived in my residence hall, so “there was a lot of opportunity to hear the upperclassmen talk and what they did” (Amy). I would listen to them talk about “going to graduate school or what kind of jobs they were getting” (Amy). There was a constant “reinforcement of female success stories” (Pamela). I would be moved by some of the great things some of my friends and upper-class role models had done after they graduated. There were peers who were ahead of me and “I knew they were very special at the time. I mean, obviously very smart, but also that they were going to do big things” (Lisa). These graduates and upperclassmen students would be my inspiration to be involved, to be a good student, and to work hard. “I really learned by watching the leaders in the year or two ahead of me” (Judy).
Faculty members and administrators made a difference in my life, too. It was nice to look around and see a lot of female faculty members and administrators. These faculty members and administrators were why I chose this profession. “Just as soon as I got to know what they do, I was like, whoa…this is the kind of job I want!” (Karen). My faculty members helped me choose my major. We worked on projects together. They were also there for me in times of crisis. “It was just them caring in a moment where they knew a student was hurting, so it made a big difference” (Karen).

Looking back, what I begin to recognize is that students, faculty, and staff made a difference in my life as an undergraduate, specifically as it relates to my leadership development journey. The faculty members,

…were tough women, but their commitment to students, their commitment to the discipline, and their commitment to the college were palpably clear to me, and I would guess some people would say the same of me. So I had become a version of them. And we all need models; we all need those role models who show us the way (Judy).

**Changing view of self with others.** As I said earlier, I was quite involved in college and took on many leadership positions. For the majority of my years at Women’s College, I felt that I was the one who had to get everything done. People thought of me as a leader, and “I remember feeling like a leader, with the yearbook. When everybody else went home, I was still, you know, pulling all nighters in the yearbook office to meet deadlines” (Rita). I have to say that, “I [still] like being in charge of things” (Karen). During my first years at Women’s College, I was more “dictatorial” because I wasn’t sure who I could trust, but as I took on
additional leadership positions and learned from my mentors and role models, I began to trust people more and work more collaboratively.

**Broadened view of leadership.** Looking back on my time as an undergraduate student at Women’s College, “I don’t remember thinking about leadership” (Amy), but what I do remember is my major and that we were expected to be involved and achieve. I worked very hard, studied a lot, and my faculty members challenged me to always do my best. My major taught me that leadership is not always about me! Because my major required me to work with others, I realized that we are “…sort of like…a basketball team or something that…everyone is dependent on your level of competency so you’re working as a unit or as team” (Mary). At my Women’s College, I learned that “women’s leadership is collaborative. Nobody gets to be whatever they are alone. It’s because they’ve encouraged people, they’ve challenged people, they’ve infuriated people, they’ve whatever, but it’s always in context” (Judy). Through life experiences and from attending Women’s College, I learned that I want to hear from everyone. I’m always “making sure that everyone has a voice, that all perspectives are considered” (Pamela). To me, one of the critical things that I noticed about my time in college was that I “had to assume leadership roles” because “You couldn’t just leave it to the guys to do that” (Lisa).

**Conclusion**

In this chapter, the data from each participant’s interview is illustrated. The stories revealed that women administrators lived and experienced leadership during their undergraduate careers. Many of the participants were actively involved on campus and had influential role models and mentors who helped them develop their self-confidence and in
turn their leadership capabilities. Most of the women were in stage two or three of their leadership identity development while in college. The data from many of their stories exemplifies that while in college, their leadership identity was influenced by participating in groups, developmental influences, and developing self.

In the final chapter of my dissertation, I will analyze the findings and describe several emerging themes. Additionally, I will illuminate the practical and theoretical implications and suggest areas for further research.
Chapter 5: Discussion

The goal of this study was to gain an understanding of how women administrators developed as leaders during their undergraduate years. Specifically, I sought to learn more about how relationships and experiences influenced their leadership development. Regarding my first research question, the findings of this study indicate that most participants experienced leadership through engaging in meaningful activities and observing women in leadership roles on campus. Participants also cite that relationships with faculty and staff fostered their leadership development, as did observing peers serving as role models. For most of the women, the environment at the women’s college encouraged their development as leaders, as most participants described how women assumed all leadership roles on campus. They also note that through the expectations that were established and the encouragement given from peers, faculty, and staff, they were given confidence that they could accomplish anything and do tasks well. Concerning research question two, the findings suggest that the solidification of the participants’ leadership identity was advanced because of the women’s college experience.

Perhaps women who attend women’s college are more likely to be leaders and risk takers. For example, one participant noted that her women’s college experience encouraged her to take risks. Yet, she also acknowledged that she took a risk by choosing a women’s college that was far from home and by taking a semester off to tour Europe. Another participant attributes some of her success to the foundation she received at a junior college before transferring to her women’s college. She was engaged in curricular and co-curricular activities at both institutions. Other participants described how their work experiences,
mentors in their career, and leadership training programs post undergraduate fostered their leadership development. However, as the participants confirmed, the collegiate leadership journey at their women’s college was a keystone that contributed to their leadership development and career in higher education today.

Because little is known about how the undergraduate experience influences the leadership development of women higher education leaders, this study explored how the relationships and experiences during college contributed to their leadership development. By purposefully focusing on the undergraduate experiences at women’s colleges, more was learned about how this environment type fostered the leadership identity development of the women participants. Although the focus of this study is narrow, the findings suggest that women’s leadership is fostered at women’s colleges, and this is consistent with past research (Hardwick Day, 2008).

In this chapter, I organized the analysis to reflect the literature I reviewed and the conceptual framework. First, I will discuss how elements of the women administrator and women’s college literature are exemplified in the data. Next, I refer to the data collected to explain how the leadership identity development model is seen in the participants’ stories. Following these analysis, I describe implications for higher education research and practice and offer suggestions for future study.

Overview of Findings

In this narrative study, I interviewed 10 women administrators who attended women’s colleges. Related to exploring how women administrators lived and experienced leadership while in college, nine of the participants described how leadership positions, experiences in
their major and/or relationships influenced how they currently understand leadership. Some women elaborated on the environment and the expectations of the women’s college that fostered their growth as leaders.

From the stories eight participants told, it is clear that their view of leadership changed. Several participants realized that women could be leaders. For example, Sarah and Rachel discussed how they knew they could achieve anything and that this type of self-confidence came from the women’s college experience. Other participants discussed how they became conscious of the fact that all voices needed to be heard and that leadership is collaborative, relational, and about bringing out the best in others. Eight women discussed mentors or upper-class students who influenced their growth as a leader.

Regarding how women administrators developed their leadership identity while in college, most of the women’s stories suggest that participating in group experiences and having mentors, role models, and meaningful involvement at their women’s college positively influenced their leadership identity development. The LID model asserts that developing self-confidence and self-efficacy, participating in a group, and having adult and peer influences, significant engagement, and reflective learning foster a person’s leadership identity (Komives et al., 2005). A number of women described how their self-confidence increased because of their women’s college experience. Other participants noted that leadership was not mentioned or discussed while they were in college, but that they felt more confident, became better speakers, took risks, and led because of their experiences at their women’s college. For example, Sara and Pamela discussed their improved communication skills that developed because of their opportunities to speak in front of groups at their
women’s college. Jan discussed that her experience at her women’s college gave her courage to take risks in her career. Judy and Karen credited their women’s college experience for making them better leaders through the co-curricular experiences they had.

According to the data I collected, the environment at a women’s college cultivates leadership development. Staff mentors, upper-class students and faculty members helped women become more self-confident by encouraging them to get involved, helping them make meaning of challenging student leadership situations, and suggesting to them that they could accomplish anything. The environment at these institutions required that women step into leadership roles because no men were available. Rachel and Karen noted that they may not have stepped into leadership roles if they were at co-educational institutions. Judy described that her high school environment made it possible for boys to have the top leadership positions, so when she came to an all women’s college, she was ready to lead and not be a secretary. For many of the women participants, they noted that women were in administrative leadership roles and had advanced degrees, which in turn gave them the courage to step out, be involved, and lead.

**Implications for Theory**

In this section, I describe how the data I collected substantiates and extends the women administrator and women’s college literature. In the below chart, I outline how the findings from my study related to the literature reviewed. Then, in the following paragraphs, I describe each area of the table more fully.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Literature Review Themes</th>
<th>References</th>
<th>Concepts Found in Findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Environment/Education</td>
<td><strong>Women Administrators</strong> Krause (2009); Madsen (2007b); Steinke (2006); Toman (2008); Vanhook-Morrissey (2003); Waring (2003)</td>
<td>Participants think about their undergraduate experiences and relationships. Their undergraduate years inform their leadership and how they relate to others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Women’s Colleges</strong> Duncan et al. (2002); Kim (2001); Kim (2002); Kinzie et al. (2007); Miller-Bernal (2000); Rice &amp; Hemmings (1988); Tidball et al. (1999); Wolf-Wendel (2000)</td>
<td>Participants described how elements of the culture helped them to realize that they could do great things, be successful, and do tasks well. Participants noted that they or their peers were very involved. Some described the environment as safe, while others described the environment as one that supports them to take risks and be leaders.</td>
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### Table 5.1 Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relationships</th>
<th><strong>Women Administrators</strong></th>
<th><strong>Women’s Colleges</strong></th>
<th>Faculty, staff, and students were critical during their undergraduate experiences. Role models were ever present. For some participants, their role models influenced their career choice and self confidence. Upper level students served as success stories and models for what they could be. Staff advisors modeled behavior that the women wanted to emulate.</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Women’s Colleges</strong></td>
<td>Bank and Yelon (2002); Langdon (2001); Miller-Bernal (2000); Rice &amp; Hemmings (1988); Wolf-Wendel (2000)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Outcomes</strong></td>
<td><strong>Women Administrators</strong></td>
<td><strong>Women’s Colleges</strong></td>
<td>Many of the women discussed how their self confidence increased as a result of their experience at a women’s college. Participants discussed the ability to speak well in front of others, handle challenging conversations, and believe that they could accomplish anything.</td>
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</table>

**Women administrators.** Scant research has examined how undergraduate experiences and relationships influence how women administrators lead at their current
higher education institutions. Researchers describe that mentors were vital for women’s leadership development. Mentors gave women the courage to step out and accomplish tasks that they did not think they could do, helped them become more self confident and aided them in recognizing skill sets (Brown, 2005; Krause, 2005; Madsen, 2007a; Steinke, 2006; Toman, 2008; & Vanhook-Morrissey, 2003). I found little research that described how the undergraduate years influenced women higher education leaders’ practice and development. The literature I reviewed only discussed the types of degrees women have. No literature goes into great depth to describe how these experiences and relationships shape how women administrators lead and relate to others in their current positions. The findings in my study indicate that undergraduate mentors and role models had a considerable impact in their lives, leadership development, and career choices.

Weick (1995) suggests that people are often looking at past experiences and events to make sense of the situations they are facing today. I found this to be true for a number of my participants. For example, Karen shared that she relates to students today in the same way that her dean of students related to her when she was an undergraduate. She even stated that in some situations she thinks about what her associate dean of students would have done in a given situation. Jan explained that to “serve students well” she has to think about her undergraduate experience to identify with students in transition and to remember what it feels like to be young. Judy, who works at her alma mater, remarked that she is constantly thinking about her undergraduate experience. She calls upon her memories when she gives presentations and speeches. Sarah shared that when she teaches a first-year seminar class, she
called upon memories from her undergraduate career and used these as a means to relate to students.

Although the primary focus of this study was to understand how these women developed as leaders, the information gathered in this study sheds light on how undergraduate experiences shape how women administrators lead and call upon past experiences in their daily work life. For me, this was one of the most surprising and telling aspects of the study. I did not expect participants to readily call upon past memories that impacted their career trajectory and how they lead. Secondly, I did not realize that so many of the participants would think about certain facets of their undergraduate career when they were leading at another higher education institution or while leading at their alma mater during a later era. Pamela discussed how she is able to have difficult conversations about diversity and other issues in her current job because of her experiences at Women’s College when she had to navigate challenging situations and conversations regarding diversity.

**Women’s College Environment.** Consistent with the literature reviewed (Kim, 2002; Kinzie et al., 2007; Tidball et al., 1999) several participants described that the environment at the women’s college either gave them opportunities to lead or gave them the courage to step out and take on leadership roles. Lisa, Karen, Judy, Pamela, Rachel, and Sarah were engaged in a significant co-curricular experience(s). These women discussed how experiences as SGA president, president of their class, yearbook editor, hall monitor, president of the multicultural student association, and transfer representative in SGA influenced their leadership development. For example, Pamela describes how being the president of the multicultural student association gave her the opportunity to recreate an
organization, speak on behalf of other multicultural students, and navigate challenging conversations.

While the other women may not have been involved in co-curricular experiences, it is important to note that they as well as some of the engaged participants were very dedicated to their major and excelled academically. For example, Sarah presented a paper with her faculty member. Lisa participated in a political campaign because of her relationship with a faculty member, and Amy described how she learned to be assertive at her women’s college by having to muster courage to ask her faculty member for assistance.

These findings are similar to past research yet offer more in-depth descriptions for how the environment positively influences leadership development. For example, Kinzie et al. (2007), notes that the women’s college environment is a more effective learning environment for women than co-educational institutions, and the environment aids women in understanding themselves and others. Participants in the Duncan et al. (2002) study described the women’s college environment as supportive. Kim (2002) found that women who attended women’s colleges were more likely to feel empowered while having opportunities to be involved in campus demonstrations, campus work, diversity awareness programs, and honors programs. In the Tidball et al. (1999) study, researchers found that women’s colleges give women the opportunity to take on leadership roles in an environment that “take(s) women seriously” (p. 29). Kim (2002), Wolf-Wendel (2000), and Miller-Bernal (2000) described that women have the opportunity to hold leadership positions at women’s colleges.

Participants in my study described another important element of the environment that influenced their leadership development. Anne, Karen, Jan, and Lisa discussed the
importance of the honor code and how following the honor code and having a sense of integrity was an important expectation in the women’s college environment. Although some of these women did not directly express that the honor code influenced their leadership development, by them discussing the importance of the code as part of the women’s college environment, I believe it can be concluded that, for them, being a person of integrity is an important aspect of leadership.

**Relationships.** As the women administrator literature describes (Krause, 2009; Madsen, 2007b; Steinke, 2006; Toman, 2008; Vanhook-Morrissey, 2003; and Waring, 2003), the findings from my study illustrate that relationships are an essential component for the leadership development of women administrators. Mentors are critical in developing leadership. Past studies illustrate that women take on leadership roles and new challenges because of their mentors (Madsen, 2007a; Toman, 2008). Steinke (2006) elaborated on the role of a mentor by explaining that mentors were very important during her participants’ undergraduate and graduate school careers. Vanhook-Morrissey (2003) discovered that mentors and role models shaped certain career choices, degree pursuits, and professional development opportunities for the women in her study.

The women’s college literature describes the importance of role models during the women’s college experience. Wolf-Wendel (2000) discussed that role models help women students be successful and believe that they can accomplish anything. Bank and Yelon (2002) found that faculty encouragement of academic success could play a role in increasing a student’s self-confidence. Miller-Bernal (2000) asserted that when women have a meaningful mentor relationship, their self-confidence increases, and women’s colleges make it possible
for students to have women as mentors and role models. Langdon (2001) suggested that women’s colleges are valuable in today’s society because of the opportunities for mentoring and role modeling.

In my study, faculty, staff, and students were critical during their undergraduate experiences. Role models were ever present. For some participants, their role models influenced their career choice and self-confidence. Upper level students served as success stories and models for what they could be. Staff advisors modeled behavior that the women wanted to emulate. My study extends the women’s college and women administrator literature as the participants in my study described specific behaviors and attributes of role models and mentors from their women’s college experience who influenced their career choice and development. The in-depth descriptions of their mentors and peer relationships gives greater understanding to these roles and emphasizes their importance. Karen and Lisa discussed how they wanted jobs like their faculty and staff mentors, and ultimately chose a career in higher education because of these mentors. Judy hoped to return to her alma mater as a faculty member because of the examples of her faculty. Lisa stated how she knew how to be a good house chairman because she watched a peer mentor lead in that role. Pamela chose to enter higher education because a staff member in Admissions asked her to do so.

**Self-confidence.** Researchers described that women’s self-confidence is fueled at a women’s college (Astin, 1993; Kim, 2002; As cited in Langdon, 2001; Miller-Bernal, 2000; Wolf-Wendel, 2000). Several researchers found that having the opportunity to hold and holding leadership positions at a women’s college fosters a women’s increased self-confidence (Kim, 2002; Wolf-Wendel, 2000). These results are consistent with my findings
as most participants described that they are more self-confident because of their women’s college experience. However, women expressed that they are more self-confident because of curricular and co-curricular experiences.

According to the data I collected, staff mentors, upper-class students and faculty members helped women become more self-confident by encouraging them to get involved, helping them make meaning of challenging student leadership situations, and suggesting to them that they could accomplish anything. Having to speak in front of groups and classes also cultivated increased levels of self-confidence. For example, Rachel noted that she notices that women’s college graduates can speak better and more confidently than other college graduates. Sarah presented at a conference. Because of her experience at her women’s college, Pamela successfully navigates challenging conversations with students and parents.

**Leadership Identity Development Model**

Because one of the focal points of this study was to understand leadership development during the college years, I primarily focused on how the participants’ leadership identity expanded during their undergraduate college years. As a result, in this section, I will primarily focus on stage two and three of the leadership identity development model, as stage two and three are where most of the participants were during their collegiate years. Characteristics of stage two, exploration and engagement, include being engaged in a group and taking on some responsibility in the group. In stage three, leader identified, individuals realize that groups have leaders and followers and the leader is a defined person in the group.
In the following paragraphs, I describe how the LID categories were present in the participants’ lives during college.

As outlined in the LID model (Komives et al. (2005), the categories of leadership identity development are as follows:

1. Developing Self: having a deeper sense of self, increasing self-confidence, applying new skills, developing motivations, and improving self-efficacy
2. Developmental Influences: having “adult influences, peer influences, meaningful involvement, and reflective learning”
3. Group Influences: participating in groups and learning from members of a group while having changed perceptions of group
4. Changing View of Self with Others: moving from being less dependent on others, to dependency, and then to interdependency
5. Broadening View of Leadership: adjusting view of leadership from understanding that leadership can only be someone besides me to realizing that leadership is positional to then acknowledging that anyone can be a leader and that leadership is process oriented (Komives et al., 2005, p. 599).

**Developing Self.** According to Komives et al. (2005a), developing self is one category of leadership development that influences how a person expands his or her leadership identity development. The majority of the participants in this study made comments that suggested that their self-confidence, self-awareness, and interpersonal efficacy was influenced during their women’s college experience. I found that most of the participants were in stage two, exploration/engagement or stage three, leadership identified,
while in college. The exploration/engagement stage is characterized by developing skills, recognizing strengths and weaknesses, and strengthening self-confidence.

Some of the women remained in the exploration stage during college but noted how their self-confidence increased as a result of the experience. In this stage, personal skills are developed, strengths and weaknesses are recognized, and self-confidence is strengthened. For example, Amy discusses that she was not doing very well in a math course, so she realized that she needed and deserved additional assistance from the professor. In this situation, Amy realized her weakness and took initiative to be assertive by contacting her professor and asking her for assistance. Others described that they were encouraged to achieve and succeed while learning the value of working with others.

Other women were in the leader identified stage which is characterized by a person narrowing down their experiences and holding “positional leadership positions or group member roles” (Komives, 2005a, p. 3). Individuals model others, struggle with delegation, appreciate recognition, and believe the leader is in control (Komives, 2005a). For example, five participants narrowed their experiences and assumed significant leadership roles. For instance, Pamela chose to focus primarily on the multicultural student organization. She credits her experience as the president of the multicultural student association for teaching her to navigate difficult conversations while giving her the opportunity to bring about change for her student group. Rachel focused on participating in the yearbook staff. Although she described that she became part of the yearbook staff because a friend asked her to participate, the next year her leadership experience was narrowed further when her peers voted for her to be editor. She realized that she was the leader and discussed how she would have not taken
on this role on another campus. Participants noted that they had to take on leadership positions because there were no men to do so.

Yet some findings suggest that several women were beginning to transition to the leadership differentiated stage while in college. They primarily exemplified characteristics of stage two, leader identified, but by the final year of college, some of their behaviors suggested that they were in transition between stage three and stage four, leadership differentiated. This stage is characterized by people modeling others, struggling with delegation, and continuing to understand that the leader is the one in charge, while fluctuating between leader and follower roles. In this stage, people learn to trust and value others and are comfortable being a member and not being in control. They begin to understand that they can influence others as members and as positional leaders and value servant leadership while beginning to desire to serve society.

Several participants mentioned struggling with delegating to others or assuming that they had to get the job done without the help of others, but if participants experienced a critical incident while in college (e.g., sickness, academic probation), this forced them to be share responsibility. Notably, the women who were deeply involved in campus life were the only participants who began transitioning to the next stage of leadership development. Judy and Karen shared about their experiences as student government leaders. During their senior years, each had to step back and let others lead. Judy became sick, so other student leaders had to step into decision-making roles, and Karen did not have enough credit hours to be a senior, so she had to delegate to other senior class officers to complete tasks.
Others only began the transition to stage four after college. Therefore, the experiences these women had during their collegiate career helped them develop their leadership identity at an earlier point in their life than others. In other words, these women had opportunities to practice leadership prior to graduating from college. Overall, although some women developed the self more while in college when compared with other participants, nearly every participant commented about increased levels of self-confidence, self-awareness, or interpersonal efficacy.

**Developmental Influences.** According to Komives et al. (2005a), at different stages of developing a leadership identity “developmental influences,” which include adults, peers, and meaningful involvement, promote LID. Within each stage of LID, developmental influences play a role in cultivating people’s leadership identity. Throughout the LID process, developmental influences are an important component in people’s paths to leadership identity. Lastly, “…staff, key faculty, same-age mentors” aid individuals in meaning making and reflecting upon experiences (p. 3). Nine out of the 10 participants described various types of developmental influences during their collegiate career. For some of the participants they had positive role models. For others, they noticed that women were in administrative leadership roles on their campus. Yet other participants described how their faculty members made a difference in their life and how they were ultimately responsible for their career path. For instance, Lisa described how she chose her career path because she wanted to have the best job in the world, teaching. She hoped to be like her advisor. Karen shared that she wanted to be like her dean of students and assistant dean of students.
In the exploration/engagement stage, individuals receive affirmation from adults and others begin to see them as a leader. For the participants in my study, at some point during their collegiate career, many of them were part of this category. Lisa, Judy, Rachel, Pamela, Karen, and Katherine all discussed how either their peers or faculty/staff mentors saw them as leaders. For Katherine, it was as simple as a faculty member asking her to lead class when she could not be there. For Pamela, it was the dean of admissions and other administrators asking her opinion on important multicultural issues. Others were affirmed by adults to passionately pursue their career, lead with integrity, and accomplish great tasks.

In the leader identified stage, individuals begin to take on responsibilities, model peers and adults, observe older peers and see adults as mentors and guides. When people begin to transition to the next stage of leadership, they begin to have adults and mentors be meaning-makers for them. Judy and Lisa gave descriptions of the adult mentors and peer models who made a difference in their leadership development. During Judy’s first-year at her women’s college, she looked up to the SGA president. She observed her behavior and was enamored when she, the SGA president, asked her, Judy, back to her room so that she, along with the committee, could continue meeting. Lisa described how two upper class students impacted her. She remembered that two women were profoundly influential for her. One woman was an upper class student who was house chairman and the other was her roommate. Lisa remembered thinking that these women were very smart, cared about people, were great mentors, helped student navigate the college experience, and were going to do great things. Lisaattributed her understanding of leadership in the context of the house chairman role to this upper class house chairman who she looked up to. Lisa modeled her
role models behavior and noted that she was the type of house chairman that she was because of her mentor.

**Group Influences.** Another important category of the LID model is taking part in groups, learning from membership, and changing group perceptions. This category along with developing self influences how individuals engage with others, which leads to a broadened view of leadership. For this category, all but one participant described participating in some type of group. Eight participants took part in student organizations or sporting teams, one woman participated in music ensembles, and one woman did not describe any group experiences that she was part of. Although nine out of the 10 participants were engaged in some type of group while in college, there are varying ranges of participation levels.

If individuals are in the exploration/engagement stage, they may decide to be involved in a group. During this time, individuals explore a group, and they may engage in a variety of groups. Sarah, Jan, and Katherine were in this stage while in college. These women participated in a variety of organizations and groups, but they did not speak of narrowing their interests while in college. Rather, these women discussed taking part in a variety of organizations and groups on a surface level. These women did not describe in depth how these organizations impacted their development. Nor did they discuss staying involved with particular groups throughout their collegiate career. Katherine mentioned that she was a hall monitor one year, that she thought she participated in her home economics club, and that she took part in a branch of student government at some point. However, she could not remember the exact position, and she was only a hall monitor for one year. Jan
stated that she played badminton, but she does not suggest or describe that this experience helped her develop as a leader.

Other women were further along in this area and seem to be in the leader identified stage. Characteristics of this stage include narrowing interests and beginning to realize that the leader and the group have a job to do and it must get done. Further, as people transition to the immersion portion of the leader identified stage, they may involve members to get the job done or stay closely connected with an identity based group. Of the participants who were involved in groups, (i.e., Judy, Karen, Mary, Pamela, Rachel, and Lisa), they described experiences of having to get certain jobs done (e.g., completing the yearbook, organizing a ceremony, planning Family Weekend, helping students in their house be successful). For some of these women, they chose to get the job done on their own and others opted to work with others to complete tasks. These women also chose to participate in a singular activity while in college or during the later years of their undergraduate college career. Mary discusses that she was singularly involved in her major, music. She describes how that because she was a music major she learned how to work with others through performing with an ensemble yet she also worked in solitude to practice her craft. For Mary, the task she had to complete was doing well in her major, which required her to work alone and with others.

**Changing View of Self with Others.** Simply defined, people who are developing their leadership identity will change how they view themselves in relation to others. Initially individuals will be dependent on others, and then they will transition to being independent, followed by becoming more interdependent. In my study, Lisa, Judy, Katherine, Karen, Pamela, and Rachel note or describe how they related to others and how this changed during
their college experience. For example, Lisa was a hall monitor and worked in the kitchen. These leadership roles gave her opportunities to extend kindness to fellow classmates while giving her the chance to learn more about leadership through these experiences. Judy and Pamela credit their women’s college experience for making them more collaborative leaders who take in others’ opinions when making decisions. Karen describes that during her first years she did not trust people and tried to do projects on her own, but by her senior year, she worked with others to complete tasks. Karen’s stories suggest that she transitioned to the immersion portion of the leader identified stage. She was involved in student government all four years of her college career. When she was a student leader during her first two years, she mentioned struggling with delegation, but as she progressed in her student government leadership role each year, she began to trust people more, so she delegated more thereby becoming more dependent on others. Additionally, because of her academic probation, she was forced to give others the opportunity to lead and take part in goal completion.

**Broadening View of Leadership.** Individuals with a developed leadership identity have a changed view of leadership. In the awareness stage, people believe that others are leaders and they are not. In my study, two women fit into this category while in college: Amy and Mary. Neither of these women assumed leadership roles while on campus and did not make much connection to leadership other than noting that others were leaders. Amy even discussed that she wished she were more involved in college.

In the exploration/engagement stage, people begin to think that they want to be involved and do more in the organization. Several participants noted that their view of leadership changed while in college. For example, Sara was involved in several organizations
and described how her view of leadership changed while in college and as a result she questioned leaders and leadership. Sara’s communications professor encouraged her to question authority and to consider how people lead. Prior to attending her women’s college, she always trusted those who were in higher positions than her, but as a result of her professor’s encouragement to think on her own and decide what she thinks about a situation, she felt comfortable to question those in authority and take on new challenges.

In the leader identified stage, individuals begin to think that a leader “gets things done” and as they immerse in stage, they believe they are the leader and that others should follow them. Lisa, Rachel, Karen Judy, Sarah, Rachel, and Pamela realized that women could be leaders and there stereotypes of women and leadership were broken down because of their undergraduate Women’s College experience.

Extending the LID Model

**Difference in Participant Type.** Because this is the first time that the LID model has been applied to a population that is no longer in college, the nature of the LID model has been extended as the findings from my study shed light on how leadership identity develops during and after college. The participants in my study were adult, women administrators who reflected upon and made meaning of their undergraduate experiences as it related to leadership development.

In the initial LID study (Komives et al., 2005), all participants were actively involved in some type of student organization during college. In my study, not all of the participants in my study were engaged in student organizations during their undergraduate years, yet the data collected suggests that their leadership identity was fostered. For example, Judy, Ann,
Mary, Jan, and Sarah describe how their academic experience either made them more self-confident, helped them understand leadership, or encouraged them to choose a career in higher education. Finding that participants developed leadership skills outside of involvement in student organizations is an extension of the LID model. Although elements of their stories were consistent with the categories and stages of the LID model, aspects of their stories extended the model.

**Developmental Influences.** The results of this study provide a more complete understanding to the developmental influences category of the model. In the original Komives et al. (2005) study, developmental influences included adults who served as role models and meaning-makers, reflective learning, meaningful involvement, and peer influences. The participants in their study discussed the developmental influences from their entire life (i.e., influential people from their childhood, adolescence, and young adult life). However, my results provide a rich depiction and understanding of developmental influences during the undergraduate collegiate years at women’s colleges. According to the data I collected, staff mentors, upper-class students and faculty members helped women become more self-confident by encouraging them to get involved, helping them make meaning of challenging student leadership situations, and suggesting to them that they could accomplish anything. For most of the participants in my study, meaningful involvement opportunities were an important part of their undergraduate experience. The participants noted that women were in administrative leadership roles and had advanced degrees at their institutions, which in turn gave them the courage to step out, be involved, and lead. Peer influences encouraged students to get involved and served as role models. These findings offer a more complete
picture of mentors by suggesting that the gender of role models mattered to participants. Moreover, the participants described in depth the characteristics of their mentors and role models.

Interestingly, a number of the participants described how their faculty members, staff advisors, and involvement experiences influenced their career choice. Lisa shared that she chose to be a college professor because of the example of her college advisor. Judy explained that she sees her first involvement experience in college as a springboard to her being a chief student affairs officer now. Karen described how she wanted to have a job like her mentors, the dean of students and assistant dean of students. The LID model does not discuss how these experiences and relationships influence career choice. Yet because this study considered how leadership developed for a specific leader population (i.e., women administrators), the LID model is extended. According to the findings in my study, developmental influences during the undergraduate years foster leadership development and influence career trajectories towards positions of leadership.

**Environment.** The experiences and relationships at the women’s college fostered their leadership development, and this is consistent with the women’s college literature and the conceptual framework. The data from my study extended past research by providing a rich depiction for how the women’s college environment fostered leadership development. Recent research cited that leadership was developed in the women’s college environment, but the data did not expound on how leadership was developed (Hardwick Day, 2008; Kinzie et al., 2007). In my study, participants described how elements of the women’s college environment helped them to realize that they could do great things, be successful, and
complete tasks better than most. Participants noted that they or their peers were very involved in campus life. Some described the environment as safe, while others described the environment as one that supported them to take risks and be leaders.

The environment at these institutions required that women step into leadership roles because no men were available. Rachel and Karen noted that they may not have stepped into leadership roles if they were at co-educational institutions. Judy described that her high school environment made it possible for boys to have the top leadership positions, so when she came to an all women’s college, she was ready to lead and not be a secretary. For many of the women participants, they noted that women were in administrative leadership roles and had advanced degrees, which in turn gave them the courage to step out, be involved, and lead.

I also found that throughout the women’s college experience high expectations were set and the environment as a whole fostered leadership development. Participants explained that there were high expectations at their women’s college: women would do well academically, act with honor and integrity and be successful. For example, the participants in my study palpably felt and knew that they could accomplish great tasks. Faculty and staff encouraged them to do well. Elements of the environment required them to be assertive. Admissions material suggested that women’s college students and graduates succeed. The pervasiveness of the honor code expected them to be people of integrity and responsible. Most of the participants took part in some type of leadership role on campus and some noted that they would not have done so in a co-educational environment.
I believe that the summation of these experiences and relationships and the context of these experiences is an extension of the LID model. Nowhere in the LID model is the importance of the environment taken into account. There are distinct aspects of the women’s college environment that play a significant role in fostering a woman’s leadership identity development. For example, the findings from my study suggest that there are role models and mentors readily available for students. The data collected implies that stepping out and participating in leadership roles on campus is an expectation and also necessary because there are no men to fill these roles. The participants emphasized that being a person of integrity is an expectation of a women’s college graduate and a leader. Women shared that there was an expectation that they would do well, which in turn aids women in increasing their self-confidence. Further, because the categories of leadership development that foster a woman’s leadership identity are ubiquitous on a women’s college campus, the women’s college environment is ideal for women to develop as leaders.

**Leader Identified Transition.** In the Komives et al. (2005) article, researchers described that future research should consider how individuals transition from stage three (leader identified) to stage four (leader differentiated). The theory asserts that people become less independent and more interdependent as they progress in the development of their leadership identity. In my study, I found that moments of crisis facilitated leadership identity development. During college, several participants realized that they could not accomplish the goals of the organization alone, but they only realized this when they were required to take on fewer responsibilities due to perceived crisis (i.e., illness and academic preparedness). Another participant who was well established in her career recounted that after she suffered
from a serious illness, she realized that her department could run effectively in her absence. Although not all participants described critical incidents that spurred their growth as leaders, for some these challenging situations made a difference in how they related to others.

**Implications for Practice**

As portrayed in Chapter Four, each participant’s career path is distinct. However, when analyzing components of their career paths, it is apparent that some commonalities extend across the stories. Understanding these commonalities should be a focus for current and future higher education administrators, faculty, and staff as the stories described in this study provide additional examples for future women leaders to emulate and model.

First, most of the participants were active in college. For some, this meant actively participating in their academic major (e.g., reading often, excitedly giving projects and papers to faculty members for feedback, researching and presenting a paper with a faculty member). Other participants took part in a number of co-curricular experiences, and many of these women were the stated leader of an organization.

The data collected in this study suggests that potential future women higher education leaders should be fully engaged as undergraduates. These findings help higher education faculty and staff understand how they can encourage the right type of involvement for an undergraduate woman wanting to pursue a career in higher education. Specifically, the findings in this study indicate the types of involvement experiences (e.g., leading a multicultural student organization, preparing for and presenting at a conference with a faculty member, holding a student government position) that played a role in developing participants’ leadership and for some in choosing their career paths. Faculty and staff can
encourage and set up opportunities for students to have similar involvement experiences. This encouragement could aid in unclogging leadership pipelines.

Secondly, eight of the participants in this study participated in some type of leadership training or mentoring relationship after college. Two women mentioned participating in ACE seminars and trainings. Another took two higher education classes while in graduate school and participated in a Harvard Institute. Several women had significant mentoring relationships during the early years of their career and four administrators have or are in the process of receiving a higher education or adult and community college education doctoral degree. The findings from this study suggest that women who are interested in higher education leadership positions should seek out developmental influences (e.g., mentoring relationships) and further training and education specific to higher education to prepare them for these roles.

Given this finding, if current higher education leaders recognize that young professionals are interested or have potential to be higher education leaders, current leaders should suggest and set up opportunities for future leaders to pursue further training. Also, current administrators should look for young professionals to mentor. If higher education leaders take these steps, more women may be able to pursue higher education leadership, as they will be prepared and confident to do so. The findings in this study have implications for career services professionals and higher education administrators at women’s colleges. Given that post-college training and mentoring was an important aspect of enhancing these participants’ leadership identity, career services offices could develop a mentoring program between college seniors and alumnae that extends post graduation. Career services offices
and higher education leaders should be ready to discuss graduate school programs and training opportunities with undergraduate students who are interested in higher education leadership. In conclusion, because training and mentoring after college is key, how to pursue and where to look for these educational opportunities needs to be readily available to undergraduates, and post-graduation mentoring programs with women’s college alumnae must be established so that future women administrators will be well-equipped to pursue leadership roles at the appropriate time.

Lastly, none of the participants in the study intended to pursue the particular position that they hold now. Several women participants were asked to step into certain roles at a university or college, which then led to another position. For other women, life circumstances (e.g., pregnancy, sick family members, marriage) required that they take certain positions, which later led to promotions. Yet some administrators took risks at certain points in their career, which later led to greater job mobility. The findings of this study imply that future women leaders should take risks, look for opportunities, and prepare for positions so that when the time is right, someone will ask her to step into a leadership role.

Knowing that the participants in this study had serendipitous career paths has implications for higher education leaders and women’s colleges. To provide additional career path examples for future women leaders, current women higher education leaders should be ready and willing to share their path to leadership with future leaders. The stories described in this study provide additional examples for future women leaders to emulate and model. Student affairs professionals at women’s colleges could call upon the stories collected in this study as examples to share with students about career path and the importance of being
prepared for various types of careers within higher education. Additionally, student affairs professionals at women’s colleges can encourage students to succeed, set high expectations for achievement, and create leadership development opportunities so that when they are on their journey to becoming a higher education leader, they will have built the self-confidence during their women’s college experience to be ready for leadership positions while having the ability to adjust and be agile during their career progression.

Limitations

As with all research projects, this study has limitations. In this section, I describe these limitations and make suggestions for addressing them. In the next section, I describe how some of these limitations can be addressed in future research.

In the qualitative approach, the researcher is the instrument. Therefore, the perspectives and conclusions outlined in this study are influenced by my study, work, relationships, and experiences. If another researcher were to approach this project, he or she would likely have different conclusions about the data I collected. A limitation of this study is that the data collected was primarily understood from one viewpoint, my perspective.

Although this study highlights how women developed as leaders during their undergraduate career at a women’s college, there is much more to learn and understand about leadership development. A limitation of my study is that I was looking to understand the leadership identity development process, but I only focused on one time period of the participants’ lives and leadership development takes place throughout a person’s life. Also, women could develop leadership at co-educational institutions, but because the focus of my dissertation was to understand how leadership developed at a women’s college, I did not
address how women developed leadership in other types of college environments. The scope of the research questions in this study limited my focus to the college years of the women participants; however, after reviewing and analyzing the data it became apparent that additional leadership training and mentoring takes place after college. Eight of the participants in my study either participated in further study that related to leadership, attended conferences, or had mentors who aided them in their development.

Because their leadership identity was not fully developed while they were in college, to have a more complete understanding of their leadership identity, more research on this population is needed. A limitation my study is I only focused on how leadership identity developed during the undergraduate experience, yet the participants in my study continued to develop as leaders after their undergraduate years. It could be argued that my study does not give an accurate portrayal of leadership identity development because critical experiences that fostered leadership development took place after college.

Likewise, I did not focus on how the participants in my study developed as leaders during their pre-college years. The participants in my study attended a women’s college for different reasons and because I only studied how they developed leadership during college, I do not have a clear picture for how each participant developed as a leader prior to college. Some women may have been pre-disposed to being a leader, and this is why they chose to attend a women’s college and developed their leadership identity while there. For example, Judy, Jan, and Amy described that they were ready for a different type of environment than their high school. Jan wanted to be president and not just secretary. Jan took a risk and moved across country to attend college. Amy wanted a college experience different than her
friends. Because it is possible that students who select women’s colleges are pre-disposed to being leaders, additional research could focus on understanding the childhood and adolescent years of women administrators.

Also, in this study, leadership is only understood through one lens, the relational leadership model. Because there are multiple ways to define leadership, there may be other models to define how a given type of leadership develops. Most of the participants in my study either described their approach to leadership as collaborative or through their comments I deduced that how they lead is relational in nature.

**Implications for Future Research**

In this section, I describe how the findings from this study can impact research in higher education. This study explored how the undergraduate years of women administrators played a role in their leadership development and the results of this study discovered how the experiences and relationships from undergraduate inform how the administrators lead and relate to others in their current positions. To gain a clearer picture for how undergraduate higher education influences current administrators, more research is needed in this area.

The data collected in this study indicates that for these women leaders, there is a connection between the experiences and relationships of their undergraduate career and how they developed as a leader and how they lead at their respective higher education institutions today. Because this study was exploratory in nature and focused primarily on leadership development, future research could probe how past experiences from undergraduate life inform current decision-making and leading. In addition, to add further credence to the results from this study rather than a small participant pool of 10 women, additional women
leaders could be surveyed about the types of experiences and relationships that influenced them during their undergraduate career. Research questions for this study could include the following: What role does an administrator’s undergraduate years play in preparing her to be a higher education leader today? What theories, practices, and memories inform how higher education leaders lead?

When I began this study, I assumed that the findings would indicate that women who attended women’s college would have a fully developed leadership identity upon graduation, but my findings showed otherwise. The participants in my study had not fully developed their leadership identity upon graduating from their women’s college, yet the data indicated that the experiences, relationships, and environment at the women’s college aided them in their LID process. A number of participants mentioned mentoring and additional training after college that helped them develop as leaders. Although the women’s college environment was a critical foundational piece, we need to understand more about the relationships and experiences before and after college that contributed to their leadership development. We would have a more complete picture of their LID process if we further investigated how their leadership identity progressed before and after college. Questions for a future research project could include the following: How did early career experiences influence how women higher education leaders lead in their current positions? How did the relationships formed and the experiences had during childhood, adolescence, and graduate school influence women administrators’ leadership development?

The findings in this study indicate that the women’s college environment was conducive for the participants to develop as leaders. Role models, mentors, high
expectations, leadership opportunities, and valuing honesty and integrity were important environmental factors that fostered the leadership identity development of the participants in my study. To learn more about environments that cultivate leadership, future research projects could focus on learning more about the environments at other institution types. For example, future researchers could interview graduates of a historically black college or university, an all male college, or a small private university. The research questions would be similar to the research questions in my study; however, researchers would be interested in understanding how leadership is lived, experienced, and developed at these institution types.

The participants in my study were women leaders who held a well-defined leadership role at a college or university. In general, these women readily called upon and told me stories about memories from their undergraduate years. Future research could include interviewing women who have leadership roles in government, business, or the media. Research questions could include how do women leaders live and experience leadership as an undergraduate student at a women’s college? How often and in what ways do women leaders think about and call upon memories from their undergraduate career? The results from this future research could be compared and contrasted with the results from my study to determine if women in leadership positions outside of higher education call upon their undergraduate experience and attribute their success to their women’s college experience in the same ways that my participants did.

**Concluding Reflections**

In this chapter, I summarized the findings and demonstrated how these findings supported, refined, and refuted literature and the leadership identity development model. I
also outlined future areas for research and how this research has implications for higher education and future higher education leaders. This dissertation illustrates that there is much more to discover about how women administrators develop as leaders. This study shows how the environment, relationships, and experiences during college influenced how the participants in this study understood, experienced, and developed leadership.

The results of this study suggest that for the participants in this study leadership development is complex, and the women’s college environment is an ideal setting for fostering their leadership development because mentors are readily available, opportunities to hold leadership positions are found throughout the college experience, and the expectations to do well and achieve are pervasive throughout the women’s college. The results from this study overwhelmingly signify that these participants were changed for the better because of their women’s college experience. As one participant looked at a picture of 30 of her classmates, she summarized how the women’s college experience influenced her, her friends, and women’s college graduates in general,

…They have leadership capabilities. They may not say they were leaders but I would say that Women’s College, and I would hope that all women’s colleges are like that but I would say they all—something while they were there transformed them from—it gave them more confidence. It gave them a sense of who they were…and how they deal with the rest of the world. And I think a lot of them would talk about the honor code and that sense of integrity.
In closing, this study showed that women’s colleges are unique environments that foster leadership identity development. Jan summarizes her ideas about women’s colleges here:

… the one thing I would want to say and something I talk about here a lot…You’re writing about something really important, which is how women’s colleges, in my view, I mean women’s colleges have in these places where women hand sort of leadership and power down the generations to each other….being part of that chain as a student and then being part of that chain as a faculty member and now being part of that chain as a president and being part of that chain at 16 and now at 56…it’s just tremendously rewarding but…as I see it…when women enter into the women’s college world, they enter into that kind of legacy, that kind of chain and they’ve got all these older women ahead of them, handing down all this knowledge and all this expectation and all this wisdom and power to them and it’s just such a great gift to be part of that world.

This study provides further understanding for how these women administrators developed as leaders, and this research contributes to the development of future women leaders.
REFERENCES


Developing a leadership identity: A grounded theory. *Journal of College Student Development, 46* (6), 593-611.


Miller-Bernal, L. (2000). *Separate by degree: Women students' experiences in single-sex and*


APPENDICES
APPENDIX A: PROCEDURES

1. Researcher Procedures
   a) Complete all necessary IRB forms
   b) Contact Director of Women’s College Coalition to access list of women’s college alumnae who are college or university presidents and contact Alumnae Offices of women’s colleges
   c) Create standard email to send to all potential participants
   d) Send participation email to all potential participants
   e) Create beginning codes for data analysis, based on LID
   f) From responses to email, decide who will participate in study
   g) Through email correspondence or phone calls, set up a time to interview her and review IRB forms and other necessary information
   h) Visit or call participants and conduct interview with them
   i) Record and write field notes during the interview
   j) Send interview data to transcriber
   k) Analyze field notes and transcribed interview with existing codes and when necessary create new codes
   l) Ask participants to participate in follow up conversation and/or send reflection email
   m) Collect data from reflection emails and follow up conversations
   n) Analyze data
   o) Complete all items until all participants have completed necessary steps
   p) Send transcribed interview and initial themes to participants to verify that interview information is accurate and to assess if each participant agrees with the preliminary themes from the data.
   q) Finalize the themes of the data and write a report of the data
   r) Begin Chapter 4 and 5 of the dissertation

2. Participant procedures
   a) Participant will respond to email invitation
   b) Participant and I will schedule a time for me to meet with her or talk on the telephone
   c) Participant will complete all necessary IRB forms
   d) Participant will be interviewed by researcher
   e) Participant will participate in additional phone conversation and/or reflection email
   f) Participant will read transcribed interview and initial themes
   g) Participant will report thoughts on transcribed interview to researcher
   h) Participant will report thoughts on themes to researcher
   i) Participant could read final copy of Chapter 4 or Dissertation
**APPENDIX B: INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD**

North Carolina State University  
Institutional Review Board for the Use of Human Subjects in Research  
SUBMISSION FOR NEW STUDIES

### GENERAL INFORMATION

1. **Date Submitted:** *April 26, 2010*

1a. **Revised Date:**

2. **Title of Project:** *THE LEADERSHIP IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT OF COLLEGE ADMINISTRATORS WHO ATTENDED WOMEN’S COLLEGES*

3. **Principal Investigator:** *Heather Campbell*

4. **Department:** *Adult and Higher Education*

5. **Campus Box Number:** *NA*

6. **Email:** *hmcampb2@ncsu.edu*

7. **Phone Number:** *919.656.3668*

8. **Fax Number:** *NA*

9. **Faculty Sponsor Name and Email Address if Student Submission:** *Alyssa Bryant, abryant@ncsu.edu*

10. **Source of Funding? (required information):** *NA*

11. **Is this research receiving federal funding?:** *No*

12. **If Externally funded, include sponsor name and university account number:** *NA*

13. **RANK:**

   
   - [ ] Faculty  
   - [ ] Student: [ ] Undergraduate; [ ] Masters; or [ ] PhD  
   - [x] Other (specify): *Ed.D. student*

As the principal investigator, my signature testifies that I have read and understood the University Policy and Procedures for the Use of Human Subjects in Research. I assure the Committee that all procedures performed under this project will be conducted exactly as outlined in the Proposal Narrative and that any modification to this protocol will be submitted to the Committee in the form of an amendment for its approval prior to implementation.

**Principal Investigator:**

*Heather Campbell*  
(typed/printed name)  
*Heather Campbell*  
(signature)  
*4/26/2010*  
(date)
As the faculty sponsor, my signature testifies that I have reviewed this application thoroughly and will oversee the research in its entirety. I hereby acknowledge my role as the principal investigator of record.

Faculty Sponsor:

Alyssa Bryant

3/8/10

*Electronic submissions to the IRB are considered signed via an electronic signature. For student submissions this means that the faculty sponsor has reviewed the proposal prior to it being submitted and is copied on the submission.

Please complete this application and email as an attachment to: debra_paxton@ncsu.edu or send by mail to: Institutional Review Board, Box 7514, NCSU Campus (Administrative Services III). Please include consent forms and other study documents with your application and submit as one document.

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Reviewer Decision (Expedited or Exempt Review)

☐ Exempt ☐ Approved ☐ Approved pending modifications ☐ Table

Expedited Review Category: ☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 ☐ 8a ☐ 8b ☐ 8c

Reviewer Name ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Signature ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Date ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

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North Carolina State University
Institutional Review Board for the Use of Human Subjects in Research
GUIDELINES FOR A PROPOSAL NARRATIVE

In your narrative, address each of the topics outlined below. Every application for IRB review must contain a proposal narrative, and failure to follow these directions will result in delays in reviewing/processing the protocol.

A. INTRODUCTION

1. Briefly describe in lay language the purpose of the proposed research and why it is important.

The purpose of this research is to better understand how college administrators, specifically women administrators who attended women’s colleges, developed as leaders. My study will explore how their undergraduate experiences shaped their leadership development.

This narrative study of understanding how women administrators developed leadership while attending women’s colleges has the potential to influence higher education practice, the structure of higher education institutions, professional development programs, leadership programs and curricula, and leadership theory. To date, no studies focus solely on the leadership development of college administrators who attended women’s colleges. Although some studies present information about the educational background of college administrators, little is known about how undergraduate experiences shape their understanding of leadership. The women’s college literature and the studies of women administrators assist in understanding women’s leadership development, but to better understand
college leaders who are alumnae of women’s colleges, more research of their leadership development experience at a women’s college should be done.

2. If student research, indicate whether for a course, thesis, dissertation, or independent research.

   This research is for my dissertation.

B. SUBJECT POPULATION

1. How many subjects will be involved in the research?

   A maximum of 10 college administrators will participate in this study. Additionally, I, the researcher will be involved in the research process as I will interview, journal, and keep field notes about the interview experiences with these women.

2. Describe how subjects will be recruited. Please provide the IRB with any recruitment materials that will be used.

   I, the researcher, will recruit subjects to participate through the following methods: a recruitment email will be sent to all known women administrators who attended women’s colleges (appendix b). [As I worked on my dissertation proposal, I kept an informal word document list of women who met the criteria for my study (i.e., a college administrator who is a woman that attended a women’s college). As I read news articles and websites and interacted with women, I was able to gather information to create this list.] In the recruitment email to administrators, I will ask them if they know of other women who fit the criteria and are willing to participate in the study (appendix b). I will then send these women the same email.

   Additionally, I will email this list to the President of the Women’s College Coalition and the appropriate contact at the American Council on Education (ACE) to see if they know of others who should be included on the list (appendix d). Lastly, I will send an email to the Alumnae Offices of current women’s colleges (appendix e). If the Alumnae Offices share additional names of potential participants, I will send the recruitment email to these women as well.

3. List specific eligibility requirements for subjects (or describe screening procedures), including those criteria that would exclude otherwise acceptable subjects.

   Subjects must be current women administrators (i.e., at least deans or vice presidents) who attended women’s colleges. Women administrators who did not attend women’s colleges will not be allowed to participate in this study because the goal of this research is to understand how women’s leadership develops in the context of a women’s college environment.

4. Explain any sampling procedure that might exclude specific populations.

   All people who meet the selection criteria will be eligible to participate. However, because these women are very busy, some women may not be able to participate because of time commitments. If a subject is only able to meet after August 1, 2010, they will be excluded from participating in my study because this does not fit in my dissertation timeline. Also, if I have enough subjects who are in close proximity to Raleigh, because of cost and feasibility, I will exclude those participants who are outside of this region. If at all possible, to have the most meaningful interview as possible, I would like to interview all candidates in person and therefore must consider cost and feasibility.
5. Disclose any relationship between researcher and subjects - such as, teacher/student; employer/employee.

I would like to interview a past professor who previously served as a college president.

6. Check any vulnerable populations included in study:

- minors (under age 18) - if so, have you included a line on the consent form for the parent/guardian signature
- fetuses
- pregnant women
- persons with mental, psychiatric or emotional disabilities
- persons with physical disabilities
- economically or educationally disadvantaged
- prisoners
- elderly
- students from a class taught by principal investigator
- other vulnerable population.

7. If any of the above are used, state the necessity for doing so. Please indicate the approximate age range of the minors to be involved.

NA

C. PROCEDURES TO BE FOLLOWED

1. In lay language, describe completely all procedures to be followed during the course of the experimentation. Provide sufficient detail so that the Committee is able to assess potential risks to human subjects. In order for the IRB to completely understand the experience of the subjects in your project, please provide a detailed outline of everything subjects will experience as a result of participating in your project. Please be specific and include information on all aspects of the research, through subject recruitment and ending when the subject's role in the project is complete. All descriptions should include the informed consent process, interactions between the subjects and the researcher, and any tasks, tests, etc. that involve subjects. If the project involves more than one group of subjects (e.g. teachers and students, employees and supervisors), please make sure to provide descriptions for each subject group.

Upon receiving IRB approval, I will send the recruitment email to women administrators (appendix b). After participants agree to participate in the study, in the next email message, I will further explain the nature of the study to them and how the research process will work and schedule an interview time. In this email I will also let them know that I will ask them to sign an informed consent form when we meet together; I will attach the interview guide to the email; and to aid in remembering their collegiate memories, I will ask them to bring a college yearbook or some other type of college keepsake to our meeting. (By providing the questions to them before the interview, it will allow them the opportunity to look over and think about the questions before we meet together.)

Then, I will email the this list of potential administrators to the President of the Women’s College
Coalition and the appropriate contact at ACE to see if they know of others who should be included on the list (appendix d). Next, I will send an email to the Alumnae Offices of women’s colleges (appendix e). If the Alumnae Offices share additional names of potential participants, I will send the recruitment email to these women as well. This recruitment period should take two to three weeks.

Upon reaching an appropriate sample size, I will begin data collection. For each interview I will follow the following procedures. When the interview begins, I will thank the participant for agreeing to meet with me, ask her to sign the informed consent form, ask permission for the interview to be recorded, and give her a chance to ask me any questions she has. I will also describe the purpose of the study and explain that our time together is intended to be conversational.

The first interview will focus on the participant’s life history, specifically experiences and relationships during the college years. If she brings her college yearbook, I will ask her to look through the yearbook and tell me about some of her experiences (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). If she is unable to bring a yearbook, I will ask her to tell me about the keepsake she brought. Then, I will intentionally begin the interview with a broad question so that she can tell me what experiences and relationships are most important to her. Following asking the broad question, I will ask additional probing questions. (appendix c) When I call the participant for the second interview, which will be by phone, I will ask her to reflect upon a specific leadership experience. In this reflection, I will ask her to reflect upon a time when she experienced leadership during their undergraduate career. I will ask her various questions about this experience. Lastly, if she is unable to have a follow-up phone conversation, I will ask her to write an email reflection about a leadership experience from her undergraduate career.

With permission of the participant, I will record each interview, keep field notes, and send the recordings to a professional transcriber. To make the data most trustworthy, I will send the participants the interview transcripts and will share with them the initial conclusions that I have drawn. I will ask for their feedback regarding both and use it in my analysis. After participants review the transcripts and offer feedback, they are finished participating in the study. Then, I will write a thank you note to each participant.

2. How much time will be required of each subject?

The subject will be asked to participate in an hour and a half interview, a 30 minute phone conversation or email reflection, and 30 minute review of the transcription: a total of 2.5 hours.

D. POTENTIAL RISKS
1. State the potential risks (physical, psychological, financial, social, legal or other) connected with the proposed procedures and explain the steps taken to minimize these risks.

None

2. Will there be a request for information that subjects might consider to be personal or sensitive (e.g. private behavior, economic status, sexual issues, religious beliefs, or other matters that if made public might impair their self-esteem or reputation or could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability)?

No
a. If yes, please describe and explain the steps taken to minimize these risks.

NA

b. Could any of the study procedures produce stress or anxiety, or be considered offensive, threatening, or degrading? If yes, please describe why they are important and what arrangements have been made for handling an emotional reaction from the subject.

No

3. How will data be recorded and stored?

All of the information shared is confidential. The recordings of the interviews and my field notes from the interviews will only be kept with me. When I download the interviews to my computer, no one else will have access to the comments as the file will be password protected. All of my field notes from the conversations will be kept in a binder that is with me or at my home. After the interviews are transcribed by a professional transcriber, these records will be kept on my computer and the file will be password protected.

a. How will identifiers be used in study notes and other materials?

I will not use the participant names or institution names when referencing comments. I will give each woman another name so that her identity will not be revealed. Prior to receiving the transcripts from the transcriber, I will give each woman another name. Upon receiving the transcripts, I will change any references of the participant name to her other name. Then, when asking each woman to review her transcripts, I will explain that I changed all of her name references to her other name.

Additionally, I will not disclose what undergraduate institution she attended or disclose where she currently works. If there are any references to this in the transcribed interviews, I will change the name of the institution to another name before sending the transcription to the participant. Lastly, if a participant references the first and last name of another person, I will only use the person’s first name when referencing him or her so that his or her identity will not be revealed (e.g., Dr. Jan, Mr. Jack).

When I send the transcripts to each participant, I will explain to her that her name has been changed, all names of institutions have been changed, and all name references in the transcripts only include first names and not last names.

b. How will reports will be written, in aggregate terms, or will individual responses be described?

Reports will be individually described, and I will also describe the results according to the Leadership Identity Development (LID) model of leadership development.

4. If audio or videotaping is done how will the tapes be stored and how/when will the tapes be destroyed at the conclusion of the study.

The audio tapes will be stored in my home and will be destroyed upon completion of the research process. At the conclusion of the study, I will contact a recycling agency and will take the tapes to this agency to appropriately destroy the tapes.
5. Is there any deception of the human subjects involved in this study? If yes, please describe why it is necessary and describe the debriefing procedures that have been arranged.

No

E. POTENTIAL BENEFITS

*This does not include any form of compensation for participation.*

1. What, if any, direct benefit is to be gained by the subject? If no direct benefit is expected, but indirect benefit may be expected (knowledge may be gained that could help others), please explain.

This narrative study of understanding how women administrators developed leadership while attending women’s colleges has the potential to influence higher education practice, the structure of higher education institutions, professional development programs, leadership programs and curricula, and leadership theory. The subject will not gain any direct benefits, other than better understanding how she developed leadership. She may then be able to better mentor or prepare others for college or university leadership roles.

F. COMPENSATION

*Please keep in mind that the logistics of providing compensation to your subjects (e.g., if your business office requires names of subjects who received compensation) may compromise anonymity or complicate confidentiality protections. If, while arranging for subject compensation, you must make changes to the anonymity or confidentiality provisions for your research, you must contact the IRB office prior to implementing those changes.*

1. Describe compensation

None

2. Explain compensation provisions if the subject withdraws prior to completion of the study.

NA

3. If class credit will be given, list the amount and alternative ways to earn the same amount of credit.

NA

G COLLABORATORS

1. If you anticipate that additional investigators (other than those named on Cover Page) may be involved in this research, list them here indicating their institution, department and phone number.

NA

2. Will anyone besides the PI or the research team have access to the data (including completed surveys) from the moment they are collected until they are destroyed.

NA
I will ask another doctoral student to review my data.

H. CONFLICT OF INTEREST
1. Do you have a significant financial interest or other conflict of interest in the sponsor of this project? No

2. Does your current conflicts of interest management plan include this relationship and is it being properly followed? NA

I. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
1. If a questionnaire, survey or interview instrument is to be used, attach a copy to this proposal.

2. Attach a copy of the informed consent form to this proposal.

3. Please provide any additional materials that may aid the IRB in making its decision.

J. HUMAN SUBJECT ETHICS TRAINING
*Please consider taking the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI), a free, comprehensive ethics training program for researchers conducting research with human subjects. Just click on the underlined link.
APPENDIX C: RECRUITMENT EMAIL

Dear college administrator,

My name is Heather Campbell and I am in the dissertation phase of the higher education administration doctoral program at North Carolina State University. The title of my dissertation is “The Leadership Identity of College Administrators who attended Women’s Colleges.” The purpose of my narrative study is to better understand how college administrators, specifically administrators who attended women’s colleges, developed as leaders. This study will explore how the undergraduate experiences of college administrators shaped their leadership development.

Currently, I am in the process of asking college and university administrators to participate in my study. Because you meet the necessary criteria to participate in this study (i.e., a current college or university administrator and a woman who attended a women’s college), I would like to invite you to be a part of my study. The time commitment for this endeavor is minimal and will only require approximately two and a half hours of your time.

If at all possible, I would like to talk with you in person for approximately one hour and a half and then follow up with a brief phone conversation or email after we talk initially. If we are unable to meet in person, but you would like to participate in the study, we can plan to talk over the phone. I hope to complete these interviews during the months of May, June, and July.

If you are available and would like to participate in the study, please let me know and I can work with you or your assistant to set up a time to talk with you more. Also, I will send the guiding questions and some additional information to you at least two weeks prior to our conversation time. (If you would like this information sooner, I can send it at an earlier date.)

Lastly, through various means I have generated a beginning list of administrators who attended women’s colleges, but if you know of other women, who may be willing to participate in this study and would not mind me contacting them, please let me know their names and contact information.

Thank you in advance for your time.

Sincerely,

Heather Campbell
APPENDIX D: SELECTION CRITERIA

Selection Criteria

My research questions, which aimed to understand how women college administrators lived and experience leadership while attending a women’s college and how women college administrators developed their leadership identity while attending a women’s college guided the selection of participants.

Participants were chosen for this study for three reasons: their gender (female); attendance at a women’s college, and leadership as a current college or university administrator.

Further, I contacted the Women’s College Coalition to acquire a full listing of all persons who fit the above criteria. Because the list was incomplete, I used the snowballing technique by asking the participants if they are aware of other persons who meet all three criterions. Additionally, I reviewed governing body websites and perused websites to see what women administrators could potentially participate in my study.
APPENDIX E: INFORMED CONSENT FORM

North Carolina State University
INFORMED CONSENT FORM for RESEARCH

Title of Study: THE LEADERSHIP IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT OF COLLEGE ADMINISTRATORS WHO ATTENDED WOMEN’S COLLEGES

Principal Investigator: Heather Campbell  Faculty Sponsor: Alyssa Bryant, Ph.D.

What are some general things you should know about research studies?
You are being asked to take part in a research study. Your participation in this study is voluntary. You have the right to be a part of this study, to choose not to participate or to stop participating at any time without penalty. The purpose of research studies is to gain a better understanding of a certain topic or issue. You are not guaranteed any personal benefits from being in a study. Research studies also may pose risks to those that participate. In this consent form you will find specific details about the research in which you are being asked to participate. If you do not understand something in this form it is your right to ask the researcher for clarification or more information. A copy of this consent form will be provided to you. If at any time you have questions about your participation, do not hesitate to contact the researcher(s) named above.

What is the purpose of this study?
This narrative study of understanding how women administrators developed leadership while attending women’s colleges has the potential to influence higher education practice, the structure of higher education institutions, professional development programs, leadership programs and curricula, and leadership theory. To date, no studies focus solely on the leadership development of administrators who attended women’s colleges. The women’s college literature and the studies of women administrators assist in understanding women’s leadership development, but to better understand college administrators who are alumnae of women’s colleges, more research on their leadership development experience at a women’s college should be done. Although some studies present information about the educational background of college administrators, little is known about how undergraduate experiences shape a college administrator’s understanding of leadership.

What will happen if you take part in the study?
If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to participate in a 1 ½ hour semi-structured interview with the researcher. During this conversational interview, we will discuss how the relationships and experiences from your undergraduate career influenced your leadership development. Additionally, after the initial interview, I will ask you to participate in a follow-up 30-minute phone conversation or email reflection. The interviews will be audiotaped. Once all data are collected, you will be asked to verify that the transcribed interview and themes gathered from the data is accurate. It should only take 30 minutes to review the transcribed interviews. If possible, I will visit you on your campus and interview you in your office; however, if this is not feasible, I can interview you at another location or on the telephone.

Risks
No risks are anticipated.

Benefits
This narrative study of understanding how women administrators developed leadership while attending women’s colleges has the potential to influence higher education practice, the structure of higher education institutions, professional development programs, leadership programs and curricula, and leadership theory. Although there may not be any direct personal benefits, you may better understand how you developed as a leader, and you may then be able to mentor or prepare others for college or university leadership roles.
Confidentiality
The information in the study records will be kept confidential to the full extent allowed by law. No reference will be made in oral or written reports which could link you to the study.

Data will be stored securely. Please know that the recordings of our interview time together and my field notes from the interviews will only be kept with me. When I download your interview to my computer, no one else will have access to your comments as the file will be password protected. All of my notes from our conversation will be kept in a binder that is with me or at my home at all times. Additionally, I will not use your name or institution name when referencing your comments.

After a professional transcriber transcribes your interview, these records will be kept on my computer and the file will be password protected. Additionally, I will send you copies of the transcribed interview so that you can confirm that the responses and themes I concluded are accurate. After reviewing the document, if you would like any comments to be removed, please just let me know.

This data gathered and the conclusions made from the data will only be published in a doctoral dissertation for North Carolina State University, an article submission for a peer reviewed journal, or a conference proceeding.

Compensation
There will be no compensation for participation.

What if you have questions about this study?
If you have questions at any time about the study or the procedures, you may contact the researcher, Heather Campbell, at hmcampb2@ncsu.edu, or [919.656.3668].

What if you have questions about your rights as a research participant? If you feel you have not been treated according to the descriptions in this form, or your rights as a participant in research have been violated during the course of this project, you may contact Deb Paxton, Regulatory Compliance Administrator, Box 7514, NCSU Campus (919/515-4514).

Consent To Participate
“I have read and understand the above information. I have received a copy of this form. I agree to participate in this study with the understanding that I may choose not to participate or to stop participating at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which I am otherwise entitled.”

Subject's signature_______________________________________ Date ______________

Investigator's signature____________________________________ Date ______________
APPENDIX F: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Interview Protocol

Because this study is evaluating leadership development through the six step leadership identity process identified in Komives et al. (2005), the interview procedures in this study mirrored the interview protocol in the Komives et al. study. However, the researchers in the Komives et al. study used a structured interview approach, and in this study I used a semi-structured approach as I asked additional questions of the participants as themes emerged. Further, I adjusted the questions to reflect the new information that I received in each interview.

In the Komives et al. study, the three interviews focused on life history, a detailed exploration of the experience, and reflecting on the meaning. The second interview time was used to determine how the students worked with others, and the third interview explored how the students’ view of leadership changed over time.

Although my study used techniques from the Komives et al. (2005) study, I only held one in-depth interview my participants and I did not specifically ask about life history. I focused on their life history but only history during their college years.

Interview Questions

In person interview

1) Life History
   a) Tell me about your undergraduate experience.
      i) How did you come to be who you are today and what role do you think your undergraduate experience played?
      ii) How do you think attending a women’s college influenced who you are today?
      iii) Please describe the campus where you went to college.
   b) When you reflect back on your undergraduate experience, what experiences helped make you the person you are today?
      i) Please tell me about these experiences.
      ii) Are there other experiences that have made you the person you are today?
      iii) Please tell me about these experiences.
   c) How did the relationships developed during your undergraduate years, influence who you are today?
      i) Tell me more about these relationships.
      ii) Who was the most memorable person and why?
      iii) Tell me about your circle friends.
      iv) Who was your favorite professor and why?
      v) Who was the most memorable person and why?

2) How view of leadership changed and what influenced changed view
d) Describe how you understood leadership when you entered college.
e) Describe how you understood leadership when you graduated from college.
f) What factors led to your changed understanding of leadership?
g) How do you think that the environment at a women’s college, the relationships formed during college, and the leadership positions you held influenced your understanding of leadership?
h) Could you please give me an example of this?
i) Tell me about a certain experience that caused you to change your view of leadership?
j) Define leadership and please explain why you define leadership in this way.
k) How do you believe your leadership compares to women who did not attend a women’s college and why?

3) Concluding questions
l) What have we not covered?
m) Please talk about something that you wish I would have asked about.
n) When considering your experience at a women’s college, is there one metaphor that you would use to describe that experience? Please explain.

Email Reflection
1) Working with others and experiences of leadership
a) Please tell me a story about how you experienced leadership while an undergraduate.
b) In the experience you described, how would you describe how you interacted with others during this experience?
c) Are there other experiences of leadership that you would like to share?
d) Please tell me about these experiences.
e) Other than the experiences you directly experienced, could share any experiences of leadership that you observed? (For example, observing other students, faculty, or staff enacting leadership.) Can you describe a day when you experienced leadership?