

AN ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION OF

Brenda Inglis Marks for the degree of Doctor of Education in Education presented on August 24, 2004.

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Sam Stern

As community colleges have responded to shifts in funding structures, demands from an aging population, the emergence of for-profit competitors, the development of globalization, and the increasing use of technology, the role of faculty has evolved and new leadership opportunities have emerged. This study examines informal faculty leadership at a larger-sized Oregon community college. Informal leadership is conceptualized as a faculty member (not in a leadership position) who influences another faculty member. Interviews with 16 faculty members were recorded, transcribed, and analyzed for dominant themes.

Four major themes emerged: how strong ties develop between faculty; the impact of office location in developing relationships with other faculty; the phenomenon of faculty role models; and how e-mail communication influences faculty. When faculty share similar interests and values, strong ties develop. Faculty are influenced by colleagues who are identified as a strong tie relationship.

The proximate location of offices appears to promote the development of strong ties: many faculty who develop strong tie relationships report having co-located offices. Fewer than half of the interviewees identified role models, and most of these (five out of seven) were faculty with four to ten years of teaching experience at the study site. Participants reported that role models were admired because of their social skills, teaching experience and positive personality traits. E-mail communication was the final theme that emerged as a factor in how faculty were influenced by other faculty. The impact of the influence was difficult to discern because of the wide variance in how e-mail messages are selected to be read by the receiver. Findings in this study did indicate that faculty reported being influenced by other faculty in a variety of ways: through their strong tie relationships with other faculty, by proximate locations to other faculty, through observing role models and by reading e-mail communications from other faculty.

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Community College Faculty-to-Faculty Influence

by
Brenda Inglis Marks

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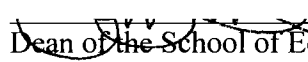
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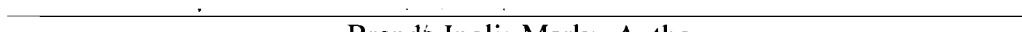

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	1
Focus of the Study.....	2
Background of the Setting.....	3
Significance of the Study	4
CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE.....	9
Collegial Decision-Making	10
Systems Theory	14
Informal Faculty Leadership	19
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY	23
Introduction.....	23
The Research Site.....	24
Participant Selection Criteria	24
Procedure.....	27
Pilot Study Procedures	27
Selecting Participants	28
Location of Interviews	29
Interview Protocol.....	29
Data Collection and Analysis Process.....	29
Strategies to Protect Human Subjects	32
Reporting of Findings	32
Methods of Verification	32
Assumptions.....	33

TABLE OF CONTENTS (Continued)

	<u>Page</u>
The Researcher.....	34
CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS.....	37
Participants.....	38
Data Analysis	40
Strong Ties	41
Shared Values.....	42
Common Interests	44
Influence and Strong Ties	47
Office Location	48
Influence and Office Location	53
Role Models	56
Influence and Role Models	60
E-mail Communication	63
Influence and E-mail Communication	67
Summary	69
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS	71
Introduction.....	71
Strong Ties	71
Office Location	79
Role Models	83

TABLE OF CONTENTS (Continued)

	<u>Page</u>
E-mail communication	90
Conclusion	93
REFERENCES.....	95
APPENDIX.....	103
Interview Protocol.....	104
Interview Protocol (Revised)	106

Community College Faculty-to-Faculty Influence

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Changes in the culture surrounding community colleges have put pressure on community colleges to adapt to the community needs. Community colleges have experienced shifts in funding structures, demands from an aging population, the emergence of for-profit competitors, the development of globalization, and the increasing use of technology (Apps, 1994). Historically, community college faculty roles included teaching, advising, professional development activities, and service to the institution (Illinois State Board of Education, 1995; Keim, 1989; Mayes, 1998). However, faculty roles have evolved as community colleges have adapted to contemporary pressures. Current roles are increasingly complex due to the numbers of programs created as a response to community needs. Contemporary faculty members' responsibilities may include "serving as program coordinators, department heads, division chairs, academic advisers, assessment coordinators, site managers, Webmasters and in various other tech-type jobs" (McCann, 2000, p. 4). Some contracts also allow faculty to "manage learning laboratories, prepare reproducible media, or coordinate the work of part-time faculty" (Cohen & Brawer, 1996, p. 99). As educational systems have evolved into their modern state,

community college faculty members have new opportunities to provide leadership in their institutions.

Focus of the Study

Mention “leadership” in the context of an educational institution, and “administrator” is the common connotation (Hamilton, 2000). Faculty members are most often seen as leaders when they step into the role of department chair or an administrative position; however, community college faculty influence each other and provide informal leadership in a variety of methods and under conditions that are not well understood. As Floyd observes, “both the interactions between faculty leaders and other faculty participants and the interactions between faculty leaders and administrative leaders should be examined” (1985, p. 68). The purpose of this study is to understand how faculty members provide informal leadership to their colleagues at Chemeketa Community College. The central research question is: “How do faculty members provide informal leadership or influence their colleagues’ professional lives?”

While teaching most often involves one instructor with a class of students, faculty interact with other faculty members in many other forums: campus-wide committee meetings, departmental meetings, curriculum development meetings, contract bargaining, professional development activities, and in the break room. Each of these events offers an opportunity for one faculty member to influence another. In their interactions, leaders may model behavior, persuade, or mentor

another faculty member. This study investigated the discrete and concrete situations in which faculty informally led or influenced other faculty.

The project was delimited by interviewing full-time faculty members who had taught at Chemeketa Community College for at least four years and were teaching at least .80 full-time equivalent (FTE). Additionally, they were serving on a campus-wide committee. These criteria were intended to focus the study on faculty who had experience at the targeted college and had the opportunity to interact and build a network with a variety of faculty members across the campus. Baldwin and Blackburn (1981) report that understanding the institution's mode of operation increases as the faculty member remains at an institution (from 21% who report understanding in early career stages to 94% in later career stages). Faculty who are integrated into the community are more likely to be in a position to provide information about faculty leadership on campus.

Background of the Setting

Chemeketa Community College (CCC, or Chemeketa) was chosen as the research site for a variety of reasons, including size, location, and a history of dynamic response to the community it serves. In an article about the development of Oregon community colleges, Kreider (1997) notes: "a distinguishing characteristic of the creation of Oregon's community colleges has been the tremendous community involvement and grassroots support" (p. 161). Chemeketa fit this profile, as it was established through the K-12 system in 1955. At the time,

CCC was known as Salem Technical Vocational School and started with 10 students enrolled in Machine Shop Practice (Salem Technical Vocational School, 1964). Chemeketa is the second largest Oregon community college and currently enrolls over 51,000 students, providing services at the main campus in Salem and at extension campuses in Woodburn, McMinnville, Dallas, and Santiam (Chemeketa Community College, n.d.). The district encompasses Marion, Polk, and parts of Yamhill and Linn counties in Oregon's Mid-Willamette Valley region. In the 2001-2002 academic year, the faculty consisted of 204 full-time (.5 FTE or greater and paid from the General Fund appropriated by the state) and approximately 600 part-time faculty who taught in CCC's comprehensive program offerings, which included extensive distance learning opportunities and the state's only vineyard management and winemaking programs. Chemeketa resembles other Oregon community colleges in that it is a comprehensive college with grassroots beginnings and serves a relatively large area. Its unique characteristics stem from CCC's responsiveness to community needs.

Significance of the Study

Knowledge about faculty leadership contributes to the understanding of how community college systems work, unveils how faculty have adapted to recent changes in educational institutions, and acknowledges unidentified areas of faculty contributions to community college functioning. Ignoring informal faculty

leadership can lead to duplication of efforts, wasted meeting time, and confusion about how change is initiated on campus.

Contemporary system theorists suggest that organizations are systems with a variety of characteristics, including interconnectedness (Allen & Cherrey, 2000; Capra, 1996; Wheatley, 1999b). Applied to a community college, systems theory suggests that in order to have a complete understanding of the functioning of the college, the role of informal faculty leadership must be understood. As Allen and Cherrey indicate, “individual components influence and are influenced by the actions of other components in the living system” (2000, p. 29). For example, faculty senates function as one discrete element of a community college, yet their actions exist within larger systems of departments, student services, budget processes, contract negotiations, etc. Interconnectedness explains how a small change in one area, such as one faculty member’s influence on another to post a web page offering information about a class, creates changes in many other elements of the system. In the web page example, students and the information technology staff may be most directly affected, but the advising staff and other faculty members may also be impacted by the change.

Proponents of systems theory also advocate viewing the organization from many perspectives to make sense of the whole system (Allen & Cherrey, 2000; Wheatley, 1999b). In a community college system, then, hearing each voice is important in understanding the entire structure. Informal faculty leadership – faculty influencing each other – contributes to the functioning of the community

college, and knowing how faculty informally lead each other offers a voice to add to the chorus. This perspective is especially important to acknowledge when systems change: "An organization rich with many interpretations develops a wiser sense of what is going on and what needs to be done" (Wheatley, 1999b, p. 67). As community colleges are pressured by changes in the larger society and as budgetary restraints continue, changes within the system are inevitable. Understanding the system and how it is changing requires acknowledging all components of the system.

Over the past several decades, Western culture has changed from an industrial age to an information-based era (Dickson, 1999). Changes in health care, access to information on the Internet, increasing environmental concerns, globalization of the economy, increasing use of technology in all aspects of life, privatization of the welfare state, and the aging of the population have all impacted the functioning of community colleges (Apps, 1994). These societal shifts have pressured community colleges to adapt by delivering education at a distance or during flexible times, altering contracts and services with welfare agencies, including computer literacy requirements, and developing significant web-based resources for students, among other responses. As educational institutions adjust to current social demands, new roles for faculty have emerged. Faculty members' work activities have evolved from primarily delivering content in a self-contained classroom to serving in positions such as program coordinators, site managers, grant coordinators, distance learning developers, and cooperative work experience

supervisors (McCann, 2000). As the community college adapts to new expectations, the informal leadership roles of faculty members change, and appreciating the evolution of faculty roles is fundamental to understanding an educational institution's system.

In addition to societal pressures on community colleges, a movement toward shared governance emerged in community colleges in the late 1970s and early 1980s. "No issue generated more controversy in the period than the control of community colleges and who was to make decisions on specific issues" (Alfred, 1998, p. 2). While the California legislature mandated shared governance practices in 1988 when it passed Bill 1725, other systems (e.g. Maricopa Community College District, Arizona; Austin Community College, Texas; Burlington Community College, New Jersey; Delaware Community College, Pennsylvania; Nassau Community College, New York; and Fox Valley Technical College, Wisconsin) voluntarily incorporated a variety of constituencies, including faculty, in the governing process (Cox, 2000; Schuetz, 1999). Collegial decision-making has created an avenue for faculty to provide informal leadership, and "the perceptions of faculty relative to participatory governance must be understood in order to create a more effective, efficient, and successful organization" (Miller, Vacik, & Benton, 1998, p. 652).

This study aids in the understanding of how faculty members provide informal leadership to other faculty on a community college campus. The findings assist in understanding the relationships between faculty leadership and other

components of the college; they provide an insight into how faculty roles have shifted in response to changes in the contemporary community college; and they clarify how faculty participate in collegial decision-making through informal channels. Faculty “are anxious and willing to engage in leadership roles through faculty governance groups or informally emerging as leaders involved in short term, departmental or divisional projects” (Hoff, 1999, p. 321). If the phenomenon of informal faculty leadership is not better understood, resources on campus could be wasted.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Many, though not all, community colleges began as an outgrowth of their local secondary school system (Cohen & Brawer, 1996; Tillery & Deegan, 1985). As such, the coordination of efforts often resided with the high school principal or school superintendent. Through the last thirty years, community colleges have grown and developed so that the contemporary community college is likely to belong to a state or multi-campus system, and its functioning is complex. Community college offerings have grown from single programs to comprehensive educational programs. Additionally, colleges have developed partnerships with business, industry, governmental, and community agencies. The development of the college system in terms of size and number of offerings has created the increasingly intricate structure of today's community college. Understanding faculty leadership within this context requires an exploration of collegial decision-making practices, systems theory, and community college faculty leadership. The collegial decision-making literature review section describes how colleges have evolved from a top-down management style to the current practice of including a variety of constituents in the decision-making process. Systems theory provides insight into how leadership emerges from every level and area of an institution. Finally, the review of literature regarding faculty leadership reveals a limited publication record of research on the topic.

Collegial Decision-Making

Shared governance, participatory management, servant leadership, collaborative leadership, and collegial decision-making are all names to describe the basic process for “distributing authority, power and influence for academic decisions among campus constituencies” (Alfred, 1998, p. 1). These campus groups include the board, faculty, staff, unions, students and administration (ibid.). The focus of this section is to explore the definition of collegial decision-making, outline the history of community college governance structures, and summarize the advantages and disadvantages of collegial decision-making in community colleges.

Collegial decision-making is difficult to define, as each institution implements the practice differently (Cohen, Brawer, & Associates, 1994; Lozada, 1998; Parker, 1998). Alfred (1998) observes:

Some view it as a system of self-government in which policies, procedures, and decision-making involve the entire organization. Others see it as a process that defines the roles trustees, administrators, instructors and students should play (p. 1).

Characteristics of a collegial decision-making model include incorporating all constituencies in decision-making (Schuetz, 1999), mutual trust (Piland & Bublitz, 1998), face-to-face interactions with time for discussion (Floyd, 1985), and “bringing diverse views to issues” (Cohen et al., 1994, p. 229). Birnbaum (1988) also suggests that collegiality may be limited to smaller campuses, to “groups of people who communicate with each other frequently on a face-to-face basis over a period of time” (p. 93). The emergence of a wide variety of practices regarding

collegial decision-making is not surprising given that each institution started with a unique culture, and the decision-making model would need to fit the distinct environment (Lozada, 1998).

When community colleges were formed, most of them emerged from the secondary system of local school districts (Cohen & Brawer, 1996). Consequently, many community colleges adopted a top-down management orientation that emulated their origins (Cohen & Brawer, 1996; Cohen et al., 1994; Sullivan, 2001; Thaxter & Graham, 1999). In the early stages of community college development, “the administrators held the power, but at least they were accessible, and face-to-face bargains could be struck regarding teaching and committee assignments” (Cohen & Brawer, 1996, p. 75). While this is the prevailing view, Boswell asserts that “community colleges nationwide have traditionally included faculty representatives in some sort of decision-making process” (Lozada, 1998, p. 18).

In the 1950s, “community colleges were engaged in a quest for legitimacy as a full partner in postsecondary education” (Alfred & Smydra, 1985, p. 203). While school superintendents had been the official heads of many community colleges, they were replaced in the 1950s by chancellors or college presidents (Cohen et al., 1994). Leadership continued to be characterized by top-down decision-making.

Community colleges grew rapidly in the 1960s and early 1970s. Administrators were burdened with an expanded workload as a result of this significant development. As the president and upper-level administrators became

increasingly alienated from faculty, “the approach administrators took towards decision making in this period could best be described as authoritarian” (Alfred & Smydra, 1985, p. 204). At the same time, participatory decision-making models were introduced in community colleges (Cohen et al., 1994; Kelley & Wilbur, 1970). Unionization began affecting the management of colleges (Case, 1985) and in some cases, conflict developed regarding roles in decision-making (Alfred & Smydra, 1985). Faculty wanted responsibility for curricular matters and wanted administration to manage resources and planning (Alfred, 1998).

Starting in the late-1970s, community colleges faced pressures from legislative committees, state-level monitoring, and the executive branch of government. Control over community colleges and who would make decisions about them created significant conflict (Alfred, 1998). The states’ requirements were a reflection of increased contributions to college budgets. By the 1980s, faculty perceived that they held less influence in the campus decision-making process; however, they were involved in national and state commissions, committees and taskforces (Case, 1985).

The 1990s brought new pressures to the community college structure as students became more critical of the quality of education they received, new proprietary competitors emerged in the educational marketplace, state and federal governments required more accountability, and four-year colleges modified policies about transfer students (Alfred, 1998). Additionally, leadership models in

the business sector moved toward collaborative leadership models: traditional hierarchical structures were seen as ineffective (Thaxter & Graham, 1999).

While some have criticized the recent overlay of the business model on academic institutions (Barwick, 1990; Cox, 2000; Hamilton, 2000; Huber, 1998), implementation of shared governance models has resulted in an increase in faculty participation in the decision-making process (Schuetz, 1999). This is only one of the perceived advantages of shared governance. Collegial decision-making promotes a sense of employee empowerment, creates buy-in with decisions, encourages responsibility for decisions that are made, improves the campus morale, increases the understanding of issues, fosters the contribution of many perspectives, and encourages compromise (Alfred, 1998).

Collegial decision-making can also bring problems, such as role confusion (as faculty are drawn away from teaching, for example), encouraging factions within the organization, slowing the decision-making process, and diminishing the quality of decisions (Alfred, 1998). Cohen et al. (1994) note:

Most conversations about shared governance continue to center around whether faculty, staff, and administrators have indeed been empowered in the decision-making process or where faculty, and staff view shared governance as an opportunity to seize power from the administration (p. 229).

Some have suggested that collegial decision-making practices, if not illegal, at very least take power out of the hands of those who are charged with final authority (Levin, 2000; Lozada, 1998; Piland & Bublitz, 1998). Levin (2000) argues that the legislative framework that authorizes community colleges to exist as

institutions also prescribes community college governance. Additionally, collective bargaining agreements obligate institutions to certain conduct. Decision-making ultimately “lies with the person who’s been entrusted legally with that responsibility” (Lozada, 1998). In California, the legislature created a paradox when it enacted Assembly Bill 1725, creating mandatory shared governance in community colleges, but giving ultimate authority to the college boards (Piland & Bublitz, 1998).

Whether legal or not, collegial decision-making may reflect the reality of academic life. Cohen et al. (1994) assert “the notion of hierarchical organization has never quite fit the college environment” (p. 11). The emergence of collaborative decision-making in business and the subsequent translation to community college leadership highlights the unique culture of community colleges. As a result, a variety of models of collegial decision-making have been implemented with myriad consequences for all parties concerned.

Systems Theory

Over the past decade, several authors have developed systems theory to better understand organizations, organizational characteristics, and leadership from a systems perspective (Allen & Cherrey, 2000; Apps, 1994; Birnbaum, 1988; Senge, 1990; Wheatley, 1999b). The roots of the systems framework can be traced from Aristotle to the Romantic Movement to contemporary understandings of biology, physics, and mathematics (Capra, 1996). The current movement towards

systems thinking reflects a change in understanding the basic functioning of the world:

We are clearly moving from a world where machines were the metaphor and predictability the expectation, to a much more unpredictable world that moves more in cycles than straight lines and has more characteristics of living organisms than of machines. (Apps, 1994, p. 24)

Systems models provide a framework for understanding problems and making “authentic judgments” (The Ubiquity of System Science, 1999).

Systems theorists suggest that organizations can be better understood by examining characteristics and processes common to all living (or open) systems. A key concept is that systems are comprised of interdependent subsystems that must be viewed in total (Capra, 1996; Jurich & Myers-Bowman, 1998; Wheatley, 1999b). Although organizations are often viewed in hierarchical arrangements, systems are merely nested in other systems (Capra, 1996; Jurich & Myers-Bowman, 1998; Wheatley, 1999b). “At each level, the encompassing system emerges from the mutual interactions among the components, with the whole being greater than the sum of the parts” (Jurich & Myers-Bowman, 1998, p. 75). This holistic perspective assumes each part of the system influences and is influenced by the actions of other components of the system.

For example, departments at a community college are complete systems that are nested in divisions. At the same time, people from across campus join together for efforts (such as faculty senate or reviewing college policy and procedures) and create another system. Decisions made in one arena (e.g., changing testing

procedures for incoming students) may affect the functioning of another system (who enrolls in which class as a result of the entrance test).

A second essential characteristic of systems is self-organization (Capra, 1996; Jurich & Myers-Bowman, 1998; Wheatley, 1999b). Systems create patterns based on the needs of the moment and develop these structures without directive leadership (Wheatley & Kellner-Rogers, 1995). Nursing instructors redesigning a curriculum from traditional lecture delivery to a critical thinking, activity-based program (when this change was not mandated) is an example. Faculty from across campus may join together to explore cutting-edge instructional technology. Administrators from across the state may create a listserve to share ideas about enrollment trends. Throughout community colleges, groups self-organize because "behind every organizing impulse is a realization that by joining with others we can accomplish something important that we could not accomplish alone" (Wheatley, 1999a, p. 153).

A third essential characteristic of systems is that the boundaries of a system are open (Capra, 1996; Jurich & Myers-Bowman, 1998; Wheatley, 1999b). In part, this reflects the nested quality of systems. While departments are one distinct system, they must also respond to changes in the larger system of the community college. The accreditation process illustrates this point: while individual departments must meet certain requirements, so must the entire institution. If an academic department meets standards, but the college's budgeting process does not, the whole system may be sanctioned. Living systems do not exist in a vacuum,

but interact with the environment. In this manner, “they have the ability to continuously import energy from the environment and to export entropy” (Wheatley, 1999b, p. 78). Because open systems engage with their environments, they are at an energetic equilibrium and are able to adapt with new information (Wheatley & Kellner-Rogers, 1995). The changes created by delivering distance learning through web-based courses are an example of permeable boundaries at community colleges. Historically, colleges were founded to serve a particular geographical region. With the development of distance learning options, community colleges will need to adapt and create new services for students inside and outside of their traditional service areas (Kershaw, 1999).

A fourth distinguishing characteristic of living systems is self regulation through feedback loops (Birnbaum, 1988; Capra, 1996; Wheatley, 1999b). Feedback loops can be stabilizing (or negative) or amplifying (or positive). In the typical, contemporary community college, an example of a negative feedback loop might be the approval process for creating new full-time faculty positions in an established college. The budget conditions may warrant the creation of a very few number of positions a year. However, the faculty organization would vehemently oppose the elimination of full-time faculty positions. Consequently, the number remains relatively static. In contrast, an amplifying loop might be the growth of a program. If employment market demands more employees who are skilled in computer technology, more students enroll in computer science classes. As the original students are successful in the field, positive information about the

community college classes encourages more people to enroll. Internal and external environments shape feedback loops, which create change in the system. Ilya Prigogine, a chemist, coined the term “dissipative structures” to describe these kinds of open systems that have the capacity to respond to negative and positive feedback loops in order to adapt (Wheatley, 1999b).

Change and adaptation create order or allow new patterns to emerge. The process is often messy and looks chaotic (Wheatley & Kellner-Rogers, 1995). When looking at a system, “a sophisticated observer would be able to see many patterns and signals where a less experienced one might only see noise and confusion” (Birnbaum, 1988, p. 170). The patterns in a sophisticated system (like a community college) are often extremely complex, so that no one person can understand all of the patterns. Additionally, “in the living world order and disorder are always created simultaneously” (Capra, 1996, p. 189). This feature highlights the complexity of community college functioning.

Systems theory explains the importance of leadership that emerges from multiple areas of a system (Allen & Cherrey, 2000). Thus, the study of leadership from a systems perspective acknowledges formal and informal leaders. Wheatley (1999b) observes:

When people speak of leadership, they describe. . . how people create the leadership that best responds to their needs at the time. We may fail to honor these leaders more formally, trapped as we are in our beliefs about hierarchy and power, but we always know who the real leaders are and why we are willing to follow (p. 24).

Community college systems illustrate the characteristics of living systems. Any group that is created on campus exists as a subsystem of the college. While an appointed leader may initiate a meeting, the group's members self-organize by making meaning out of the given task. (In well-functioning groups, this would happen during a meeting. In other groups, this could happen in informal sessions outside of the group's official meeting.) As such, the group is self-organizing. The boundaries of the group are open, in that the initial directive may change: the group membership may rotate, etc. Positive and negative feedback loops either encourage the group to maintain its functioning or gradually lose interest in the task.

Systems on campus emerge for many diverse reasons: to form a walking team for an off-campus event; to create a new, cross-disciplinary program for Hispanic students; to develop on-line learning opportunities; to share travel experiences; to review instructional procedures; or to create or modify curriculum. In some of these examples, leaders are appointed by administration. In many others, leaders emerge from the group. Systems theory provides a framework for better understanding how informal leadership happens on campus.

Informal Faculty Leadership

While the "roles of faculty who act as informal leaders have seldom been examined" (Neumann, 1987, p. 3), related literature provides some insight into informal leadership, the characteristics of faculty leadership, and how faculty leadership emerges. Studies of community college faculty leadership are limited,

but the topic can be better understood by examining literature from sociology, elementary and secondary teacher leadership, and university and college professor leadership.

As systems theory illustrates, leadership can emerge from all areas of an institution. The theme is also noticeable in educational literature that has been influenced by collegial decision-making. For example, Shoenberg (1990) writes, "clearly not all campus leaders are administrators. Nor does all leadership come from people who occupy positions that give them license to lead" (p. 2). Apps (1994), Birnbaum (1988), Cohen and Brawer (1996), Levin (1995), and Walsh (1970) all agree that leadership is an interactive process where informal leaders emerge and influence the formal power structure. Informal leaders, then, are those who provide influence without a designated power position.

Neumann (1987) reports that faculty members and administrators differ on what is good faculty leadership. However, when Lee (1991) asked faculty and administrators to comment on the characteristics of a good faculty leader, "their answers fell into two categories: personal attributes and an understanding of how the system works" (p. 59). Burgan (1998), in describing the characteristics of university faculty who exhibit academic citizenship (providing informal leadership), also cites knowing how the campus works as an important attribute. In addition, Burgan noted that gaining the trust of colleagues is vital in providing leadership.

To conduct the Institutional Leadership Project (a five-year longitudinal study), Birnbaum (1992) interviewed formal leaders in 32 colleges and universities. When asked “Who do you think are some of the important leaders on this campus?” 35% of the respondents identified faculty who were not at that time in a formal leadership position. The respondents listed a variety of qualities that characterized these faculty leaders: good judgment, respected by other faculty, dependable, take work seriously, willing to do extra work, developed new programs, considered intellectual heavyweights. The most common reason that faculty were seen as leaders was “the respect with which others responded to them” (p. 109).

Several factors lead to the emergence of faculty leadership. In a study of elementary school leadership, Friedkin and Slater (1994) found that “interpersonal influence in formal organizations not only rests on an individual’s hierarchical rank, but also stems from the centrality of an individual’s location in the intra-organizational network of informal communications” (p. 130). In their 1964 study of curriculum changes, Blocker and McCabe found that “any member of the staff who comes in contact with members who are high influentials are potentially influential” (p. 112). Studying networks in an organization provides information about how information travels and who pays attention to whom.

In an article synthesizing three research studies about networks and influence, Katz (1957) reports, “broadly, it appears that influence is related to (1) the *personification of certain values* (who one is); (2) to *competence* (what one

knows); and (3) to *strategic social location* (whom one knows)” (p. 73). In more recent literature, Birnbaum (1988) indicates that social attraction, value consensus, and reciprocity are factors involved in group interaction and influence.

Additionally, Friedkin (1993) argues that three bases of power must be in place before influence can be exerted: cohesion, or the likelihood someone would stay in the group; similarity between members; and centrality, or how close to the core of the group the member is. This research reinforces what systems theory would assert: informal leadership emerging from an organization exhibits some sort of pattern. Influence is not randomly distributed.

The literature regarding collegial decision-making, systems theory, and informal faculty leadership suggests that faculty indeed assume leadership roles at community colleges. While the collegial decision-making and systems theory models provide a framework for understanding informal faculty leadership, few empirical studies examine this topic. Related research from other disciplines indicates that influence from one faculty member to another can happen in a variety of methods and circumstances. This study, with its emphasis on informal community college faculty leadership, will contribute to the limited body of research.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This project was conducted using a qualitative methodology, the grounded theory approach. Creswell (1998) observes that qualitative research is most appropriate for asking questions of how or what, and the primary research question to be understood in this project is, "How do faculty members provide informal leadership or influence their colleagues' professional lives?" Faculty members were interviewed and asked to recount their experiences with informal faculty leadership. Interviews focused on how participants have been influenced by another faculty member regarding a work-place issue. This approach is supported by Strauss and Corbin (1998) who assert that "research that attempts to understand the meaning or nature of experience of persons. . . lends itself to getting out into the field and finding out what people are doing and thinking" (p. 11). This section describes the research site, participant selection criteria, procedures, data collection and analysis, preliminary strategies for protection of human subjects, reporting of findings, methods of verification, *a priori* assumptions, and researcher disclosures.

The Research Site

This study was conducted at Chemeketa Community College, one of Oregon's larger community colleges. Chemeketa is a comprehensive institution, offering certificates, transfer degrees and associate of science degrees. Serving a large portion of the Mid-Willamette Valley, Chemeketa has six campus locations in three counties. Chemeketa was chosen because of its size, location, comprehensive offerings, and dynamic characteristics. (A more complete description of the setting can be found in Chapter 1.)

Participant Selection Criteria

The participants in this research project were faculty members who had taught full-time at Chemeketa for at least four years and were not currently serving in a formal leadership position. Additionally, they were teaching at least .80 of a full-time equivalent (FTE) workload at Chemeketa's Salem (main) campus during the term they were interviewed. Finally, the participants' faculty positions were funded in the general fund (apportioned by the state government to each community college), and they were participating in a campus-wide committee. These criteria are indicators of faculty members' familiarity with the institution; these faculty would have had an opportunity to establish themselves at the college and develop relationships with fellow faculty members.

Full-time faculty members have been identified as participants for this research project because part-time faculty are not as involved in the institution

(Cohen & Brawer, 1996; Gappa & Leslie, 1993). At the community college, the average part-time faculty member teaches only one course per term in comparison to the average full-time faculty member, who teaches five courses per term (Vaughan, 2000). Additionally, part-time faculty are frequently teaching as a second job, bringing their expertise from their profession to the classroom. Some part-time faculty members piece together work at several colleges; consequently, they cannot spend a great deal of time on a campus to become involved with campus-wide issues (Gappa & Leslie, 1997). For these reasons, part-time faculty were not included as participants in this project.

Fugate and Amey (2000) studied the early career stages of community college faculty by interviewing faculty who were in their first six years of full-time teaching. Interviewees reported teaching was the focus of their work, but “other aspects of the faculty role included service to both the community and to the college. These roles seemed to increase as faculty moved into the second year of employment and beyond” (p. 6). Similarly, Baldwin and Blackburn’s (1981) study of university faculty suggests an increase in institutional familiarity the longer a faculty member is at an institution. Of the assistant faculty in the first three years of full-time college teaching interviewed, 21% report they understand their institution’s mode of operations. However, 81.8% of associate professors report the same knowledge. These studies reflect the intuitive sense that the longer faculty members teach at an institution, the more likely they are to understand the whole system and become acquainted with their colleagues. Therefore, full-time faculty

who have taught at Chemeketa for at least four years are more likely to provide information about informal faculty leadership than those who have taught fewer than four years.

The primary focus of this study was to understand how informal leaders influence fellow faculty members. By excluding faculty who were currently serving in formal leadership positions (e.g. department chairs, union association leaders, coordinators of programs), the focus of the project remains on how faculty influence their colleagues in informal circumstances.

Teaching at least twelve credit hours (.80 FTE) was another attribute of participants in this project. This criterion excluded faculty members who were on a reduced contract or had release time for non-teaching activities. If non-teaching activities comprised more than a .20 FTE, then the faculty member may have been assuming a more formal leadership role.

Chemeketa offers classes at six campuses and at over 20 other community locations. Participants in this study were limited to those whose primary work location was the Salem (main) campus. The *a priori* assumption for this criterion was that each location of the college would have a unique culture or perspective “through which its members interpret and assign value to the various events and products of this world” (Bergquist, 1992, p. 2). Additionally, the faculty who teach at the main campus were more likely to know and interact with other faculty at the same location. Therefore, faculty teaching at the main campus would be able to provide information about informal leaders in their primary work place.

Faculty members who were funded by grants and contracts were excluded from participating in this study. Brewer (1993) identifies several strategies for maintaining funding, including following funding requirements, sustaining positive relations with the funding source, and reporting outcomes. Since the goal of most soft-money programs is maintaining the services provided by the program, faculty supported by grant and contract-funded programs tend to direct their energies toward grant or contract-related activities. Additionally, connections to campus-wide personnel and functions could be secondary to grant or contract-related activities. Therefore, these faculty members would not have as much contact or awareness about informal faculty leaders in the larger institution.

Faculty who were participating in a campus-wide committee were interviewed because they demonstrate some level of involvement in the campus community. Through their committee work, these faculty members have an increased likelihood of being familiar with other faculty (outside their departments) at the institution.

Procedure

Pilot Study Procedures

To ensure the effectiveness of the interview protocol, one CCC faculty member who fit the selection criteria was selected for the initial interview. He was asked about the clarity of the questions, the logical flow of the interview and his level of comfort with the process. His feedback was positive, and he indicated that

the protocol did not need adjustment in terms of the phrasing of questions or the structure of the interview. This participant mentioned the ubiquitous use of e-mail as a communication tool among the faculty group and the general campus community; therefore, a question about e-mail was added to the protocol. Questions used in the pilot interview seemed to elicit data that would help understand informal faculty leadership at Chemeketa. Based on this analysis, the interview was merely adjusted by adding a question about e-mail communication.

Selecting Participants

Chemeketa employed approximately 204 full-time faculty (.5 FTE or greater and paid from the General Fund appropriated by the state). In the 2001-2002 school year, 67 full-time faculty participated in ten campus-wide committees (e.g. Academic Standards, Diversity Action Council, and Wellness Committee). Of those 67 serving, 17 faculty members fit the guidelines outlined in the Participant Selection Criteria section. The sampling strategy employed was typical case in order to develop an understanding of the normal or average experience (Creswell, 1998). Data analysis of these 16 interviews (one tape was very poor quality and could not be transcribed) yielded sufficient information to create meaningful categories, so no further interviews were conducted.

Location of Interviews

Face-to-face interviews took place on campus where the participants felt comfortable talking about professional experiences. All but one of the interviews were conducted in the faculty member's private office.

Interview Protocol

During the tape-recorded interviews with faculty, questions focused on eliciting information about their experiences with informal faculty leaders. Introductory questions confirmed the participant's qualifications for the study (e.g. tenure at CCC, teaching load, primary teaching location, etc.). The focus of the interview was to elicit experiences of the participant regarding specific activities informal faculty leaders have performed to influence the interviewees. Follow-up questions were asked to capture details of the experience. (See Appendix for the complete interview protocol.)

Data Collection and Analysis Process

In a grounded theory study, "one begins with an area of study and what is relevant to that area of study is allowed to emerge" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 12). Individual interviews with faculty members were semi-structured in that the researcher approached participants with open-ended questions, and allowed participants to discuss what is important about informal faculty leadership from their perspective. As participants were interviewed, categories of phenomenon

emerged and specific questions were added to elicit information to develop a category, find variations, or enrich the connections between categories.

Strauss and Corbin (1998) discuss questioning participants at various points in the data collection phase, arguing that “different questions and issues arise at different points of the inquiry” (p. 75). Information provided by the initial participants may indicate that interview questions should be modified (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). As Strauss and Corbin explain “After [the central phenomenon] is determined, there will be many more specific questions about the phenomenon and how it relates to events and happenings that are observed” (1998, p. 75). Consequently, the interview protocol established at the beginning of the study evolved to explore the issue of informal faculty leadership as it was explained by the participants.

While interviewing was the primary method of data collection, phone calls to administrative assistants confirmed details, such as when a building was completed, the process for assigning office space, which buildings contained faculty offices, etc.

The grounded theory method requires data analysis processes be simultaneous with data collection processes. Understanding of phenomenological categories, interpretation of the relationship between categories and theory emerges throughout the research process. As faculty members are interviewed, their comments were transcribed from tape recordings and coded. At this stage in data analysis, open coding revealed categories of phenomena. The subsequent phase,

axial coding, “is the act of relating categories to subcategories along the lines of their properties and dimensions” (Strauss & Corbin 1998, p. 124). Subcategories explain the categories, answering the questions: who, where, why, how.

Data collection and analysis process continued until categories were developed and clear in terms of their properties and dimensions (known as theoretical sampling). “Sampling continues until all categories are saturated; that is, no new or significant data emerge” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 215). In this project, the categories were distinguishable after the 12th interview. The interview protocol was modified for the remainder of the interviews: participants were told the categories that had emerged from previous interviews and given descriptions of the categories. Then they were asked how the categories reflected their personal experience. Finally, they were asked what needed to be clarified or expanded in each category.

During the data collection and analysis, the researcher created several types of notes to assist in understanding the emerging categories. Memos (written records of data analysis), code notes (describing various categories of data), and operational notes (describing the procedures used in data collection).

In summary, between 17 faculty members who taught full-time at Chemeketa Community College for at least four years were individually interviewed. The interviews were transcribed and coded for categories of phenomena and the relationships among these phenomena. Telephone contact with other college staff confirmed minor factual details.

Strategies to Protect Human Subjects

Because this project is part of Oregon State University's Community College Leadership Program, the Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (IRB) at Oregon State University reviewed the proposed study and verified that human subjects were protected from harm while participating in the project. Issues such as voluntary participation, confidentiality, and the handling of audio-recorded interviews were addressed. The application to the IRB was completed after the committee approved this project.

Reporting of Findings

The primary method of reporting qualitative data is narrative form (Creswell, 1994), and this is the mode appropriate for the study. However, tables were included as necessary to summarize or clarify data.

Methods of Verification

Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest a set of techniques for establishing trustworthiness in qualitative research projects. (Trustworthiness, they argue, corresponds to the quantitative measures of reliability and validity.) Creswell (1998) updates and summarizes these procedures: prolonged engagement and persistent observation; triangulation; peer review and debriefing; negative case analysis; clarifying researcher bias; member checks; rich, thick description; and external audits. He then suggests that "qualitative researchers engage in at least two

of them in any given study” (p. 203). Strauss and Corbin (1998) add objectivity to the list of standards for conducting grounded theory studies. “Objectivity is necessary to arrive at impartial and accurate interpretation of events,” and it is developed through “openness, a willingness to listen and ‘give voice’ to respondents” (p. 42). Another technique advanced by Strauss and Corbin is sensitivity: “having insight into, and being able to give meaning to, the events and happenings in data” (1998, p. 46). The primary techniques employed in this study were thick description, member checks, clarifying researcher bias, objectivity and sensitivity.

Thick description appears throughout chapter four, as faculty are directly quoted to illustrate categories. The interview excerpts provide context to help the reader understand the categories and how the researcher grouped information into each category. Member checks were completed after the 12th interview when faculty were given a printed copy of the revised protocol and asked questions about the categories described. The researcher bias, objectivity and sensitivity is described in the next section following “Assumptions.”

Assumptions

Every research design methodology has inherent assumptions expressed either through explicit beliefs about research and the researcher or implicit beliefs that are embedded in the methodology. The grounded theory approach assumes that reality is socially constructed; the researcher should minimize the distance between

the participants and the researcher (in a variety of ways, including conducting research in the field); factors involved in the project mutually shape each other; the results are context-bound; and the inductive process provides accurate and reliable data (Creswell, 1994; Gall, Gall & Borg, 1999; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

The Researcher

One of the measures of trustworthiness in this study is clarifying researcher bias, since the primary research tool is the researcher. Information about my epistemology, personal experience and professional background may contribute to evaluating the research product.

I am from a family of teachers who value education and life experience. The demands regarding grading, committee responsibilities, union involvement and quasi-management duties were discussed in our house on a regular basis. I understood the rhythms of school not just from a student's perspective, but also from a teacher's. Although my parents never expected me to become a teacher, I found that I loved the role when I was a teaching assistant in my Master's program. (My previous experience in the high school classroom left me uninspired, however.)

Life and classroom experience has led me to an interpretivist/constructivist point of view. Through traveling and friendships with non-native Americans, I have come to understand that reality is socially constructed and meaning is created between people. As a consequence, respect for participants in a study is

unquestionable. Without their trust, authentic involvement and generosity, the project would fail.

As an instructor employed at a community college for more than seven years, I bring professional bias to the project. My tenure at Clackamas Community College has included working with a variety of people across campus in my roles as faculty senate secretary, faculty senator, union bargaining team member, and coordinator of the Center for Learning and Teaching. Role models for my out-of-class responsibilities led me to this dissertation topic. My interest is quite personal in that when someone asked me what I'd like to be doing for work in ten years, I replied, "Be Dave Arter," who is an informal faculty leader at my institution. An underlying assumption in this project is that leadership can and should emerge from the full time faculty at an educational institution. This leadership should help to advance and improve teaching (which should positively impact student learning) and support the overall college mission.

I bring another bias to this project: my beliefs about leaderships in organizations. I embrace the implications of systems theory that leadership has the potential to emerge from various areas of an organization, not just from those who are designated leaders or who are hired into an administrative role. During my tenure as an instructor, I have witness faculty and staff provide leadership at Clackamas Community College in arenas such as budget problem solving, developing new and existing programs, and negotiating contracts. I began this

study with the firm assumption that faculty can provide informal leadership in a community college environment.

These personal and professional experiences gave rise to the topic, but the research method dictates my need to hear the voices of my participants. I am wholeheartedly committed to that task.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

The central question addressed in these interviews was, "How do faculty members provide leadership or influence their colleagues' professional lives?" During 40-60 minute individual interviews with full-time faculty at Chemeketa Community College, 17 participants were asked broad questions about how they are influenced by other faculty members, who they seek for assistance with professional dilemmas, and their professional role models. These interviews were transcribed verbatim by a professional typist. The text was analyzed to discern categories of meaningful information with respect to the research question. The analysis took place concurrently with the interview process in that interview questions were modified to elicit information that would build understanding of categories and relationships between categories. Drafts of these categories and relationships were revised as the research progressed. The findings suggest that faculty form strong ties with colleagues; that faculty office location is a significant factor in how relationships develop; that faculty do not always identify current professional role models; and that e-mail communication varies widely in its influence among faculty.

Participants

Participants were selected for this project based on several characteristics deemed important to soliciting information from faculty who were in a similar physical location, had experience in this work setting, and were primarily focused on instruction. Interviewees had taught full-time at Chemeketa for at least four years, and were not currently serving in a formal leadership position (e.g. department chair or union representative). Additionally, they were teaching at least .80 of a full-time equivalent (FTE) workload at Chemeketa's Salem (main) campus during the term they were interviewed. Finally, the participants' faculty positions were funded by the general fund (apportioned by the state government to each community college), and they were members of a campus-wide committee. These criteria were established to select participants who were involved in the institution, had the opportunity to meet and work with a variety of other full-time faculty, were teaching as a primary workload (versus primary involvement in administrative tasks), and teaching at a common campus worksite.

Seventeen faculty members met these criteria and were interviewed. One interview tape was very poor quality and could not be transcribed, so sixteen interviews are included in the data. Each interview was conducted in a location selected by the participant.

Participants were informed that their identity would be confidential when the findings were reported: their responses would be reported in aggregate. However, information about their length of service, gender, and office location may

provide some context in which to understand their comments. Participants are listed in the table below, in the order in which they were interviewed.

General Description of Participants

Interviewee	Gender	Years of Service	Office Location (Bldg. Number)
1	Male	4-10	A
2	Female	4-10	B
3	Male	21-30	B
4	Female	4-10	C
5	Female	4-10	D
6	Male	21-30	A
7	Female	11-20	E
8	Male	11-20	F
9	Male	21-30	B
10	Female	4-10	G
11	Male	21-30	B
12	Female	4-10	F
13	Female	4-10	G
14	Male	21-30	G
15	Female	4-10	G
16	Male	11-20	G

As the table indicates, a balance of men and women were interviewed for this project. Participants had taught full-time at least four years at Chemeketa. Eight of them had taught 4-10 years; four had taught 11-20 years; and five taught 21-30 years. Faculty offices are spread across campus, and there are four buildings with 15 or more faculty offices: Buildings A, B, G, F. Buildings A and F are dedicated to staff: they house offices and conference rooms. Building G houses faculty offices and the campus bookstore. In addition to office space, Building B also supports classrooms and lab space. Offices are located in other buildings aside

from the ones mentioned here, but these buildings have a relatively large concentration of faculty.

The table does not identify in which program areas faculty teach. Disclosing this information would compromise their confidentiality because the numbers of women teaching in some fields (e.g. math, science and trades) and men teaching in others (e.g. human services, English as a second language and basic skills) is extremely skewed. Faculty interviewed for this project taught in Business, Science, Humanities, Trades and Technologies, Health, Human Services, and English as a Second Language (ESL). Every program area from the Campus-Based Instruction division is represented except for Emergency Services and Nursing. The faculty member teaching in ESL is from the Regional Education Service division.

Data Analysis

The initial interview protocol included seven questions (see Appendix). The seventh question, which asked for feedback about the interview questions, was dropped after the first interview. Interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed by a professional typist. These transcripts were analyzed for themes regarding how the interviewees were influenced by other faculty or how they perceived other faculty influencing or being influenced. During the first interview, the participant noted how Chemeketa e-mail messages regarding campus-wide issues were circulating, so a specific question about how the participants used e-mail was added. Categories began to emerge by the eighth interview, and a memo was drafted to begin

developing the categories. At that point, the categories included influence through diverse stimuli, influence from common interests, concerns and values, influence from e-mail, office locations and influence, and influence through observed behavior. These categories were further developed with information from the ninth through twelfth interview. In the remaining four interviews, the protocol shifted to discussing the categories with the participants and asking for further clarification. The categories were revised using information from these final interviews. The four categories were identified in the final analysis: strong ties between and among faculty, office location, faculty role models and e-mail communication. Each category is described along with examples of how faculty perceive they are influenced by colleagues based on these factors.

Strong Ties

Faculty interviewed for this project report forming strong bonds with other faculty members. When strong ties are formed, faculty members report being influenced by these relationships. Faculty also distinguished between strong ties and other relationships: "Those I don't work with on an ongoing basis are not necessarily my personal friends. They're just acquaintances, let's say, because I don't have the same close interaction with them as I do these individuals" (Interviewee 15).

In general, two factors must be present to form a strong tie: similar values and a common interest. Similar values identified by participants include working

hard, innovation, excellence in teaching, and honesty. Faculty reported a wide variety of common interests: a similar life stage (e.g. parenting the same-aged children or impending retirement), shared athletic activities, or shared cultural activity. The common interest can be a similar academic discipline, but it is more likely that the bond is formed over another type of interest. Interviewee 14 summarized this phenomenon:

Conversations at work over good ideas could quickly come to a standstill in situations where even though you connect over interests you don't share values at all. . . . Like they just don't seem to have the same valuing of the day-to-day nitty gritty work with students, so professional conversations or discussions don't go very far, even though you may have done something together and shared an interest.

Shared Values

Several interviewees implied that they shared values with colleagues by describing situations where faculty "build connections" or turn to others for camaraderie and support. Interviewee 10 described a poignant incident where her colleagues gave her a gift of bath salts as she was having a particularly difficult term. She said, "Someone here cares for me. I felt like for the first time in five years that I was becoming a part of a community and people noticed and they cared. That was important." Similarly, Interviewee 9 discussed the relational aspects of playing basketball with other faculty:

What we mainly talk about is what we do in school and our students. It just gives us a chance to get out of the classroom, get away from campus, and do something we like to do. But we still always talk about our students. . . It's a good way to have a

camaraderie. They like to play and they like the competition but they also like the camaraderie.

Community colleges are seen as teaching institutions, and during interviews, faculty at Chemeketa reinforced the notion that teaching is their primary professional duty. Excellence in teaching is a value identified by several interviewees. Interviewee 6 indicated that he would respect colleagues' "dedication to the classroom and to their profession." In discussing her professional support system, Interviewee 15 listed this and other values:

We value excellence in teaching. . . That's across the board for all of us. We all value family. . . . Decency. I don't know if that's a value but decency, wholeness, living healthy lifestyles. . . When I say healthy I mean not being so caught up in crazy, dysfunctional mess.

Interviewee 6 said that he is a loner and is not involved in many professional relationships on campus. However, he did express a need for similar values with those with whom he does interact:

Well, if you're going to respect somebody's value system I think you would tend to look at those people that had those same value systems as you. That's normally why you'd respect them. Their dedication to their job and their dedication to the students. Honesty with the student or honesty with the situation. . . . Then I might go to that individual and talk to him and let them reinforce my energy level about retaining that value system.

By the thirteenth interview, the theme of similar values had emerged from the previous interviews, and questions about this particular phenomenon were added to the interview questions. Interviewee 13 said, "Yes, I would say that the people that I feel the most connected with at work would be the people that. . . yes,

I would say that that's true. Common values." She also distinguished between sharing values and being "like-minded" indicating that shared values are not an indication of being like-minded. The remaining participants (14, 15, and 16) were asked about this emerging subcategory. Interviewees 14 and 15 confirmed that shared values were important in developing strong ties with other faculty.

Interviewee 16 indicated he was atypical in terms of developing professional relationships, "I've just always been more of a loner or a lone wolf or whatever. That's just my whole life, so I think I'm not the norm in that way." When he does talk with other faculty about work-related issues, sharing common values is not important to him, but respect is. He said:

Some of the people that I have respect for and trust with have very different teaching values and teaching objectives and stuff but I respect what they're doing because they are thoughtful about it. Even if it's not how I would do things or not quite what I value in the same way, I respect their thoughtfulness and their creativity. Maybe that's the value that is the mutual value there but it's not a practical value or goal or objective like that. It's just more I appreciate their mind and their way of thinking and their integrity. It's much more a respect issue than shared interest, values, that sort of thing.

Common Interests

The theme of common interests emerged by the fourth interview. After my initial awareness of this phenomenon, probing questions about this theme were added to the interview. This area proved rich in examples from athletic activities (participation in the Hood-to-Coast relay team, basketball groups, racquetball partners, walking partners, bicycling partners) to similar life stages (parenting and

impending retirement) and other activities (shopping, spectating at sports events, attending cultural events).

The experience of Interviewee 9 is typical of faculty who have athletic interests in common. He reported,

I've been involved in a basketball group since I've been here. What we mainly talk about is what we do in school and our students. It just gives us a chance to get out of the classroom, get away from campus, and do something we like to do. But we still always talk about our students.

He also plays racquetball with another faculty member and they "bounce all kinds of ideas off each other." Interviewee 4 described her physical activities with other faculty this way: "I have a group of two other women that I walk with whenever I have an opportunity. Instead of going out for lunch we go and walk."

Faculty who share interests in life stage said they have two primary elements in common. One is parenting. For example, Interviewee 10 said, "Another thing we talk about a lot is that I have two small children and I'm trying to do without daycare. . . So it's been very useful to hear from them insights on how to juggle." A second example is from Interviewee 15 who said, "We both have kids, young adult children, so that's a commonality for a lot of us, too."

The other common life stage faculty members voiced was retirement. Interviewee 6 provided a clear example. He became involved with "the Breakfast Club" and created a chart comparing some different investment options available for retirement:

There's a group of instructors that have breakfast over in the food service area. . . I'm getting ready to retire, so I'm practicing my

people skills. So I've started joining in with them about once or twice a week and just shooting the bull.

Faculty report interacting with others in a variety of other activities. They work together on technological questions, socialize together ["Go to movies. Go to dinner. Go shopping." (Interviewee 15); "He and I often meet for lunch on campus when he teaches. He also lives in Portland so often we have him over for dinner" (Interviewee 10).], and participate in professional activities in "another whole interest area" outside of their academic area (Interviewee 13). Interviewee 11 reported his interactions with coaches: "We spend lots of time together just visiting between classes on the sports page or who they're recruiting or things like that." During these discussions, conversation often turns to work-related topics, including student, curriculum and office politics. Interviewee 14 put it this way: "The interest connections reinforce the professional connections."

Participants reported a large variation in the importance of strong ties. Some (such as Interviewees 5, 7, and 9) provided numerous examples of how they have developed strong ties with fellow faculty members. Other interviewees (e.g. 6 and 16), self-identified as "loners" and indicated that relationships with other faculty were not important in making decisions in their professional lives. Additionally, interviewees identified people other than full-time faculty at CCC as strong ties: Interviewee 5 discussed relationships with faculty who teach in the same discipline at other colleges and Interviewee 10 identified a part-time instructor who teaches in the same field at CCC as a strong tie.

Influence and Strong Ties

Faculty members are influenced by those with whom they share a strong tie. During these interviews, participants reported being influenced by others' attitudes, by suggestions about how to approach a problem, and by collaboration on a project. "Stealing," using, adapting and taking pedagogical and technological ideas are reported as common practices.

Interviewee 6 gave an example of how he might turn to a strong tie when he feels discouraged about an academic issue:

In other words, I might be feeling down and say, "Why do I go through this?" or "Why do I do something?" Then I might go to that individual and talk to him and let them reinforce my energy level about retaining that value system. Why not inflate all the grades? You've heard about grade inflation. . . So why not just give A's to everybody and say, "The heck with it?" But then you have to get the balance. You need to go talk to somebody and get the balance on that. So that would be the way they would influence me.

Interviewee 5 described how the strong tie developed and how it influences her:

So we do have standing appointments for speed walking at lunch and doing other things where we can talk about a lot of facets of life and school, of course, is a big one. So I do have that support from both of those women that help support. I think we support each other and get each other to think real positively about the projects coming up.

Finally, Interviewee 2 discussed how she is motivated by a faculty member who has encouraged her to take over a telecourse:

Mostly he just gives ideas and then shows me how to do, and then I can go do it. I modify it and make it my own. So, mine doesn't

look like his, but I think that just the momentum of doing things like that when other people around you are doing things that are different. It gives you the security. . . it gives me the security and the more willingness to try those. . . If nobody around here was doing any kinds of things like that, it would be harder to initiate... for me to start out and do those kinds of things. Or to even try. Even though our approaches are different, I've done some things that I wouldn't have done. He's not doing them, but I wouldn't have done them had he not inspired me to do them.

On the other end of the spectrum, Interviewee 11 left a telephone message after the interview to clarify that he is not influenced by other faculty. He indicated that he does "the right thing" independent of others and their opinions.

Office Location

Data collected in this study indicate that office location (i.e. proximity to other faculty) impacts how relationships among faculty develop. This happens intentionally and serendipitously. Faculty have moved offices for specific reasons: because they want to be close to others in their department, to be nearer to friends, to be closer to classrooms and campus resources, etc. Serendipitous relationships develop due to proximity; faculty use the same copying facilities, for example, and become acquainted because of repeated contact. Conversely, faculty report less interaction with, and influence from, those in other buildings, even if they are in the same program area (or discipline).

As a result of proximity, faculty influence each other's work in a variety of ways: collaboration on curriculum development, technological problem solving,

discussion of departmental and campus-wide issues, concerns regarding students, and use of pedagogical materials and techniques.

Buildings on this campus tend to be “classroom buildings” or “office buildings” unless they house programs with specialized facilities like science labs, physical education facilities or computer labs. In the latter cases, faculty offices are located near the specialized facilities. The primary office buildings (with 15 or more faculty offices) are Buildings A, B, G, and F.

When faculty members are hired, they are given a list of available offices across campus and are asked to choose their office. Faculty who need to be close to a lab or specialized facilities tend to have offices grouped together. Others (e.g. humanities, developmental education and social sciences) have offices in a variety of buildings across campus. During interviews, faculty members who had been at Chemeketa for more than 10 years discussed how and why their office locations have changed. A major shift occurred when Building G was completed in 1993. This facility currently houses the bookstore downstairs and approximately 50 faculty offices upstairs. When the building opened, faculty were given the opportunity to request offices there and the subsequent office assignments were based on seniority.

When they are first hired, faculty have limited choices of office location: whichever offices are vacant at the time. However, when offices open up, they may choose to move to a different location. Many faculty who had been at CCC for 10

years or longer discussed “when Building G opened” and their decision-making about requesting to move to new offices or staying in their current offices.

Interviewee 14 initially stayed in his office when Building G opened because “the structure of [Building G] was not conducive to communication, interaction, or whatever. . . I liked my office [where it was].” He decided to move to Building G later because the location was more central and he had better access to the library. Additionally, he was team teaching an integrated program course, and by moving to Building G he would be closer to the two other instructors of the course.

Interviewee 2 reported that her colleague initially moved to Building G because it was a new facility and because “there would be faculty from all over. . . and there would be more community and diversity of disciplines.” After a couple of years, he moved back to his old office “because the [program] community was here. This is where you bump into people [in your discipline].”

Interviewee 13 described why she was located in her current office. Because of the cohort nature of the program and the high degree of collaboration among faculty in the program, all program faculty have their offices located in the same wing of Building G. She said:

I don't think we'd be able to do the program very effectively if we weren't because we. . . organize the practicum, for instance, for anywhere from 40-60 students a term and we oversee that whole thing. We meet, which is different from a lot of programs, weekly. We pretty much are a self-managed team. I hear from the couple of directors that I've worked under that we're probably the most self-managed team on campus.

Interviewee 16 indicated that his office location and office neighbor were intentional:

It's one of those friends [next door]; one of those people I'm closer with. We sort of chose these spaces. At the time we were fairly low in seniority. That's why I have indirect lighting and am kind of a gatekeeper here so it's not a great location. But at least there were two close together so we snagged those.

Interviewee 4 works in a program where faculty offices are located near lab classrooms. She shares an office with other instructors and reported that they are "constantly comparing ideas and techniques" and that she would "never want an office by herself" because of the proximity to other program staff and ease of communication with colleagues.

In addition to explaining how proximity in office location provided opportunities for interaction with fellow faculty members, interviewees discussed how lack of proximity caused a lack of interaction with other faculty, especially those in the same academic program area. Interviewee 1 put it this way:

Because sometimes I really want to just walk down the hall and just get something settled that is bothering me about something I am doing. I need somebody to talk to. The only person down the hall is in the math department. He's a nice person, but [he can't help with departmental issues].

Interviewee 10 echoed the problem with a lack of proximity with those in the same academic area. One other person teaches her specific courses, and she reports that:

The thing that has kind of hindered our developing more of a relationship is that Chemeketa believes that they should place

people randomly in office buildings without any reflection of what program or department they're in. So he's way out on the other side of campus, his office is, and so I rarely see him.

Interviewee 8 discussed faculty office location and commented about the type of interaction that might happen with faculty who are not located in the same area. "E-mail and other forms of communication are not near as inclusive as live communication. There are things that I wouldn't say on e-mail that I'd say live and visa versa."

Interviewee 9 compared interactions before the science building was completed and after he moved there:

[Originally, all college faculty] were all in the same little building over on the other side of campus. That was interesting because you could talk about different things with different people and I enjoyed that part. So when the new building was built we [science instructors] all gravitated to this building. So I've lost something because of lack of contact [with other faculty].

Finally, Interviewee 14 attributed departmental problems to the lack of proximate offices:

As our program grew, as the college space grew, there was still a question of where you house people. . . You couldn't all say you're going to stay in this one particular space or move to this one particular space. So that became a problem. . . Maybe in the late [1980s], there were discussions in our program, some quite heated a few times, saying the best thing we could do is get ourselves back together [physically] because we were at a point where we were falling apart as a program. . .

Most interviewees discussed office location as an important facet of developing relationships with other faculty. Some faculty reported the negative implications of being separate from others (e.g. Interviewee 10 whose colleague

teaches the same subject but has an office across campus, and Interviewee 9 who described establishing relationships when faculty were all housed in “the same little building” compared to the current office situation. He has “lost something because of lack of contact”). Other Interviewees (7 and 12) did not develop relationships based on proximity with their peers and reported that location was not a hindrance to developing relationships with people in their program areas or areas of interest (e.g. distance learning).

Influence and Office Location

In the interviews, participants described how office location helped or limited developing relationships with other faculty. Interviewees reported that office location influences how relationships develop. Additionally, those who share an office building with faculty from another discipline report having a better understanding of other departments. For example, Interviewee 14, an English instructor, has an office next to an English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) instructor. They discuss goals of the ESL program and how they dovetail with English courses. Conversely, Interviewee 14 has an opportunity to discuss the unique errors of ESL students’ writing in his classes. He finds “tremendous value in that.” If offices were segregated into discipline areas, these kinds of conversations would not be as convenient.

In addition to understanding other departments, interviewees reported other influence on their professional work because of proximity: sharing curricular ideas,

discussing campus-wide issues, and deliberating on issues with students. Several interviewees mentioned that they share instructional techniques with those who share office space. Interviewee 4 shares an office with two other people who teach in the same area and gave this comment:

We are constantly comparing ideas and techniques and modifying classes. It's kind of a continuous upgrade that we're doing throughout every term. I really value that. I would never want an office by myself.

As previously mentioned, Interviewee 14 moved to a different office location in order to be closer to two other faculty. The three were developing an integrated course offering. His goal was "to get closer to the center of campus. Closer to them."

Proximity also allows for informal discussion of campus-wide or departmental issues among faculty members. Interviewee 6 said:

As far as your question about other faculty members, in this building, in this office area, there are currently five of us that are in the [program] area. Then there's [another instructor] in Building G. So he's not in the same [building]. So the five of us [in this building] do talk informally in the hall or informally sitting on the couch or standing around talking about it. So from the standpoint of what they say, I do take some of their ideas and we do play off of that. So the instructors in my immediate area have more influence than anybody else.

Interviewee 8 provided another example:

We kind of had a situation here where we had a problem with another faculty member and the three of us [from the same program area] in this office conferred about it and collectively decided to do something together about it. . . So we collaborate quite a bit together.

Proximity is convenient for Interviewee 3, also. He said, “You kind of saw that bullpen where we all are. . . It’s easy to go door to door to talk issues. If you’re standing out in the hall talking to somebody about certain issues, obviously everybody can hear, and then they’ve got something to say.”

Two interviewees mentioned students who cheated on assignments or tests in the past year. The faculty reported how they approached the problem and to whom they went for advice. Interviewee 4 talked with her Dean and her program Chair to discuss how to respond to the problem:

Interviewee 4: Yes. As a matter of fact I also went to my program Chair.

BIM: Is that one of you three [who share the same office]?

Interviewee 4: Yes. It’s [program Chair’s name].

BIM: That’s convenient that you were all...

Interviewee 4: It is. It’s clearly convenient.

While Interviewee 4 may have gone to her program Chair to discuss the problem whether or not they had shared an office, they had been able to develop a relationship before the problem arose. In part, their relationship developed because of proximity.

Proximity allows for informal contact between faculty members. Contact provides an opportunity to develop relationships that influence work-related decision-making. Faculty provided clear examples of how they have been influenced by other faculty who have a proximate office location. Conversely,

interviewees described distant relationships with colleagues whose offices were farther away, even if those colleagues taught the same courses. By co-mingling offices, CCC faculty have developed relationships outside of their discipline area.

Role Models

When asked to identify role models, several participants reported they do not currently have a professional role model on the CCC campus. The faculty who do report having role models describe several characteristics they value in the role model, including social skills, teaching experience, and positive personality traits. Participants indicated that these attributes motivate and inspire the interviewees to emulate their role models.

The campus has a formal mentoring program that is coordinated by the Opportunity Center, which was formed for the advancement of teaching excellence and staff development. Faculty who were hired in the last four years were paired with a mentor outside of the new hire's academic area. Mentors guided them through the first academic year of the new faculty member's tenure. Interviewees who participated in this program reported varying success with the mentoring experience. Some found it useful, but others indicated the mentors were friendly but not helpful with daily adjustments to the campus.

Given the current structure of course delivery, few instructors have the opportunity to watch a colleague teach. Aside from team-teaching and on-line instruction, information about faculty members' teaching can only be inferred by

how instructors talk about their profession, what students say about the instructor, and sharing class activities and ideas. Interviewee 6 specifically indicated the lack of opportunity to experience others' teaching: "I don't get in the classroom actively listening to anyone."

Several years ago Interviewee 14 collaborated with two other instructors to offer an integrated program on American Studies. When asked about role models, he identified a colleague from that project and specified what he would like to emulate:

The way he can conduct a class session. The way he could draw out points of view from many students in a 50-minute session. Very much on target with kinds of activities and with kinds of assignments that really allow the students to be engaged but made them be engaged and allowed them to find their way of understanding the material.

Interviewee 2 also identified a colleague she saw as a role model. She admired her colleague's mastery of his subject and his "blend of hands-on personal experience with the science and technical background that he teaches these students. So it's not just pure theory. If anyone asks a practical question not only has he seen someone do it but he's done it himself."

On-line instruction allows for instructors to view each others' classes in a way that classroom teaching does not. Faculty can share websites where they have posted lectures, course information, and learning activities. Colleagues can observe these classes (even threaded discussions among students and faculty) much more readily than classroom-based teaching. Interviewee 5 commented about a

colleagues' web-based courses, which have impressed her: "Mostly in their innovative ways of presenting and jumping [into] that online venue and the energy level."

Participants discussed several ways in which their colleagues demonstrate adept social skills in the workplace. This category encompassed both personal strategies (such as choosing one's battles) and understanding the campus culture (such as how to get things done).

Interviewee 2 identified a person as a role model because "He doesn't sweat stuff. He chooses his battles. Which we all need to do. You choose your battles and the ones that really are important he's an advocate for. If in the course of eternity this isn't important, he lets it go." She added that not everyone would agree with his decisions about what is important. However, she respects his opinion. Moreover, Interviewee 2 indicated that this same role model is also effective because he "knows who to talk to or where to go because he's been here so long." He has developed the knowledge and the network to be an effective faculty member.

Interviewee 7 identified the same role model as Interviewee 2. Interviewee 7 noted his methods of "working through the structure of the campus. Working with your directors. That's kind of where that's at. I can kind of sit back and watch him."

Interviewee 10 discussed an e-mail *faux pas* she had committed early in her career at Chemeketa. Through this experience, she learned about one aspect of

Chemeketa culture and decided to cultivate mentors. She found people who would help her as,

Institutional mentors, not mentors in the sense that they know my subject matter at all. But it's become clear to me that it's very important to know the culture in which you teach and to find your bearings. Eventually I think I'll be able to do that on my own, but right now I can't.

Faculty often described a role model as someone who was energetic, hard-working, or had a positive attitude. Interviewee 6 said he respects other faculty for "their dedication to the classroom and to their profession." Interviewee 5 had a similar comment about a colleague she considers a role model: "She's just the most energetic and innovative teacher. I always think of her as very positive in her attitudes." Others, like Interviewee 8, identified concern for students as a quality to emulate in their role models. Interviewee 1 was quite specific about what he admired in his colleague:

Someone like [my colleague] I would say who seems like a tireless worker, and is always very energetic. [She] has the very unusual quality that a good teacher has to have. One that's very difficult to maintain over the years. Is the way of treating every lesson and every project you are doing. . . even though you have done it a gazillion times. . . as if it's the very first time that you have ever done it. To add that kind of freshness and make it a really fresh experience for the students.

The variation in this category is broad. Six interviewees responded that they had a current, professional role model on the CCC campus. One of these, Interviewee 2, mentioned she has been intentionally working toward providing peer leadership. She reports that she is becoming a senior faculty member in her area

and wants to mentor others. Two faculty identified “mentors,” not role models. Interviewee 13 explained the difference between mentoring and role models: “The only distinction I would make would be that I certainly have role models that aren’t necessarily mentors. . . There would be a relationship connected for me with the mentor and not so with the role model.” Faculty reported that Chemeketa tries to “cram some role models down our throats,” while others described fellow faculty they “admire” but would not call role models. Finally, one interviewee identified his fifth grade Sunday school teacher as his role model. The teacher decided to hand the class over to students and the faculty member reported he “learned more about teaching from that experience than anything else.”

Influence and Role Models

When faculty do identify role models, they also describe both general and specific ways in which the role models influence their actions and decisions about workplace issues. Interviewees report that role models often provide motivation and encouragement to complete projects or solve problems.

Interviewee 15 said her role model provides support, “when I get down and want to talk to someone about the woes of the world or about Chemeketa, she gets it. She knows what I’m talking about. She understands that and we can talk and commiserate and then move on.” For Interviewee 15, her role model not only listens, but provides feedback so that she can process her frustrations and return to work in a more productive manner.

Interviewee 5 mentioned how her strong ties provided encouragement, and so do her role models:

BIM: And it sounds like those people have influenced you to take on some things that sometimes you might not be sure about.

Interviewee 5: Yes, to make sure I just keep the fear or risk low and jump in there and go do something.

Later, Interviewee 5 added that her role model, “influences me when I’m thinking of a project and [wondering], ‘Will this be overwhelming or will this be wonderful?’ It can help tilt me to, ‘Oh, this will be great. I can do that. If she can do this then I can do this.’ ”

Interviewee 7 gave an example of changing how she used the web-delivery system for her web-based classes because of her role model: “Before, I was using backdoor methods because the system kept crashing all the time and people were upset. I wasn’t upset because I used backdoor methods and let my students come in other ways but I decided to put my trust in it and go for it. That was because of him.”

Interviewees 1 and 11 gave general examples of their role models.

Interviewee 1 explained that he couldn’t directly imitate his role model’s teaching methods, but he is inspired by her “attitude and the outlook. The way of responding to students.” Interviewee 11 couldn’t pick one role model on campus, “but you get the sense that there’s a lot of good people working hard and that this is a good place to work and that there’s a lot of positive things going on. That motivates me to hopefully continue to try to do my part doing that as well.”

Participants in the study report that their role models are influential. Role models provide encouragement and demonstrate how to maneuver through social and political situations in the workplace.

Chemeketa's Opportunity Center coordinates a mentoring program for new faculty. The Center matches the new faculty member with an experienced faculty member who is outside of the new member's academic area. Participants in this study had varied reactions to the program. Interviewee 5 thought mentoring "was a great program. I had someone that really did keep tabs on me and met with me and had coffee with me and we talked about things." Interviewee 4 had a similar reaction: "She'd introduce me to a lot of people and that was really nice. She showed me where things were and kind of answered some general questions."

Others had a very different experience. Interviewee 10 went to her mentor for guidance on an issue. "I remember I was having a problem with being misunderstood. I guess I came on...I don't know. I was demanding of something when I came and it was misperceived and I was talking to her about it and she really wasn't that helpful."

Interviewee 13 has mentors she developed during graduate school, and she goes to them for guidance. She said, "I'll still write to her and ask her for ideas about my group dynamics class or whatever." Interviewee 13's situation is also unique in that she "worked here for ten years from the mid 80s to the mid 90s in a whole different capacity." She didn't have the need for an institutional mentor to show her around campus or introduce her to colleagues.

Most of the faculty who were interviewed for this study had been employed before the mentoring program was established. Because of the limited number of people who participated in mentoring and were interviewed for this study, no themes emerged about the mentoring program and role models.

Faculty members at community colleges are engaged in teaching as their primary work responsibility. Teaching is typically a solitary activity: team-teaching is infrequent enough that only two of the participants in this study had participated in a team-taught course offering. For the most part, faculty must infer who is a good teacher from conversations with others, rather than from actual observation of the teacher. Finding a teaching role model, then, can be difficult. Faculty interviewed in this project identified two other ways that role models influenced them: through positive attitudes and social skills.

E-mail Communication

A major communication venue on the CCC campus is e-mail discussions. Since Chemeketa is a larger campus, not every faculty member knows (by name or by face) every other faculty member. It would be common to get e-mail from “strangers” on the faculty about campus issues like instituting a parking fee, changes in health insurance, or the grading structure. Additionally, e-mail is used among smaller program areas and discipline units to communicate about their specific issues. During the course of this project, interviewees reported that several campus-wide topics were discussed via e-mail: the rising costs of health insurance

and its impact on benefits; changing the grading system; and instituting a parking fee to raise revenue.

Faculty members report a wide range in their treatment of e-mail messages. While some indicated that they read all of their e-mail, two interviewees reported knowledge of colleagues who don't read any e-mail. Three factors emerged when faculty discussed how they decide to read e-mail: time, subject lines and message senders. Time is a significant determinant in the decision-making process. E-mail messages are prioritized depending on how much time a faculty member perceives he or she has to devote to reading messages. Subject lines or the inferred content of a message is another element in deciding whether to read e-mail. If faculty are not interested in the subject line, the e-mail message is likely deleted. The sender of the message is a final factor in making decisions about e-mail. E-mail is frequently prioritized or deleted based on who sent the message. E-mail influences faculty in two key areas: reading e-mail can shape a faculty member's thinking about an issue, and e-mail messages stimulate face-to-face conversations about issues raised in e-mail discussions.

Six interviewees specifically mentioned time as a factor regarding making decisions about reading e-mail messages. Interviewee 8 said, "There are so many [e-mail messages] out there and you have to go through all that stuff and it's just too time consuming to read them all." Like Interviewee 8, Interviewee 7 consistently weeds through her e-mail because of consistent time constraints.

Others, like Interviewee 15, indicated that her time limitations fluctuate during the term:

Right now it's finals week and I've got a bunch of e-mails that I'm not opening yet because I don't have time. So it's time. What I have going on at the time. Usually I'm real good about getting to it as soon as I come in but there's just not enough time [at this point in the term].

One faculty member, Interviewee 10, reported that the time she took to read e-mail messages was not too demanding: "[E-mail about] the discussions on campus – I would read them all. I would read them because I'm interested in what people have to say and I know it's not going to be that big of a commitment of my time."

Interviewee 16 indicated that his decision-making is based on time, combined with another factor:

Maybe time is the most important influence here but. . . If I know that there's going to be a meeting to follow up the ten days or two weeks of e-mailed conversations I will tend to just sort of keep track, read a little bit, try and pick up as much as I can and then know that the real conversation is going to occur face to face.

Time is a factor in reading e-mail messages, but time is a factor in making decisions about many work-place activities. The perceived priority of e-mail is reflected in faculty members' comments.

Another factor in reading e-mail messages is the subject line of the message or the inferred content of the e-mail. Two interviewees specifically mentioned that they delete a message about an activity on campus or a general announcement. They indicated that they don't have time to go to activities such as "blood drives or plant sales," so they delete the message.

Several interviewees mentioned that an interesting subject heading would pique their curiosity, and they would read the message. For example, Interviewee 13, “read all of the e-mail on grading policies because I was very interested in that.” Similarly, Interviewee 5 reads e-mail with an interesting subject line, but, “There are things that come in that I may not read for two or three days because I don’t have the opportunity to because they’re too long or something of that nature.” The time factor intersects with the subject line so that the messages will be read, but not immediately.

As with the time and subject matter factors, the sender of a message helps faculty to prioritize e-mail messages. Interviewee 12 had particular criteria she uses to approach her e-mail:

Students come first, my children come second. Sometimes my children come first. It depends on what it is. But I look to see what is there. I’m also...a lot of authors have up-to-date messages. A lot of book companies have things where they send out articles they think you should be aware of or you might want to read. Those are always at the bottom of the totem pole.

Interviewee 7 reported that she only reads e-mail from people she knows because of the volume of e-mail messages she receives: “What I did is I had 80-some e-mails yesterday and I went through and I saw who it was and I’d click on it and just see what they had to say. . . There is so much [e-mail]. If there wasn’t then that would be a different case. But when you have to pick and choose. . .”

Interviewee 11 reports that he at least skims e-mail messages from important

people, but he doesn't, "read anything from my in-laws. They send me all sorts of stuff from the Internet that they've found."

Two interviewees reported that the sender of a message makes no difference regarding whether or not they would read the message. For example, Interviewee 9 said, "I think if somebody is seeking information or is giving out some information or wants input then I think I'd read it. Who it comes from doesn't play too much influence." Interviewee 6 reported the same sentiment.

Influence and E-mail Communication

Faculty interviewed for this study reported that e-mail messages from colleagues can influence their decision-making about professional issues. The content of e-mail messages can persuade faculty to change their thinking about a topic. Secondly, e-mail can stimulate face-to-face discussions of topics that were raised via e-mail. In that case, the sender may stimulate a face-to-face discussion between people who did not participate in the e-mail discussion.

During the course of this project, several e-mail discussions were taking place: the rising costs of health insurance and its impact on benefits; changing the grading system; and instituting a parking fee to raise revenue. Some of these topics were sent to the faculty bargaining unit (i.e. all full-time faculty) and some included the entire campus e-mail list.

Several faculty who report reading e-mail they receive indicated that the messages can affect their position on a subject. Interviewee 5 said:

They definitely bring up things I hadn't thought of, especially with something that's being debated. That's probably the best value. I wouldn't say I'm easily influenced but I appreciate hearing all the different sides because they'll bring in facets of an issue that I had never thought of before. So that's the most positive aspect. So definitely in that way it could influence how I may vote or how I may express my opinions on an issue.

Similarly, Interviewee 6 discussed the proposed change in the parking fee:

I read a couple of them and the rest of them I just deleted because \$25 is not a significant factor. Our insurance is going to be a lot worse than that. I did scan because they had some good ideas about some of our students who are lower income and \$25 is part of a week's worth of groceries. That might not seem much to some of us but part of a week's groceries may be significant. So I thought some people had some good reasons why not to other than the selfishness of some of the faculty.

While many interviewees gave general examples of what was influential,

Interviewee 13 offered a specific example of what was significant for her in the grading discussion:

One [message] had to do with a student being allowed to wait until the eighth week of class to decide whether they were going to do pass/no pass. That seemed a little weird. And then there was a great revision to the language that was actually offered by [refers to another full time faculty member] and I was very impressed with the language that he submitted.

The faculty who regularly delete messages do not have the opportunity to be influenced by e-mail discussions. Interviewee 8 provided an example of this phenomenon: "They've got a lot of dialogue and I'm kind of an efficient type of person so I just delete them. I give my input and rarely read the other people's input on grading or parking or things like that."

Reading e-mail messages might be similar to reading the newspaper. A reader probably wouldn't call the author of the article, but she or he might be prompted to discuss the piece with colleagues. Faculty reported that e-mail can stimulate discussion with others, not necessarily the e-mail's author. This theory emerged later in the project, and the last three interviewees were asked about this phenomenon, which emerged from the previous interviews.

Summary

Interviewee's responses to interview questions were analyzed, and four categories of how faculty are influenced by other faculty members emerged from the data: strong ties, office location, role models, and e-mail communication. Many participants reported that strong ties which develop between and among faculty can lead to very influential relationships. Those strong ties were based on similar values and common interests. Office location and proximity to other faculty can also be influential in how faculty relationships develop. In general, the closer offices were, the more likely an influential relationship will develop. Faculty who identified role models reported that they provide encouragement and motivation to become better instructors. The role models' teaching performance was primarily based on inference from anecdotes they share about how they interacted with students, since watching a fellow faculty member teach is a rare phenomenon. Faculty reported a wide range of responses to e-mail communication. Messages were deleted based on: the amount of time faculty perceive they have; the sender; and the subject line.

Interview data suggests these strong ties, office locations, role models, and e-mail communications influence how faculty make professional decisions and approach their teaching tasks.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

Four themes emerged during data analysis of participants' interviews: strong ties with other faculty; the impact of office location in developing relationships with other faculty; professional role models; and how e-mail communication impacts professional decision-making. In this chapter, each theme will be explored, including a brief review of the findings, a discussion of how the findings relate to existing research, an exploration of implications of the findings, and identification of questions for further research.

Strong Ties

Faculty interviewed for this study report forming strong relationships with other faculty members. When strong ties were formed, participants indicate they are influenced by these relationships. Interviewees also distinguish between strong ties and other relationships: "Those I don't work with on an ongoing basis are not necessarily my personal friends. They're just acquaintances, let's say, because I don't have the same close interaction with them as I do these individuals" (Interviewee 15). In general, two factors must be present to form a strong tie: similar values and a common interest. These findings support Birnbaum's (1988)

assertion that social attraction, value consensus and reciprocity are factors involved in group interaction and influence.

Since there is a gap in the organizational literature about informal connections in the work place (Krackhardt & Stern, 1988), and the research on community college faculty relationships, in particular, is lacking, the findings on strong ties can best be understood by comparing the sociological literature on friendship formation and the literature on workplace alliances.

As observed in this study, office location was often a precipitating factor in the development of strong ties. Propinquity has been established as a key element in the development of relationships (Festinger, Schachter & Back, 1950; Katz, 1957; Krackhardt & Stern, 1988; McPherson, Smith-Lovin & Cook, 2001; Riordan & Griffeth, 1995; Snow, Leahy & Schwab, 1981), but other factors of homogeneity must also be in place for a relationship to develop into a friendship or strong tie (McPherson et al., 2001; Snow et al., 1981). Social and demographic similarities tend to reinforce relationships and encourage their development.

Jackall (1988) writes about alliances and how they are formed among corporate managers. Alliances are made when:

one becomes known, for instance, as a trusted friend of a friend; thought of as a person to whom one can safely refer a thorny problem; considered a 'sensible' or 'reasonable' or, especially, a 'flexible' person. . . ; or considered a person with sharp ideas that break deadlocks. . . ." (p. 38)

These qualities resemble those that faculty identified as some of the reasons they form strong ties with other faculty: similar values, such as a strong working ethic, innovation in teaching, excellence in teaching, and honesty.

Several questions emerge from the findings in this study regarding strong ties. First, how is influence perceived and reported? Second, what is the relationship between strong ties and productivity in the workplace? A third relates to the emergence of self-organization. Finally, what questions arise for further research?

This study was based on participants' self-reflection and self-reporting regarding professional relationships with colleagues. Additionally, interviewees were not provided a definition of influence. "Despite the concept's wide use, 'influence' has no agreed-upon meaning in the sociological literature" (Sandefur & Laumann, 1998, p. 488). Burt (1983) addressed the question of providing definitions to participants when he describes a participant's thought process in recalling information and answering questions about relationships:

When someone poses a sociometric question to me asking for the names of people to whom I go for such-and-such, I must disentangle the welter of interaction activities in my naturally occurring relations and classify some as such-and-such activities before I can answer the question. . . If I am asked to name the people who most influence my thinking with their personal comments, I must decide which of my activities fall under the label of influence. Obviously, people can differ in their interpretation of specific interaction activities as manifestations of more general types of activities, with some viewing as intimate, for example, what others view as no more than friendly. (p. 36)

Participants were not directed to a definition of influence, but they were prompted with examples of times when they may have been influenced. (Have you talked with other faculty about your instructional practices, conferences, participation on committees, or opinions about hiring the new president?)

In this study, participants may not have shared times they were influenced because the influence was small or because instances were not recalled during the interview. This phenomenon allows for the possibility that influence from faculty who do not have strong ties with the interviewees could be much more common than was reported. One hypothetical example is that a faculty member goes to the shared printer to collect a document. In doing so, the instructor sees an interesting activity, lesson plan format, or handout that someone else had printed. Exposure to others' ideas in this type of serendipitous situation may not be recalled during an interview. Additionally, influence may be quite subtle, so that the one influenced is unaware of the change in thought or behavior. An example might be discussing course preparation with a colleague. The conversation might result in slight changes in how one thinks about class lessons, so that instead of preparing for individual class periods, an instructor prepares a weekly plan.

Another example might be overhearing colleagues discuss Brookfield's (1995) methods of student feedback and takes subconscious note of the information. Later the instructor buys a book by Brookfield and considers how the concepts might impact her or his teaching. These small shifts in how one thinks about teaching can have profound ultimate effects in how one thinks about the

work of teaching and how one interacts with students in the learning environment. This study did not intentionally investigate the possibilities of these more subtle forms of influence, and the possibilities of this phenomenon may deserve more attention.

Another potential consequence of developing strong ties with colleagues is the impact on productivity and innovation in the workplace. Riordan and Griffeth (1995) write about an understudied dimension of the workplace: friendship potential and development. They note, "There is relatively little theoretical or empirical work that has attempted to examine the attitudinal and behavioral consequences of informal relationships within the work context" (p. 151) and they surmise that, "perceived friendship opportunities may be more closely associated with work-related outcomes than has been implied by previous research" (p. 153). As employees (faculty) feel trust and ease with others, this facilitates the flow of information between those with close ties: "a group within which there is extensive trustworthiness and extensive trust is able to accomplish more than a comparable group without that trustworthiness and trust" (Coleman, 1988, p. S101). Adler and Kwon (2002) argue that the social capital developed in relationships with strong ties can be used to gather information and advice. They also argue that social capital can be converted into "economic or other advantage" (p. 21). In another study by Krackhardt and Stern (1988), participants who had friends "spread out through the organization" had an advantage during a simulated organizational crisis (p. 125). They surmise that "the friendships that exist in all organizations can either

hinder or facilitate that cooperation in times of crisis, depending on whether those friendships cut across subunit boundaries” (p. 138). In the study at hand, faculty report that information flow (such as how to thwart students who might want to copy quiz information from an on-line class) can positively affect efficiency: not every faculty member would need to spend time solving the same problem.

While the uses of social capital can be seen as positive, negative consequences are also possible. Portes (1998) lists examples of ethnic groups who have traditionally dominated various sectors of the economy in different cities or regions of the U.S. An additional example is the “good old boy network” that excludes some institutional members from important decision-making roles.

Another implication of the research findings is that the development of strong ties appears to be an example of self-organization. Because of the unique arrangement of offices at Chemeketa Community College, many faculty members are not proximate to those who share their discipline. In this study, the data indicate that when faculty are not physically organized by department or program area, they organize themselves based on common values and interests. Examples include an interest in participating in, or watching sports, having similar familial circumstances (e.g. same-aged children or caring for parents), or interest in delivering computer-mediated instruction. This illustrates the theory that when an organizational structure is not imposed on a group of individuals, a structure will organically emerge.

Wheatley (2002) posits that significant change can develop when individuals talk about what matters to them. "Large and successful change efforts start with conversations among friends, not with those in power. . ." (p. 25). This study suggests that when faculty create strong ties, change may result in the institution. The closest examples that faculty provided in the interviews were changes in on-line teaching and learning. Talking with each other about technical issues in delivering distance learning brought about change in the technological infrastructure and how faculty used the resources available. Wheatley's thesis implies that the potential for change lies within strong-tie relationships and the conversations that happen between and among faculty. "Simple conversations held at kitchen tables, or seated on the ground, or leaning against doorways are powerful means to start influencing and changing our world" (Wheatley, 2002, p. 9)

This area of inquiry precipitates questions for future research. How do strong ties develop in other colleges when faculty in the same discipline are proximate to each other? The unique organization of this community college appeared to have a significant impact on the development of strong ties. Would the finding be transferable to colleges that are physically organized with departments that are proximate?

These findings also suggest that strong ties affect productivity, but this phenomenon has not been established in a college setting. Since the "product" of an educational institution can be elusive, this area might be difficult to study. Potential

areas where productivity could be measured include committee work, establishment and growth of new programs, and contracts with external partners.

The findings also might have a gap in eliciting information about times when an influence might have been small or subtle. Collecting data by asking faculty to keep journals or by using focus groups might capture this elusive information.

Studying the effects of weak ties might also prove to yield information on innovation. The fleeting conversation with a distant colleague might have impact on how a faculty member approaches a future project or issue based on the information exchanged.

Strong ties emerged as a significant theme identified during analysis of interviews with faculty. Participants report that the effects of strong tie relationships varied from feelings of social support to concrete help on technical problems. The effects of social capital, evident in the exchange of information and the helpful actions of others, were present in the interview data. How this social capital translates into a tangible impact on informal faculty leadership (narrowly) and the community college institution (broadly) is less clear. While strong ties and the development of social capital among faculty may positively impact productivity, the connection was not definitively established in this study. Questions emerging from this study relate to the unique physical organization of offices at Chemeketa, the effects of subtle influence among faculty, and the investigation of the impact of weak ties.

Office Location

Interviewees in this study reported that the location of a faculty member's office seems to play a significant role in how relationships are formed. In general, faculty at Chemeketa are assigned random instructional office locations: discipline areas are not intentionally grouped unless offices are near a lab-type facility (e.g. science). However, faculty do have the opportunity to move when an office is vacated. Analysis of the data reported in this study suggests that office location is a factor in the development of relationships. In sum, serendipitous relationships develop due to closer proximity; conversely, faculty report less interaction with, and influence from, those in other buildings, even if they are in the same program area (or discipline).

The literature related to office and work space has addressed the physical components of work, such as lighting, but studies specifically addressing proximity and work relationships are scant (Donald, 1994). The closest related literature base is in sociology, where researchers have studied propinquity and friendship development in other situations (i.e. housing developments and apartment complexes). Krackhardt and Stern (1988) note that, "When units of an organization are physically proximate, more interaction occurs and friendships are more likely to occur" (p. 124). Others concur (Festinger et al., 1950; Riordan & Griffeth, 1995). However, Snow et al. (1981) surmise that "while propinquity and other design features may indeed precipitate initial contact, this contact will nonetheless remain superficial unless it is reinforced by social and demographic homogeneity" (p.

318). This section will address office location and proximity as related to faculty at a community college.

Several implications can be drawn from the findings that proximity impacts how faculty develop relationships with other faculty. One such inference is that office assignments could be intentionally designed to create bonds, increase productivity on projects, or increase the likelihood of success on an initiative. For example, if faculty working on an accreditation report were co-located for the duration of the project, this study suggests their work would be more productive. Proximate location would ease communication barriers that would exist if faculty were spread across campus. Additionally, brainstorming and “bouncing ideas off each other” while compiling the information would be much more likely.

Katzenback and Smith’s (1993) findings support this assertion. They investigated how to create effective teams and noted, “creative insights as well as personal bonding require impromptu and casual interactions just as much as analyzing spreadsheets and interviewing customers” (p. 119). Faculty who are working on a project together would benefit because of the casual interactions that are much more likely to occur when offices are in close physical proximity.

Another illustration of a project where co-location would increase the chances of success is in developing on-line delivery of instruction. Even when faculty have the computer skills to create an on-line class, working around others who are striving for the same result would provide multiple opportunities to discuss ideas during the work day. Carletta, Garrod & Fraser-Krauss (1998) suggest:

One way to foster innovation might be simply to ensure that people have the opportunity to bump into each other. In some cases, this can be done by rearranging office space to place group members near each other or providing a common room. (p. 553)

During this study, a prime example emerged where faculty who were co-located were exploring all of the methods in which a student could cut and paste test questions from the on-line class and save them to share with other students. The process of writing an e-mail with ideas or picking up the phone to share another idea would probably hinder the brainstorming process, but since the faculty could "pop in," many ideas were communicated. Projects that require creativity and innovation would benefit if those working on the project are co-located.

The findings of this study also imply that managers might benefit from moving faculty who are co-located and engaged in behavior that has a negative impact on the organization. If faculty are more likely to form bonds because of propinquity, then it is logical to assume that moving people away from each other would discourage communication and building relationships. Those involved in group think behaviors, for example, might be disrupted if their offices were not located in proximate areas. Based on the findings in this study, when people are moved to a new area, they would be more likely to develop relationships with people in the new area.

Another implication of the study findings regarding office locations relates to the disadvantages of co-mingling faculty from a variety of disciplines. At Chemeketa, faculty are frequently placed in available offices, which may or may

not be near people who teach in the same discipline or program area. (However, faculty who teach in special facilities, such as science labs, tend to be located together near the facility.) One disadvantage of the organization of instructional offices emerged in the study: two faculty who teach the same courses are separated by several buildings, and when the newer faculty member came to campus, she tired of attempting to contact the established faculty member to discuss campus resources (e.g. video tape to use in class) and instructional practices. The newer faculty member, who was interviewed in this project, turned to a part-time faculty member who also taught in the discipline and was closer in proximity. Those two regularly discussed professional matters. The disadvantage in this situation is not that the full-time and part-time faculty established a strong working relationship, but that the newer faculty member was not connected with her full-time colleague.

Other scenarios may pose a problem when faculty of the same discipline or program area are not co-located. For example, major curricular revisions brought on by a shift in technology (e.g. the shift from hand-drawn to computerized drafting) would be complicated if faculty were scattered across campus. Another illustration is the hiring of new faculty. Certainly department meetings would address formal discussions and decisions made regarding creating a job announcement or outlining selection criteria, but many informal communications and negotiations that shape decision-making take place outside of structured meetings (Krackhardt & Stern, 1988). Casual conversations naturally happen when

offices are proximate: the organization of instructional offices at Chemeketa tends to discourage casual conversation among department members.

A variety of inferences regarding the impact of office location can be drawn from the findings of this study. Co-location of offices could benefit projects that require faculty from across campus to work together to achieve a goal such as completing an accreditation report or developing new technologies to deliver instruction. Moving faculty apart could also change the dynamic, so that a situation that has a negative impact on the organization could be neutralized.

The analysis of interview data indicated that proximate office location had a significant impact on how relationships developed among faculty. Those in closer proximity were more likely to develop strong tie relationships. In turn, faculty report these relationships have the most influence on professional decision-making. These findings could inform management decisions on how to assign faculty to offices in a way that would be more likely to promote a certain outcome: if it is desirable to have certain faculty develop strong ties and influence each other, move them to a proximate location.

Role Models

During interviews with participants, the topic of role models was one of the more disparate in terms of what participants reported. Some indicated they do not currently have professional role models; other participants reported having role models; and another group of faculty said they have mentoring relationships where

they are the mentored person. The faculty who do report having role models describe several characteristics they value in the role model, including social skills, teaching experience, and positive personality traits. Participants indicated that these attributes motivate and inspire the interviewees to emulate their role models.

The Opportunity Center on the Chemeketa campus coordinates a mentoring program for new faculty. Faculty who were hired in the last four years were paired with a mentor outside of the new hire's academic area. The mentor's role is to provide a link to another discipline on campus and serve as a neutral sounding board for the new hire. Four interviewees discussed their experiences in the formal mentoring program: two found it positive, one found it negative, and one felt she didn't need the relationship since she had worked at the institution before being hired as a full-time faculty member.

The role model relationship and the mentoring relationship are two very distinct patterns of interaction. "The essential quality of a role model is that he possesses skills and displays techniques which the actor lacks (or thinks he lacks), and from whom, by observation and comparison with his own performance, the actor can learn" (Merton, 1968, p. 33). In contrast, a mentor fulfills roles such as guide, patron, coach, and collaborator (Wunsch, 1994). A role model does not necessarily have a close relationship with the one who seeks to emulate, but a mentoring relationship implies a relationship with significant interaction and trust.

During interviews for this study, participants talked about role models, but they also referred to mentors when they were asked to identify a professional role

model. Additionally, when the data were analyzed, it was sometimes difficult to distinguish between interviewees' responses about a person who was a role model, one who was a mentor, and a person who was a strong tie. Ultimately, the label the participant used to describe a relationship was used to analyze the data. The findings were that relatively few interviewees (seven – less than half) identified professional role models.

These findings generate several questions about professional role models. The overarching query is why so few faculty identify professional role models. Additionally, are faculty role models found in formal leadership roles or in administration? How could community college faculty benefit from role models? Finally, what questions arise for future research projects?

Of those seven interviewees who identified role models, five of them have 4-10 years of teaching experience, one has 11-20 years of teaching experience, and one has 21-30 years of experience. Of the eight interviewees who have taught 4-10 years, five identified role models. Those who identified role models were more likely to be in the 4-10 years of teaching experience grouping.

In comparison, half of the total participants have taught at Chemeketa for more than 10 years. (Specifically, three have taught for 11-20 years and five have taught 21-30 years). These faculty may *be* the role models for other, newer faculty on campus. Additionally, many interviewees had extensive professional experience before teaching at Chemeketa, so they may not seek role models because of their seasoned status.

Another evident answer to why so few participants identified role models is because of the current nature of the teaching job. The prevailing instructional model is that an individual teacher prepares for, and delivers, lessons in isolation from other faculty. Interviewee 6 commented, "I don't get in the classroom actively listening to anyone." At a community college the size of Chemeketa (approximately 11,700 FTE in 2003), at maximum, about two full-time faculty would teach the same courses, so the potential for collaboration is limited in this way as well. Team teaching and collaborative efforts are complicated in terms of workload and budgetary issues. Determining an instructor's workload when a class is shared with another faculty member is challenging, and the current budget climate in Oregon's community colleges restricts course releases or additional compensation for the extra time collaborative efforts require.

A significant exception to the ubiquitous, individualistic model is in distance learning, specifically, web-based delivery of instruction. Chemeketa has been a leader in Oregon in terms of developing on-line learning opportunities to students, and their first on-line course offering was in 1990. "As far as we know, we were the first [in Oregon]," (J. Scott, personal communication, December 17, 2003). What had originally been the media lab (for preparation of various media for face-to-face instruction) evolved into the Tech Hub (or The Hub), where faculty could go to get support in developing on-line classes.

The new method of delivery fostered collaboration as instructors worked together to solve technical issues regarding course design and delivery. Because of

the way on-line instruction is documented, instructors can view each others' classes in a way that "on-land" classroom teaching does not allow. Faculty who use web-based instruction can share websites they have developed to instruct students in a much more convenient format in comparison to inviting a colleague to attend a lecture-format class. This interaction would provide an opportunity to identify a colleague as a role model. Interviewee 7, who has developed on-line classes, identified a role model because of the role model's expertise in on-line instruction. (She also described this role model as a strong tie because of their shared values in advancing web-based course delivery and quality of instruction.) If web-based delivery of classes continues on its upward trend, and faculty continue to share ideas regarding the medium, role models may become more prevalent among this group of faculty.

Another factor to consider in the analysis of the findings is the delimitation of the questions about professional role models. The introduction to the interview questions included these statements: "I'd like you to take a few minutes and think about those faculty at Chemeketa who have had influence on your professional life. These people could have 'official' positions, but I am most interested in informal interactions with fellow faculty members." Another question was, "Is there a faculty member on campus that you consider a professional role model?" The introductory comments and the question narrow an interviewee's choices. While program Chairs are faculty members, they could be thought of as holding an "official position." Additionally, limiting the choices to faculty members eliminates

the possibility of choosing an administrator (Director, Associate Dean, etc.) or a classified staff member to be a role model. Perhaps participants would have identified someone outside of the "faculty" designation. Formal leaders may be the role models faculty would choose instead of colleagues who serve as informal leaders. From a systems perspective, the interview question did not take into account the permeable boundary quality of systems.

While nine of the participants did not identify a role model, seven of them acknowledged someone they would consider a professional role model and discussed the influence of the role model. Interviewees gave examples of how role models provide encouragement and demonstrate how to navigate social and political situations that arise in the workplace. It appears that identifying and emulating positive role models can lead to greater competency in the community college system. If faculty choose role models who aligned with the core values of the college, the entire system would be better integrated. In turn, this would lead to a more effective functioning of the college.

What questions arise for future research projects? First, the question should be asked in a broader fashion, not delimited to a particular category of employee. It's possible that faculty emulate different role models for different parts of their jobs. For example, a family member might provide an example of a strong work ethic, and a store clerk might provide a role model for friendliness.

Second, are role models within the organization necessary? How else can faculty strive for better performance? Where else could one find a potentially

influential role model? Perhaps this function is served in professional development organizations or discipline-specific associations. Faculty might feel two co-existing demands: one from the college culture and another from the discipline area's culture. If this is the case, then one would expect to find at least a minimal participation in organizations outside of the faculty's college.

Third, is there a point in a faculty member's career when a role model is no longer helpful? One might expect a certain level of competence in the discipline and in the system after a certain number of years of service at an institution. If this is true, where is that point?

Fourth, what is the comparison between faculty who deliver classes face-to-face versus those who deliver classes via web-mediated channels? This question is based on the assumption that the barrier to watching others teach disappears when the class can be observed in an asynchronous manner. If this is the case, then role models for faculty who teach using web-delivery can be compared to those who do not.

The issue of faculty role models emerged during the analysis of interview data and the category yielded more questions than answers. Half of the participants identified a role model and half did not: the role model phenomenon among community college faculty requires more investigation to provide a greater understanding. The links between role models, strong ties and informal faculty leadership were not clearly discernable based on the data collected. The differentiation between role models and strong ties was also not evident.

E-mail Communication

The importance of e-mail as a mode of communication among faculty emerged from the first interview of this study. Interviewee 1 described how his teaching was influenced by the exchange of ideas among department members via e-mail. In each subsequent interview, participants were asked how e-mail impacted their professional decision making. Answers varied widely, and three factors emerged when faculty discussed how they decide to read e-mail: the perceived time taken to sort through and read e-mail; the importance of the message as indicated by the subject line; and the role the sender could play in how an interviewee regarded the message. Participants reported a wide spectrum of strategies for reading or deleting e-mail. While a few report reading all of it, some report reading almost none of it.

The literature regarding computer-mediated communication is sparse and tends to examine how threaded discussions impact group decision-making (Finholt, 1990; Huang & Wei, 2000; Kahai & Cooper, 1999; Zigurs, Poole & DeSanctis, 1988), the lack of non-verbal channels of communication in e-mail messages (Rice, 1984; Sproull & Kiesler, 1986; Walther, 1992), and how the structure of a message impacts the message (Jessmer & Anderson, 2001; Tran, 2001). In 2002, the Pew Internet and American Life project collected data regarding the use of e-mail at work (Fallows, 2002). The data collected focused on the number of hours users spend on e-mail, the content of the e-mail (work vs. non-work related), the positive attitudes workers held regarding using e-mail programs, and the perception that e-

mail encourages communication in the workplace. The Pew snapshot of e-mail use may provide a baseline for future comparison, but it does not investigate the nuances of e-mail use in the workplace.

Several questions emerged from data collected in this study of faculty at Chemeketa: what assumptions can be made about how receivers treat e-mail; how can messages be constructed so that the sender has the maximum chance of the message being read; how does e-mail impact other channels of communication; and how do the qualities of e-mail impact its use? These questions can be explored, but the data collected in this study yield few answers to these queries.

Assuming that e-mail is effective for communication can lead to disappointment. The wide variance in how faculty reported they treat e-mail implies that it's a wildcard: the sender can't count on the receiver reading a message. The sender of the message and the message subject line appear to be factors in whether a message is read by the receiver. When participants perceive their time is limited, they report using these two bits of information to determine if a message will be opened, deleted, skimmed, or read. Future research might compare e-mail messages, voice messages, and printed messages to determine which mode is most effective in delivering various types of information.

A corollary question might be, "How can e-mail messages be constructed so the sender has the maximum chance of having the message opened and read?" The research design would need to include the subject line as a variable, since participants in this study indicated the subject line is a very important feature in

determining how a message is received. Jessmer and Anderson's (2001) study concluded that polite and grammatical messages were viewed more positively, but the central question about how to create a message that will be read in the first place remains unanswered.

When e-mail messages are read, they may stimulate other kinds of communication between and among faculty. Participants interviewed for this study reported that e-mail messages from colleagues can stimulate face-to-face discussions of topics that were raised via e-mail. The discussion may take place between the original sender and receiver; however, if the message is sent to a larger list, it may become more like a newspaper article that stimulates general conversation. Questions about the types of messages that open the door for other communication channels might be explored in future research.

Another question generated about e-mail was prompted by unique features of e-mail programs. The ability to write to many people simultaneously is a distinctive aspect of this form of communication. As a theoretical example, if an e-mail message were sent to the entire staff, each receiver would have access to the message simultaneously. This is not possible with paper distribution, and because of this instantaneous quality, e-mail can be an equalizer of sorts. Additionally, the ability to forward others' messages can significantly impact how (or whether) a message is constructed. E-mail messages might not be used in a delicate situation; face-to-face communication may be preferred. E-mail provides a channel for

convenient communication, but its uses and impacts of those uses are open to exploration in future research.

Conclusion

The focus of this project was to examine how faculty provide informal leadership to other faculty. During the course of preparing a literature review, conducting research and analyzing data, several gaps emerged in the current understanding about faculty leadership. Overall, there is a dearth of literature about faculty, and specifically community college faculty: this creates a challenge in linking the findings of the current study to established theory in the field. However, findings can be connected to literature in other fields, most notably sociology. The category of strong ties refers to the relationships that develop between faculty who have similar interests and values, and faculty report being influenced by other faculty they identify as strong ties. Strong ties often develop because of close office locations: serendipitous contact is more likely to occur with those in proximate offices, and those who see each other more frequently are more likely to get to know each other. The unique arrangement of office space at Chemeketa (where faculty members are often not located near colleagues in the same program area) and the development of strong ties is an example of the self-organizing characteristic of systems. The findings related to office location imply several advantages and disadvantages to co-locating faculty in the same discipline. One advantage of Chemeketa's current system is the interdisciplinary connections that

faculty make. A disadvantage is the lack of support for new faculty from colleagues in the same program area. A third category emerged in the data analysis: role models. In this study, fewer than half of the interviewees identified role models, and most of these (five out of seven) were faculty with four to ten years of teaching experience at Chemeketa. Participants reported that role models were admired because of their social skills, teaching experience, and positive personality traits. E-mail communication was the final theme that emerged as a factor in how faculty were influenced by other faculty. The impact of the influence was difficult to discern because of the wide variance in how e-mail messages are selected to be read by the receiver. Findings in this study did indicate that faculty reported being influenced by other faculty in a variety of ways: through their relationships with strong ties, by proximate locations to other faculty, through observing role models and by reading e-mail communication from other faculty.

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APPENDIX

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Introduction:

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. As we discussed, the information from this session will be used in my dissertation project.

I will need to review some procedures with you before we begin. (Review consent form, restate the purpose of the study, estimated time for completing interview, reporting of data.)

I also need to reconfirm some basic information about your career at Chemeketa.

1. How long have you taught full-time at Chemeketa?
2. How many credit hours (or equivalent) are you teaching this term?
3. Is your primary work location on the main campus?
4. Which campus-wide committee are you a member of this year?
5. Is your salary paid out of the general fund?

Interview:

Thank you. Now I can move on to the topic of the study. Today I am interested in your experiences with other faculty at Chemeketa. Since you have been a faculty member here, you have probably met and interacted with many other faculty members. I'd like you to take a few minutes and think about those faculty at Chemeketa who have had influence on your professional life. These people could have "official" positions, but I am most interested in informal interactions with fellow faculty members.

1. I would like you to think about the past year, and tell me about a specific time you were influenced in your professional life by another CCC faculty member.

Follow up questions may include:

- a. Please describe what happened.
 - b. What position does that faculty member hold in the college?
 - c. How do you know (name)?
 - d. How did this situation arise?
 - e. What was the impact of the change you made?
2. Would you tell me about another example of how a faculty member influenced your professional life? (Same follow-up questions as # 1.)

3. Is there a faculty member on campus that you consider a professional role model?
 - a. (If yes) What is it about (name) that you would like to emulate?
 - b. (If yes) What does (name) do that makes (him/her) a role model?
4. I'd like you to think about a time when you have had a work-related situation and weren't sure what to do about it, so you went to another faculty member for consultation. I won't ask you to provide details about the situation, but I do want to know who you went to for advice.
 - a. Why did you choose (name)?
 - b. How do you know (name)?
 - c. Was the advice helpful?
 - d. (If yes) What did (name) do that assisted you with your problem?
 - e. (If no) How did you anticipate (name) would have been able to assist you?
5. Consider an important issue that has arisen on campus in the last year or so. Who on the faculty did you seek out to discuss his or her opinion?
 - a. What was the issue you are thinking about?
 - b. How do you know (name)?
 - c. Why would you go to (name)?
 - d. (May need to refer to hiring a new president last year for a specific issue.)
6. I understand there are e-mail discussions (regarding parking, changing grades and health benefits) happening on campus. How have they influenced your thinking?***
7. As I am studying informal faculty leadership here at Chemeketa Community College, what else should I know about how faculty influence each other in informal situations?
8. Questions for Pilot Study

Were there any questions that were unclear to you? (If yes, which?)

What could be changed to make the flow of questions easier to follow or more logical?

What other suggestions might you have for improving this process?

*** Added after initial interview/pilot study

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL (REVISED AFTER 12th INTERVIEW)

We talk and something different happens: influence through diverse stimuli

Faculty members talk with each other about curriculum, teaching approaches, and student issues to get ideas and stimulate creative thinking. Sometimes this entails using another's course materials and modifying them to "make them my own" or getting in-put on how to effectively work with a certain student population. CCC has offered interdisciplinary classes in the past, and collaboration on these efforts has also influenced how faculty members approach teaching.

- Does this reflect your experience?
- Would you give me an example or two from your professional life?
- Describe a relationship you would need to have with someone in order to "bounce" ideas off them. (Trust? Affinity? Same discipline?)
- What needs to be expanded or clarified?

Strong ties: influence resulting from common interests, concerns and values

Faculty report developing strong, influential relationships with others who have common concerns and values: some of these are based on interests in the instructional area, but other relationships are based on commonalities in instructional delivery (eg. teaching on-line), similar physical activities (eg. walking groups, basketball groups, the Hood-to-Coast relay team) or similar life stages (eg. parenting or retirement issues).

Common interests and values appear to create the strongest ties to others and this in turn makes the relationship highly influential. Faculty report a consistent contact with these groups of people. Groups with common interests and values may be in the same program area, but they are just as likely to be from separate disciplines.

- Does this reflect your experience?
- Would you give me an example or two from your professional life of groups you have belonged to? What are/were the values and other commonalities?
- What needs to be expanded or clarified?

I read some of them/I read most of them – influence via e-mail is a unpredictable

The campus is connected through e-mail discussions. Since the campus is large, not every faculty member knows (by name or by face) every other faculty member. It would be common to get e-mail from "strangers" about campus issues

like instituting a parking fee or health insurance issues or changing the grading structure.

Faculty report a huge range in their treatment of e-mail messages. Some indicate that they read all messages, regardless of the sender. Others delete messages depending on the subject line or who sent the message.

- How do you approach e-mail?
- What factors lead to your decisionmaking about e-mail?
- What else can you tell me as I try to understand influence through e-mail?

When Building G was completed – office locations, proximity and influence

More than nine years ago, CCC faculty decided to co-mingle offices instead of grouping faculty by program area. This decision has persisted in some areas, but not in others. Faculty who use specialized labs or classrooms tend to want offices close to the labs. Faculty who do not use specialized classrooms are located in various office buildings throughout the campus.

When a new office building was completed about nine years ago, many faculty used their seniority to move to the new location. Since then, some have returned to their old offices because they missed the community they left.

Some faculty use their seniority to move closer to colleagues in their program area when offices open up.

The co-mingling of offices created opportunities for faculty to connect with people in a variety of disciplines, and this intentional dispersion of faculty has created connections across instructional areas. However, some express concern with a lack of proximity with those in their discipline. Proximity allows for more convenient informal interaction about program issues (eg. choosing textbooks or discussing instructional techniques).

- How does your office location influence your professional relationships?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of your current office location in terms of relating to those in your program area?
- How did you get into the office you currently occupy?
- Please describe where you were located before.

Role models – influence through observed behavior

Chemeketa has a formal mentoring program for new full-time faculty. A new faculty member is paired with someone who has extensive experience on campus. (Some faculty are also paired with a mentor from the program area in addition to the campus mentor.) The formal relationship lasts up to one year. While

faculty members report these relationships are usually helpful for understanding general campus procedures, they do not report that these are lasting relationships.

Enduring role models are identified as “good in the classroom,” enthusiastic about projects, able to inspire others, and those who know how to get things done. Role models indirectly influence other faculty to emulate their positive qualities.

- The questions I have asked about role models have not resonated with CCC faculty. What is your take on that?
- Why would faculty not have role models? What would you call the people you look up to?
- What is your experience with the mentoring programs, both the program-level and the Opportunity Center coordinated ones?