

AN ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION OF

Marcia G. Somer for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Education presented on December 3, 2007.

Title: The Experiences of Asian American Females Seeking Vice President and President Positions in Community Colleges: A View of the Barriers and Facilitators.

Abstract approved:

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This qualitative narrative inquiry study explored the experiences and perspectives of five Asian American females who have sought presidencies and/or vice presidencies in community colleges. All five of the participants are currently either a president or vice president in community colleges. This study found nine themes that capture the barriers and facilitators that these Asian American females encountered along their career path. The themes were mother as role model, biculturalism and bicultural efficacy, unplanned pathways and not self-identifying, earned leadership positions, strong work ethic, stereotyping and assumptions, Asian physicality and invisibility, fracturing the glass ceiling, and positive attitude and strength. Future implications for research and practice is also discussed.

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The Experiences of Asian American Females Seeking Vice President and President
Positions in Community Colleges: A View of the Barriers and Facilitators

by
Marcia G. Somer

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I understand that my dissertation will become part of the permanent collection of Oregon State University libraries. My signature below authorizes release of my dissertation to any reader upon request.

Marcia G. Somer, Author

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DEDICATION

To the memory of my dad, Ernest K. C. Wong,
who always believed in me.
I miss you.

Chapter One

The Experiences of Asian American Females Seeking Vice President and President Positions in Community Colleges: A View of the Barriers and Facilitators

Hase-Hime, do you know that your mother cannot live any longer? Though I die, you must grow up a good girl....If so do not grieve for me. . . be obedient and filial to. . . your father. Remember when you are grown up to be submissive to those who are your superiors, and to be kind to all those who are under you....I die with the hope that you will grow up to be a model woman (Ozaki, 1970, p. 75).

Asian Americans have been residing in the United States since the mid part of the 19th century. As the first of these immigrating groups, the Chinese Americans came looking for the opportunities of work (Lai & Arguelles, 2003). Today, in the 21st century, the Chinese Americans have been joined by 24 other Asian ethnic groups (U.S. Census 2000a), striving to improve their lives. This improvement includes gaining employment, earning a living wage, being educated, and moving up the hierarchical career path. Fortunately, most Asian Americans have gone beyond their initial jobs of laborers and fieldworkers (Lai & Arguelles, 2003). This career movement is, in part, due to their obtainment of varying higher educational degrees including baccalaureate, master, doctorate, and professional degree (Harvey & Anderson, 2005). During the 1990s, Asian Americans increased their college enrollment by 328,000 or 53.7%. Of these 328,000 Asian Americans, 198,000 or 66% were females. From 2000 to 2001, Asian Americans increased their college enrollment by 33,000, of which 21,000 were females (Harvey & Anderson, 2005).

Not only are Asian Americans enrolling in higher education, they are also completing their degrees at a higher rate than other non White groups. At community colleges, their degree and certificate completion rate continued to increase to 33% in 2000 compared to 25.3% for Latinos, and 31.5% for African Americans (Harvey & Anderson, 2005). The increase in completion rates, including those from graduate programs, has increased the likelihood that Asian Americans' would attain employment beyond the original laborer positions of their immigrating ancestors. Some of these jobs include college faculty and lower level management positions. Unfortunately, the career pathways of Asian Americans, particularly Asian American females, has not allowed very many to attain the positions of vice president or president in academia (Harvey & Anderson, 2005). The lack of Asian American females as vice presidents and presidents is also the case for community colleges.

Research Purpose, Focus, and Questions

The purpose of this research was to explore the experiences of the few Asian American females in vice president and president positions at the community colleges.

Research Focus

The focus of this research study was on the senior leadership of community colleges. Community colleges have an "open door" or "open access" commitment to the public. An open door institution wants to provide an education to all who seek it, whether that person is a high school graduate or a recipient of a General Education Diploma (GED). An open door institution does not require a

standardized test for entrance. An open door institution will set its tuition at a cost that is normally within the economic means of all of its students (Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, 2006). As an open door institution, the community college offers an educational opportunity to men and women of all ethnicities (Vaughan, 2000). Over the years, community colleges have been the higher educational entry point for the majority of diverse students, specifically, those who are first generation college students, and those whose primary language is not English (Bumphus & Roueche, 2007). In addition, community colleges tend to attract more female than male students (Kelly, 2002; Townsend & Twombly, 2007). With the majority of ethnically diverse students, including non Whites, and a greater percentage being female, it becomes imperative that the college administrators reflect the student population, that is, non White females. Without non White female administrators non White female students may not see themselves as future community college leaders. Non White female administrators are role models for the non White students, and even more so for those who are female. Without non White administrators, there is a greater likelihood that the learning perspectives at the community college level will not be conducive to the non White students. Non White students may not be able to connect or relate to the knowledge being imparted upon them. Therefore, the educational experience of non White students is not optimal (Kelly, 2002). The increase in the number of non White administrators increases the number of non White role models. The increase in the number of non White administrators will increase the likelihood that non

White teaching perspectives will occur. Logically, non White students will be more successful in community colleges with non White administrators.

The levels of administrative leadership positions that were focused upon in this study were vice president and president. The highest executive, cabinet, or senior administrative positions in community were that of vice president and president. It is the community college president and vice president who have the decision making power that is much stronger than other mid level management titles, such as dean, director, department chair, or coordinator. In the administrative hierarchy of the community college the dean's, director's, department chair's, or coordinator's level of responsibilities and power are "sandwiched" between the senior administrators, president and vice president, and the faculty. The president and vice president are at the top of the hierarchy. Below them are the midlevel managers, which include deans, in the decision making hierarchy. On the other side or below the dean are the faculty (Wild, Ebbers, Shelley & Gmelch, 2003) and classified staff. Thus, in order to explore the upper executive decision making positions, the population that was focused upon for this study were community college presidents and vice presidents. Specifically, this study's population was Asian American female community college presidents and vice presidents. The focus of this study was on the experiences of Asian American female presidents and vice presidents and the barriers and facilitators they encountered prior to and during their career ascents, and in their current positions.

Research Questions

Several Asian American females who were currently in the position of vice president or president were asked to describe their experiences during their career ascent, during their interview and hiring experiences, and while in their current position. Barriers and facilitators were identified during the Asian American female's administrative advancement including that which she was currently experiencing. A barrier is defined as a dynamic, individual, or experience that interferes with the Asian American female from attaining a vice presidency or other high level leadership positions. A facilitator is defined as an individual, dynamic, or experience that helps the Asian American female attain the career goal of higher level administrator in a community college.

The research questions that were explored include: 1) What is the experience of Asian American females who have sought advancement in leadership positions in community colleges? 2) What is the hiring process experience of Asian American females who have sought higher level administrative positions in community colleges? 3) Do barriers to attaining a position of higher level administration in community college exist for Asian American females? If so, what are they? What is their impact? Do these barriers continue to exist? 4) Do facilitators that aid in breaking down the barriers to attaining a position of higher level administration in community college exist for Asian American females? If so, what are they? What is their impact? Do these facilitators continue to exist?

The reason for exploring the experience of Asian American females who have higher level administrative positions in community colleges was four-fold.

First, their experience is not described in the scholarly peer reviewed literature. Second, who better to ask about the struggles and successes of these women than those who have achieved the positions of president or vice president? Third, I am personally interested in their experiences, as I am an Asian American female working at a community college seeking to eventually advance my career as a vice president.

Fourth, it was important to uncover any actions or events that counter any negative experience or barrier. Thus, it was necessary to also ask these women what they thought were facilitators to their career advancement. A study on the barriers and facilitators to a career as vice president or president in community colleges for Asian American females can bring forth significant new research information for policy and practice which can increase recruitment and retention efforts.

Significance of Study

Describing the experiences of Asian American females who are in administrative leadership positions at community colleges is significant because: 1) they are underrepresented in these positions, 2) there are no peer reviewed studies done on the experiences of this specific group in community colleges, and 3) it would inform me, and others like me, of the barriers and facilitators that Asian American females experience in their career pathways toward a vice presidency or presidency.

Underrepresentation of Asian American Females in Higher Administration

Positions in Community Colleges

There are not many Asian Americans in administrative positions in colleges and universities. There are even fewer Asian American females in these positions (see Table 1) (Harvey & Anderson, 2005).

Table 1

Asian Americans in Administrative Positions in Higher Education

	1995	1997	1999	2001
Males	1,388 (1.0%)	1,470 (1.0%)	1,718 (1.1%)	1,847 (1.3%)
Females	1,123 (0.8%)	1,266 (0.9%)	1,614 (1.0%)	1,694 (1.2%)
Total Administrative Positions	140,556	144,018	158,726	145,371

The number of Asian American females in administrative positions during 1995-2001 is less than African American females and Latinas. The only non White females that had fewer administrative positions in higher education were American Indians (Harvey & Anderson, 2005).

The number of women of color in higher levels of administration in universities, colleges, and community colleges is far less than those females who are White and in the same positions of leadership. In a study conducted by Opp and Gosetti (2002), which did not distinguish between higher and lower levels of administration within two year colleges, the results indicated that the greatest percentage increase of females from 1991-1997 was for Whites (+5.73), followed

by African Americans (+.80), Latinos (+.52), Asian Americans (+.21), and American Indians (+.11). The number of females by ethnicity in these positions in 1991 and 1997 was Whites (5,978; 7,828), African Americans (804; 1,034), Latinos (277; 406), Asian Americans (105; 143), and American Indians (55; 87). Opp and Gosetti found that there was an increase in females of color, including Asian Americans, in community college administrative positions from 1991 to 1997. Yet, this increase does not equal the number or percent increase of White females (see Table 2) suggesting an inequality can be said to exist between ethnic groups.

Table 2

Females of Color in Administration in Two Year Colleges

Ethnicity	1991	1997	Percentage Change
White	5,978	7,828	+5.73
African American	804	1,034	+0.80
Latino	277	406	+0.52
Asian American	105	143	+0.21
American Indian	55	87	+0.11

Females of color as community college administrative leaders. A comparison by percentage of female community college administrators can be made to the number of females in the United States population by ethnicity in 2000. In 2000, the female population in the United States was 77% White, 11.9% Latino, 13% African American, 4.2% Asian American, 1.4% Native American, and .3% Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander (U.S. Census, 2000b). The percentage of female

administrative leaders in terms of ethnicity in community colleges in 1997 (Opp and Gosetti, 2002) was 82% White, 4.2% Latino, 10.8% African American, 1.5% Asian American, and .9% Native American. It was not clear in which ethnic group Opp and Gosetti placed the administrators who were Native Hawaiians or Pacific Islanders (NH/PI). A comparison between the numbers of females in administrative leadership positions in community colleges in 1997 and the females in United States population by ethnicity in 2000 demonstrates that the number, based on ethnicity, with the exception of Whites, are below the percentages within the general population (see Table 3).

Table 3

U.S. Female Population and Female Community College Administrators By Ethnicity

	White	African Am	Latino	Asian Am	Am Indian	NH/PI
US Population	77%	13%	11.9%	4.2%	1.4%	0.3%
Administration	82%	10.8%	4.2%	1.5%	0.9%	n/a

Comparison of college students, faculty, and administrators by ethnicity. When looking at the number of college students in comparison to the faculty and administrators by ethnicity in 2002 (U.S. Department of Education, 2005a), there is a percentage differential among each ethnic group. The number of White students was 67%, White faculty was 78.5%. and White administrators was 81%. For African Americans the comparable percentages were 11.6% students, 5.6% faculty,

and 9.4% administrators. For Latinos, there are 9.8% students, 3.4% faculty, and 3.8% administrators. For Asian Americans, there are 6.4% students, 5% faculty, and 2.6% administrators. For American Indians, there are 1% students, .47% faculty, and 1.2% administrators. In addition, there is a percentage differential between Whites and all the minority groups demonstrating that not only are there a greater percentage of White students and faculty, but also White administrators attending or working at colleges and universities (see Table 4).

Table 4

Community College Administrators, Faculty, and Students By Ethnicity

	White	African Am	Latino	Asian Am	Am Indian
Administration	81%	9.4%	3.8%	2.6%	1.2%
Faculty	78.5%	5.6%	3.4%	5.0%	0.47%
Students	67%	11.6%	6.4%	6.4%	1.0%

There is also a clear differential between the number of Asian Americans who hold community college administrative positions, 5,008 in 2002, faculty positions, 59,712 in 2002 (U.S. Department of Education, 2005a), and students, 1,079,780 in 2003, in higher education institutions (U.S. Department of Education, 2005b). The number who attend college and those who are employed as educators and administrators demonstrate the lessening of Asian Americans as the position of institutional power increases (see Figure 1).

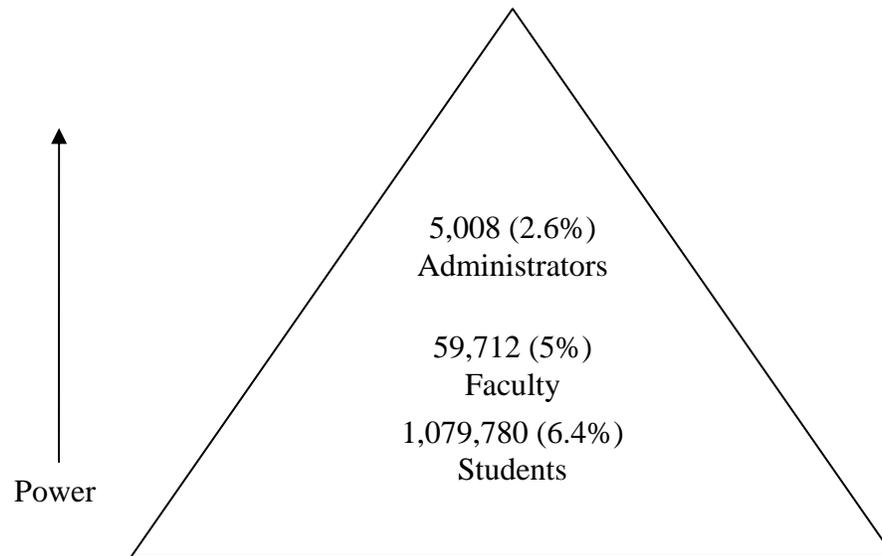


Figure 1. Asian Americans in higher education and the level of power.

The decrease in number with hierarchical leadership and decision making authority opposes that which is occurring for Whites. As the decision making power increases, the number of non Whites decreases. Like Asian Americans, the other non White groups have significantly fewer individuals in all three positions, and like Latinos, the percentage of administrators and faculty is lower than the percentage of students. The interesting difference between the Latinos and Asian Americans is that the percentage of Latino administrators is greater than the percentage of faculty, while the percentage of Asian American administrators decreases with the level of decision making responsibility and power. Figure 1 depicts the number and percentage of Asian Americans at each level of the decision making and power hierarchy.

The percentage of Asian American higher education administrators is significantly less than the percentage of faculty and students as compared to other ethnic groups. A question as to why the number of Asian Americans decreases significantly when you compare students, faculty, and administrators provides another case for the significance of this study. In addition, this is further evidence that the experiences of Asian Americans seeking higher level administration positions differs from Whites and those in other non White ethnic groups. It could be further speculated that the barriers and facilitators are not the same for every ethnic group. Whatever the explanation for the percentage differential between the ethnic groups, further research does need to be conducted to begin to understand why there are so few Asian American community college vice presidents and presidents.

Very Few Studies on Asian American Administrators in Two year Colleges

There were two peer reviewed studies on Asian American female administrators in two year colleges. Both of these studies were quantitative and uncovered the number of Asian American administrators in two year colleges. The number of Asian Americans in all levels of administration, including that of vice president and president, at two year colleges across the United States in 1997 was 143. Of these 143, not many were in higher levels of administration. According to Gillett-Karam, Roueche, and Roueche (1990-1991), the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges reported in 1988 that there were eight Asian American chief executive officers. The gender of these eight was not discussed. Again, like the comparison with Opp and Gosetti's findings, the number of Asian

American administrators is not representative of the United States population in 2000. If the number of Asian American administrators were representative of the number of Asian Americans in the United States, 43 of the community colleges' chief executive officers would be Asian Americans. As far as I can tell, based on reports and research of others, there have never been 43 Asian American community college vice presidents and presidents in any given year. We do know that there were two Asian American female community college presidents in 2003 (Stout-Stewart, 2005). I found three Asian American female community college presidents in 2007.

Based on a search through the journal databases, there are no peer reviewed qualitative studies specifically on Asian American female community college vice presidents and presidents. One study (Wilking, 2001) is closely related to this study as it focused on Asian American female presidents of two and four year colleges. Wilking's study was a doctoral dissertation and not peer reviewed.

Preparing Myself and Other Asian American Females

It was a personal interest of mine to understand what appeared to be limited career opportunities as community college presidents and vice presidents for Asian American females. My personal observation brought me to this area of research. I am an Asian American female seeking to further my career as a community college vice president. I have experienced both internal and external barriers that could preclude me from achieving my career goal. My traditional cultural values and gender role causes me to question my leadership ability and familial obligations. Over the past seventeen years, I have experienced the administrative

leadership of three different campuses, the first in Honolulu, Hawai`i, the second in Olympia, Washington, and the third in Lakewood, Washington. While working at each of these campuses, I did not experience the leadership of an Asian American vice president or president. Having no immediate role models suggests to me that it is not possible for me to gain a career with such high aspirations. The question that remains for me is, will a “glass ceiling” exist when I attempt to move further up the administrative path to community college vice president? The lack of role models is a barrier. Asian American females may not see their future as a community college vice president or president. Role models of non Whites should be those with the same ethnicity. Having a role model with the same ethnicity as oneself allows strategies and information that aid non Whites in being successful in a predominantly White work environment to be shared (Karunanayake & Nauta, 2004).

Although I do not have any role models, I do fortunately have a mentor. I have discovered the importance of a mentor who is in the position to which I aspire. My mentor provides opportunities that allow me to tear down those external barriers and to not allow the internal ones to impede my movement toward a leadership position. Having a mentor is a facilitator to my career aspirations.

I spoke with Asian American females who have achieved higher level leadership positions. I discovered what allowed them to achieve their positions and what encounters they had that made it more difficult. It should be noted that I spoke with the “survivors” who “made it,” and not those whose experiences and inner discussions prohibited them from attaining the careers to which they originally

aspired. This research allowed me to confirm my experiences and perspective as an Asian American female, and presented some unexpected discoveries. In addition, this research study gave me the unique opportunity to meet very inspirational women who attained presidencies and vice presidencies of community colleges and are thereby role models for myself and other Asian American women.

Summary of Focus and Significance

I wanted to know why there are so few Asian American females leading higher educational institutions. The number of Asian American females in leadership positions in community colleges does not represent the percentage of Asian American faculty or Asian American students. This finding is not true for the African Americans or Whites where the percentage of administrators is greater than that of students. For Asian Americans, the percentage decreases with the level of college administrative decision making responsibilities. What is not known is why there are so few Asian American female community college administrative leaders. This research allowed a better understanding of why there are very few Asian American female community college vice presidents and presidents.

The case for significance of my study is three-fold. There are not many Asian Americans females leading community colleges. In 2003 there were two Asian American female community college presidents (Stout-Stewart, 2005). I found three Asian American female college presidents in 2007. This is not representative of the percentage of Asian Americans who make up the United States population. In the 2000 Census, there were 11.4 million Asian Americans (U.S. Census, 2000b). In addition, there are six studies, all of which are doctoral

dissertations that focus on Asian Americans in higher levels of administrative positions in higher education. More specifically, four of the dissertation studies looked at experiences of Asian American administrators in two year and four year higher educational institutions (Neilson, 2002; Shintaku, 1996; Wong, 2002; Suh, 2005), and two on Asian American female administrators in higher education (Ideta, 1996; Wilking, 2001). None of the studies focused on the experiences of the Asian American female as a vice president or president at community colleges.

Finally, I felt it was my personal obligation to give a voice to the Asian American females who have chosen the career of a leader in the community college system. As one who is employed at a community college, has researched the topic of invisible Asian American female administrators in community colleges, and experienced subtle barriers when leading, I felt there was a practical, scholarly, and personal reason to further explore this topic. As I conducted my literature review and contemplated my method of data collection, and theoretical methodology or framework for my dissertation, I remained curious, anxious, and invigorated about the possibilities of uncovering meaningful and thought provoking information.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

Keel-Wee loved the bull almost as much as he did his wife and children, perhaps more, for his wife....was a grumbling, scolding, discontented soul and made life at home rather miserable for Keel-Wee, always nagging him, calling him lazy and good-for-nothing, blaming him because there was never quite enough to eat in the house. As for his children, he really knew very little about them for it was not always for the Korean father to become really intimate with his sons and daughters (Jewett, 1953, p. 75).

There is a limited amount of research pertaining to Asian Americans in higher levels of administration in higher education, and even less that specifically focuses on Asian American females and community colleges. As a way to provide context and background for this study, a review of materials focusing on historical and current demographics, cultural values, biculturalism, and discrimination against Asian Americans was added. In addition, the research that has focused on the Asian American females in higher education leadership roles is presented in this chapter.

This literature review includes the information and studies on Asian Americans and Asian American females and their experiences as higher level administrators in higher education. It is important to get a clear understanding of the past and ongoing discrimination against Asian Americans. This discrimination, both obvious and subtle, could partially explain why Asian Americans, especially Asian American females, are not adequately represented in higher level administrative positions in colleges and universities. There are a few Asian American females who are college vice presidents or presidents. What allowed these few to achieve such positions? To further understand the background information for this study, this

review is organized in the following sections: 1) Asian Americans: Who Are They?, 2) Discrimination Against Asian Americans, and 3) Discrimination Against Asian American Females as Higher Education Presidents and Vice Presidents.

Asian Americans: Who Are They?

When an individual identifies oneself as being Asian American it is not a simple task for others to determine exactly to which ethnic group they affiliate. When researchers publish studies that look at Asian Americans, one could ask: Which ethnic group or groups are their participants? In order to understand this study one must first recognize that there are many different Asian ethnic groups, 25 of which are recognized by the U.S. Census Bureau (U.S. Census, 2000b). The Asian American immigration history to the United States impacted the number of individuals who make up the different Asian American groups. Beyond the Asian American specific ethnic groups, it is also important to consider their bicultural identity of being both “Asian” and “American.” Although Asian Americans could have different countries of origin several have similar cultural values. This similarity stems back to the religions of their ancestors which are sometimes still found in the generations following the original immigrating ones. Together, the countries of origin, bicultural identity, and cultural values allow for Asian Americans from a few ethnic groups to be somewhat similar.

Twenty-five different ethnic groups are considered Asian Americans or Asian Pacific Americans by the United States Census Bureau. These groups are: Asian Indian, Bangladeshi, Bhutanese, Burmese, Cambodian, Chinese, Filipino, Hmong, Indo Chinese, Indonesian, Iwo Jiman, Japanese, Korean, Laotian,

Malaysian, Maldivian, Nepalese, Okinawan, Pakistani, Singaporean, Sri Lankan, Taiwanese, Thai, Vietnamese, and “Other Asian, not specified” (U. S. Census, 2000b). Although, the U. S. Census recognizes twenty-four of the Asian American ethnic groups, they do not acknowledge the existence of the other Asian American groups except with an ethnicity category of “Other Asian, not specified.”

Over the past 150 years, these Asian groups have been immigrating to the United States. The 2000 Census reported that there were 10.6 million Asian Americans (U.S. Census, 2004). Today, it is estimated that there are 13.5 million Asian Americans (University of California Los Angeles Asian American Studies Center, 2005). The largest Asian American group is Chinese Americans followed by Filipino Americans. The historical immigration patterns of the Asian Americans explain the population rates of the different Asian Americans.

The Historical Immigration Rates of Asian Americans

The number of individuals who identify themselves as belonging to a specific Asian American group is directly related to the immigration ebbs and flows to the United States. The beginning of the Asian immigration to the United States dates back to the 1840s with the Chinese, followed by the Japanese in 1885, the Koreans in 1903, and the Filipinos in 1909 (Takaki, 1993).

As previously stated, the two largest Asian American groups are Chinese Americans and Filipino Americans. Chinese Americans are the oldest and largest Asian ethnic group in the United States. Their immigration to the United States dates back to the late 1840s. The number of Chinese Americans grew from 237,289 in 1960 to 2,879,636 in 2000 (Lai & Arguelles, 2003).

Filipino Americans are the second largest Asian American group in the United States. In 1898 the Philippines became a territory of the United States. It was not until 1930 that they were recognized as a separate ethnicity category and no longer put in the Asian American category of “other.” In 1930, there were 45,026 Filipino Americans. In 1970, there were 336, 731 Filipino Americans, and in 2000, 2,364,815 (Lai & Arguelles, 2003).

Korean Americans follow the Filipino Americans in population size. In 1950, there were about 10,000 Korean Americans. Between 1941 and 1998, there were 778,899 Korean immigrants to the United States. In 2000, the U. S. Census reported 1.07 million Korean Americans, including those whose ethnicity is part Korean (Lai & Arguelles, 2003).

Following Korean Americans in present population size are the Japanese Americans. By 1900 there were 85,716 Japanese Americans. In 1950, there were 326,379 Japanese Americans. In 2000, the U. S. Census reported both the number of Japanese Americans that were solely Japanese in ethnicity (796,700) and those that were part Japanese (1,148,032). The number of those who identify their ethnicity as solely Japanese Americans is decreasing (Lai & Arguelles, 2003).

There is a cultural value commonality for four Asian American ethnic groups. The four Asian American ethnic groups are Chinese Americans, Japanese Americans, Korean Americans, and Filipino Americans (Berkel & Constantine, 2005; Kim, Yang, Atkinson, Wolfe, & Hong, 2001; Wilking, 2001).

Cultural values are instilled in Asian Americans during their childhood by their parents and others of their culture. Imparting the importance of one’s cultural

values can even be seen in the childhood folktales that the children are exposed to. This dissertation presents a short excerpt from some of these folktales at the opening of each chapter. The values that are emphasized in these quotes include collectivism (Chapter One), conformity (Chapter Two), filial piety (Chapter Three), gender roles (Chapter Four), good fortune (Chapter Five), and knowledge and intelligence (Chapter Six).

The Cultural Values of Asian Americans

There are six cultural values that have been strongly associated with the four Asian American groups of Chinese Americans, Japanese Americans, Korean Americans, and Filipino Americans. One explanation for this association was explained by Kim et al (2001) by the religious beliefs of Buddhism and Confucianism. Although, according to Kim et al. (2001) many Filipino Americans have religious beliefs associated with Catholicism, their cultural values are a mixture of Asian, Spanish, and “American” influences. The cultural values are collectivism, conformity, self-control, family recognition through achievement (Kim et al. 2001), filial piety (Berkel & Constantine, 2005; Kim et al. 2001; Wilking, 2001), and humility (Kim et al. 2001). Collectivism is defined as thinking of one’s group over oneself. The brothers demonstrated collectivism in their efforts to save their “future bride,” in the folktale *Shyaan am! Tuvan Folktales*, presented in the opening of Chapter Four. Each brother could not save her own his own. They needed to work together in order to be successful.

Conformity is compliance to familial and social expectations including gender roles and the accepted hierarchy within a family or company. Just as Keel-

Wee demonstrated conformity in the Korean children's folktale, *Keel-Wee, a Korean Rip Van Winkle*, had a distinct role as provider and not caregiver. An excerpt of this folktale is presented at the opening of this chapter.

Self-control is having control over one's emotions without outwardly demonstrating them. Family recognition through achievement includes being academically successful. A quote at the opening of Chapter Six is from the Chinese folktale, *Aina-Kizz and the Black-Bearded Bai*. This folktale presents the Asian cultural value of intelligence.

Filial piety is taking care of one's parents and other family members. The advice that Hase-Hime's mother to take care of her father, demonstrates the importance of family. A quote from *The Japanese Fairy Book*, is presented in the beginning of Chapter One.

Finally, in addition to the other cultural values is humility. Humility is being humble and modest. Self-promotion is discouraged in Asian Americans, since it is a form of boasting.

Similar to Berkel and Constantine's (2005) and Kim et al.'s (2001) findings of filial piety was Fong's (1984) finding of the importance of family support of one's endeavors in academia and career. Not only does an Asian American need to support her kin physically, financially, and emotionally, but they also need to be respected by their family members (Fong, 1984).

A seventh cultural value recognized by Berkel and Constantine (2005) and Yeh, Carter, and Pieterse (2004) in Asian American females was harmony. Harmony is the lack of conflict, and in this case, with those who are important to

the Asian American females. Berkel and Constantine found that harmony was related to Asian American females' life satisfaction.

A point can be made that Asian Americans are made up of several Asian ethnic groups thus it is not possible to consolidate them under a list of specific values. Yet, as stated previously, Kim et al. (2001) found the six cultural values, identified previously, among the four Asian American groups. Her study utilized data collected by other researchers from 570 Asian American college students who were Chinese American, Korean American, Filipino American, or Japanese American. One of the instruments used by the original study of Kim and Omizo (2005) was the Asian Values Scale (AVS). The AVS measures an individual's adherence to Asian cultural values. Statements in the AVS include ones that measure collectivism which were: "One shouldn't consider the needs of others before considering one's own needs," (reverse scored) and "One's achievements shouldn't be viewed as family's achievements" (reverse scored). Statements that measured filial piety were: "Children shouldn't place their parents in retirement homes," and "One's family need not be the main source of trust and dependence" (reverse scored).

According to Kim et al. (2001) there were four Asian American groups that abided by six cultural values. The level to which each Asian American group adhered to the cultural values differed. Chinese Americans, Japanese Americans, and Korean Americans adhered more to the cultural values of collectivism, conformity to norms, emotional self-control, family recognition through

achievement, and filial piety than Filipino Americans. All four of the Asian American groups did adhere to humility as a cultural value.

Kim et al. (2001) also used the data from the Kim and Yang (1999) study that included European American participants. Kim et al. (2001) found that even though there is a slight difference between the level of adherence to the six cultural values between the Chinese Americans, Japanese Americans, and Korean Americans, the difference was much larger for European Americans. Like Kim et al. (2001), Min and Kim (2000) found that the cultural values of their Chinese American, Japanese American, and Korean American participants were more similar to each other than those who were Filipino American, Vietnamese American, Indian American, and Bangladesh American.

Berkel and Constantine (2005) looked at the cultural values of 97 Asian American female college students and compared them to 169 African Americans counterparts. Using the Relational-Interdependent Self-Construal Scale and Interpersonal Relationship Harmony Inventory, they found that there were no significant differences between Asian Americans and African Americans. Both African American and Asian American females valued interpersonal relationships or close harmony.

The results from Kim et al. (2001) and Berkel and Constantine (2005) studies could allow a speculation that Asian Americans may have more similar cultural values to African Americans than Whites. Yet, Min and Kim (2000) found that those whose ancestors originated from East Asia identified more with European Americans while those from South Asian identified more with African Americans.

This finding was explained through the skin color of the participants, in that, East Asians tended to be fairer skinned than South Asians, thus the former connected with European Americans and the latter with African Americans. In either case, the cultural values of Japanese Americans, Chinese Americans, and Korean Americans were found to be similar and can be attributed to either religion or skin color.

A limitation of Kim et al.'s (2001) and Berkel and Constantine's (2005) studies is the use of a convenience sample of college students as participants. To further understand the cultural values of any ethnic group, studies on non-college students should be conducted, and even more so if a conclusion on the cultural values of professional females in the leadership positions of president or vice president is to be understood.

A question as to whether the intensity of one's cultural values remains at the same level when one is more removed from the original immigrating generation can be asked. It would seem likely that those in each succeeding Asian American generation would decrease the level at which they identified with the need to maintain collectivism, conformity, self-control, family recognition through achievement, filial piety, and humility. Therefore, a person who was a first generation Asian American would feel that collectivism was more important than one who was a second generation Asian American, who in turn, would see collectivism as more important than a third generation Asian American. The third generation Asian American would thereby identify more with the American cultural value of individualism over that of collectivism. The adaptation and accumulation of the values of the dominant group is acculturation (Lavenda & Schultz, 2000). If

this were the case, then the later generations would be said to have experienced a greater level of acculturation than the former generations.

Acculturation. As leaders, do Asian American females abide by their cultural values, particularly humility and collectivism? Would an Asian American's leadership style be determined by her generation? Would the children of the immigrating family abide less to the Asian cultural values than their parents? Would the grandchildren of the immigrating family abide even less to the Asian cultural values than their own parents? Would each following generation of Asian Americans have a lesser degree of Asian cultural values and more "American" cultural values than the previous generation?

Acculturation is when one's cultural values lessen in importance over time. This happens when an individual who is an ethnic minority lives amongst others of a dominant culture. This would mean having adopted some or all of the beliefs, behaviors, thoughts, and values of the dominant culture (Lavenda & Schultz, 2000). The layman's term for acculturation is to become "westernized" or "Whitewashed." The latter is a derogatory term used by some people of color (Pyke & Dang, 2003).

Yeh et al. (2004) looked at the cultural values and race identity of 122 Asian American college students and found that one's generation did not determine the level of Asian cultural values maintained. Instead, Yeh et al. discovered that it was one's ethnic identity that somewhat determined how much one had become acculturated to the dominant culture. The less the Asian American identified with their ethnicity the more European American cultural values they possessed. Yeh et

al. (2004) also found most of their participants experienced biculturalism by integrating both the Asian American and European American cultural values.

A limitation of the Yeh et al. (2004) study is that the few participants were from a convenient population of college students. This limitation is the same as that made of Berkel and Constantine's (2005) and Kim et al.'s (2005) studies. Do these college students represent the Asian American population in general being that they are students and the sample size was 122? Another limitation is that the researchers did not ask the participants to identify their specific ethnicity. They were identified as Asian Americans. The participants could be from any of the different Asian American groups with differing cultural values. This is a point acknowledged by Kim et al. (2001) who found that four of the Asian American groups, Chinese Americans, Japanese Americans, and Korean Americans, and to a lesser extent, Filipino Americans, had very similar levels of collectivism, conformity, self-control, family recognition through achievement, filial piety, and humility. Therefore, identifying the participants as "Asian Americans" and not further differentiating them by a specific Asian ethnic group, allows one to make the assumption that all Asian Americans have the same cultural values. Nevertheless, Yeh et al. (2004) did bring attention to the impact of biculturalism on Asian Americans, and found that one does not necessarily have the cultural values of only one ethnic group.

Bicultural Asian Americans. Many non White Americans find themselves experiencing the effects of being bicultural, that is, living in two cultures. Asian Americans are bicultural; they are influenced by their ancestral culture while living

in an European American dominant culture. Is one's leadership style a mixture of both the dominant culture and ethnic culture? Are those Asian Americans who do not allow their cultural values into their leadership style more likely to achieve the position of community college president than the candidate who values filial piety or collectivism? One study that looked at the bicultural experiences of Chinese Americans was that of Willgerodt, Miller, and McElmurry (2002). Willgerodt et al. studied 15 Chinese American females, ten of whom were in professional careers. Seven of these women reported that they experienced an internal barrier or struggle with the two cultures, and tended to be more "westernized" or American at work and more Asian at home. Being more American meant they were more assertive and vocal. Four of these women reported having chosen a dominant culture, while 11 reported having a "dual-cultural" blend of both cultures. Other studies have found that parents of Asian Americans encourage their children to become educated, to be successful in the workforce, while maintaining their cultural values including the traditional gender roles (Hune, 1998; Min & Kim, 2000). Therefore, the goal that Asian American parents have for their children is to assimilate into the American culture without relinquishing their Asian identity (Min & Kim, 2000). Kawahara (2007) used the term, bicultural efficacy, when one has the ability to develop and maintain interpersonal relationships with two cultural groups without relinquishing one's cultural identity. For Asian Americans, there are two internalized cultures that guide their thoughts, perceptions, and feelings. Kawahara's (2007) study looked at the identity development of Asian American female leaders who needed to integrate their Asian culture and American culture.

The former emphasizes humility and not drawing attention to oneself. The latter emphasizes self-promotion and visibility. These cultural values are oppositional, and therefore appear difficult to combine into an individual's leadership style.

Summary of Asian Americans: Who Are They?

There are 25 different Asian groups that make up the 2000 Census ethnic identity of "Asian American." Chinese Americans, Japanese Americans, Korean Americans, and Filipino Americans share six specific cultural values of collectivism, humility, conformity, filial piety, family recognition, and self-control. The Chinese American, Japanese American, Korean American, and Filipino American females also value harmony. Many of these Asian Americans experience life in a bicultural environment by incorporating the cultural values of both Asian Americans along with that of those dominant European Americans. Some Asian Americans are more acculturated than others, often being a part of the dominant culture at work and that of their ancestors at home.

The similarity of the cultural values of Chinese Americans, Japanese Americans, Korean Americans, and Filipino Americans supported the decision to study Asian American females as one group and not by individual ethnicities. It is apparent in the history of the treatment of Asian Americans that they are not identified by their specific Asian American ethnic group. Instead all Asian Americans were often discriminated against as a singular non White group. Therefore, a study that addresses the experiences of career barriers and facilitators of Asian Americans as a whole group is logical. At this time, many non Asian Americans continue to not recognize the individual Asian American ethnicities.

Thereby, the non Asian American assumptions and expectations of a Korean American female seeking a vice presidency could be the same as a Japanese American female seeking the same position. Based on the research on cultural values and treatment by non Asian Americans, recruiting participants from the Chinese American, Japanese American, Korean American, and Filipino American population of community college vice presidents and presidents is logical. The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of Asian American female vice presidents and presidents who are perceived and thereby treated as one ethnic group. Until the majority of non Asian Americans perceive Asian Americans by their specific ethnic group, a study that explores the experiences of Asian American females, without disaggregating the results by specific ethnic group, is supported. For now, Asian American females are perceived as one group, and therefore, have similar experiences as they attain and experience the positions of community college vice president and president.

Discrimination in the United States could have been the impetus for Asian Americans to be “American” in public and “Asian” at home. This dual abiding by cultural values by Asian Americans could have been influenced by the past discrimination that their parents and grandparents experienced.

Discrimination Against Asian Americans

Discrimination against Asian Americans has a long history in the United States. These acts of discrimination were reinforced by federal laws or non Asian groups. Chinese Americans were the first Asian Americans to immigrate into the United States dating back to the 1840s, arriving before many European American

groups such as the Italian Americans and Jewish Americans (Lai & Arguelles, 2003).

Following the Chinese were Japanese, Korean, and Filipino immigrants. Historically, the Asians were encouraged to migrate to the United States as laborers, many of which became plantation workers of Hawai`i and California, domestic workers, and railroad construction workers. The racist statement of “We have no Chinamen; we have no Japs; The Filipino is nothing, and the White man will not do the work,” made by a White labor employer in 1890 (Takaki, 1993), expressed the clear prejudice against Asian immigrants. They were not seen as humans but laborers to be “brought in” to the United States to do the work that Whites would not do themselves. Both the Chinese American and Filipino American immigrants saw America as a country of opportunity and possible financial comfort. Like the initial Asian immigrants, Filipino American work opportunities were limited by the federally created acts of discrimination that prohibited them from freely immigrating to the United States.

In 1882, the Chinese Exclusion Act prohibited the immigration of other Chinese into the United States, only to be renewed in 1892. This Act was repealed in 1943, but only 105 Chinese immigrated that year. In 1898, the National Origins Act restricted immigration of all, including Asians, except those from European countries.

From 1907 to 1908, the “Gentlemen’s Agreement” restricted the number of Japanese immigrants. During this time, there was an exception to the Gentlemen’s Agreement that allowed Japanese and Korean women to immigrate to the United

States as picture brides. These brides were courted by letters and pictures by the Japanese and Korean males (Lai & Arguelles, 2003).

In 1913, an Alien Land Law was passed in California that prevented Chinese Americans and Japanese Americans from owning or leasing land. From 1924 to 1945 federal immigration laws prohibited immigrants, including picture brides, from Asian countries into the United States. Federal laws, in 1924, went even further to discriminate against Asian Americans when citizenship was denied specifically to Japanese Americans. Similarly, the Tydings-McDuffey Act of 1935 limited the number of Filipinos immigrating to the United States to 50 per year. To further decrease the number of Asian Americans, the establishment of the Repatriation Act of 1936 encouraged Filipino Americans to go back to the Philippines by offering them free transportation with the agreement that they would not return (Lai & Arguelles, 2003).

The federal government also attempted to determine the personal lives of the Asian Americans, along with the other non White Americans, by creating the anti-miscegenation laws that prohibited interracial marriages. The explanation given for these laws was the thought that physically deformed infants would be born to interracial couples. This logic stemmed from Swiss naturalist and Harvard School (University) professor Louis Agazzi whose statements in 1863 claimed that miscegenation of African Americans and Whites would compromise and dilute the White race (Gould, 1981). Such statements encouraged the thought that human “species” should not crossbreed. The last time an interracial marriage was challenged was in 1967 in the state of Virginia (Lai & Arguelles, 2003).

Non Asian groups also have a history of discrimination against Asian Americans. In the 1870s, Chinese Americans were called the “yellow peril” (Lai & Arguelles, 2003; Hune, 1998) and “Chinese menace” (Lai & Arguelles, 2003). These labels demonstrated a fear by the dominant culture that the Chinese Americans were numerous and would “take over” the country (Wong, 2002). Similarly, the Filipino Americans in the 1920s and 1930s were called the “social menace” and “economic threat.” In 1907, in Bellingham, Washington, the Asian Indians were seen as a labor threat, and 300 Asian Indians were forced out of the town. Larger attacks occurred in the race riots of Los Angeles, California in 1992, where 2,280 Korean American owned stores were looted, damaged, or burned by many African Americans (Lai & Arguelles, 2003). The ultimate form of national discrimination against Japanese Americans was their placement in concentration camps that the government referred to as internment camps or detention centers. The executive order to place the Japanese Americans, also referred as the “enemy aliens,” into the camps was signed on February 19, 1942, by President Roosevelt. Even those who were American citizens by birth were placed in the camps and centers. Japanese Americans were forced to give up their possessions and land, and most of it was never returned even after they were released from the camps (Takaki, 1993). The discrimination against Asian Americans continues to exist today.

Present Discrimination Against Asian Americans in Higher Education

Discrimination of Asian Americans has occurred even on college campuses, including University of California – Berkeley, University of Illinois at Urbana-

Champaign, University of California – Irvine, and Indiana University in Bloomington. These events include racial epithets, anti-Asian graffiti, ethnic jokes, and malicious mispronunciations of their names that occurred in the 20th century (Hune, 1998).

Although the discrimination is no longer supported by federal laws, it still exists among the people of America (Hune, 1998; Lai & Arguelles, 2003) as evident in the occurrences on college campuses (Hune, 1998). What is not stated in these publications are the subtle acts of discrimination (Fujimoto, 1996; Hune, 1998; Lai & Arguelles, 2003), and the label of “model minority” that has been placed on Asian Americans (Fujimoto, 1996; Suzuki, 1989; Wong, 2002) that have collective and long lasting impact. An impact could be the lack of Asian American vice president and presidents in community colleges and universities.

The model minority. The label of “model minority” has been placed upon Asian Americans. Being the model minority means that even though Asian Americans are a non White underrepresented group, individuals in that group are successful like their White counterparts (Hune, 1998; Lai & Arguelles, 2003; Montez, 1998). This label can be traced back to the 1960s when prominent publications printed articles that portrayed Asian Americans, specifically, Chinese Americans and Japanese Americans, as assimilating successfully. One article appeared in the December 26, 1966 edition of *U.S. News & World Report*, entitled, “Success story of one minority in the United States.” The journalist compared Chinese Americans to African Americans and other minority groups by stating that the former group was able to be financially independent of any government

assistance unlike the latter group. Such an article caused resentment of Asian Americans by other non White groups, and gave the false impression that since all Asians are able to “make it” in the United States, why is it not possible for others. A similar article was published in the January 9, 1966 *New York Times* entitled “Success story, Japanese American style.” The journalist applauded Japanese Americans for also assimilating without help from government assistance (Woo, 2000). Both articles aided in Asian Americans having the false label of the model minority.

Asian Americans are resentful of being called the model minority because their professional and academic success does not allow them to move to the top of the career “ladder.” Studies and reports have shown that Asian Americans are highly educated (Hune, 1998; Lai & Arguelles, 2003; Suzuki, 1989) and academically successful, and are seen as being over-represented and numerous on college campuses; and yet, they are occupationally restricted, underpaid, and under promoted (Suzuki, 1989). The fact that Asian Americans tend to live above the poverty level, and have high household incomes gives the impression that they are financially successful. Yet, the majority of Asian American households are multi-generational with dual career couples with adult children living in the same household contributing to the family income (Suzuki, 1989). Many Asian American households are not the average nuclear family of two parents, one who is the “breadwinner,” with two children. The label, model minority, is a “simplistic masking” of the inequalities between the different Asian Americans (Woo, 2000). Disaggregated data would show that Asian Americans from different ethnic groups

and generations from the originating immigrating generation would uncover different levels of monetary and educational success.

Beyond the makeup of many Asian American households is the finding that many are below the poverty level. This is more often the case for the Asian American ethnic groups that are not Chinese Americans, Japanese Americans, and Korean Americans. Chinese Americans, Japanese Americans, and Korean Americans tend to be more educated with somewhat larger incomes (Suzuki, 1989). All of the other Asian groups, including Vietnamese Americans, Hmong Americans, Filipino Americans, and Pacific Islanders, tend to lack education and high incomes (Hune, 1998; Lai & Arguelles, 2003). The educational and income differences can be attributed to the number of years each of the Asian American groups have been Americans. Chinese Americans, Japanese Americans, and Korean Americans immigrated long before the Vietnamese Americans and Hmong Americans.

Yet, even though Chinese Americans, Japanese Americans, and Korean Americans have attained college degrees, Whites tend to have a substantially higher financial return on their education (Suzuki, 1989). Asian Americans have the label of model minority but have not always reaped the rewards of career and income. Being the model minority presents an image that Asian Americans are successfully assimilating into the majority culture (Woo, 2000). Asian Americans as the model minority is a myth that continues to be perpetuated. Has the label of “model minority” caused there to be fewer Asian American females to achieve the positions of higher level administrators in higher education?

Wong's (2002) qualitative study focused on 36 Asian Americans who were mid- and senior-level administrators in student affairs at two or four year higher education institutions in California and Hawai`i. The ethnicities of her participants were Chinese American, Japanese American, Filipino American, Indian American, Korean American, Vietnamese American, and Pacific Islander. Eighteen of the participants were male and 18 were female. Through interviews, Wong discovered that there was a false perception by non Asian Americans of Asian Americans being terrible leaders and not interested in leadership positions. This perception was seen as a form of racism in academia, which allowed Asian Americans to be marginalized in positions of little institutional power. This racism prevents Asian Americans from being considered for leadership positions. If Asian Americans are not considered for leadership positions, then they cannot achieve the position of vice president or president. If Asian Americans are the model minority, and therefore have supposedly the same opportunities as Whites, then why are Asian Americans not seen as leaders?

A limitation of Wong's (2002) study, in relation to this research study, is that she focused on only Asian Americans in the area of student affairs and did not consider those in academic administration. Another limitation is that her participants were from institutions in California and Hawai`i and not other states. Therefore, Wong's findings may have been only valid for Asian American student affairs administrators in Hawai`i and California.

A recommendation for future studies suggested by Wong (2002) was to study only those Asian American administrators in Hawai`i. To do so would mean

hearing the experiences and stories of those who are part of the dominant culture since many Asian Americans reside in Hawai`i. Such a study could then be compared to the experiences of White administrators in other states. In doing so, one could explore the experiences of those in their dominant culture: Asian Americans in Hawai`i, and Whites in another state. At that point, some conclusions may be drawn that focus on the barriers and facilitators of Asian Americans in a predominantly Asian American state. Perhaps Asian Americans in Hawai`i do not experience the same subtle discrimination and other career barriers as those who work outside of Hawai`i.

The glass ceiling. Not much is documented on the discrimination of Asian Americans seeking administrative positions at the college and university level. There are the individual accounts of such occurrences of Fujimoto (1996) and Chan (1989), and the conclusions of Suh (2005), Neilson (2002), Hune (1998), and Min and Kim (2000) that substantiate the existence of a glass ceiling for Asian Americans.

The glass ceiling is defined by the U.S. Department of Labor (1991) as “the artificial barriers based on attitudinal or organizational bias that prevent qualified individuals, including those who are non White, from advancing upward in their organization into management level positions.” The barrier is created by society, while companies develop internal structures that maintain a glass ceiling, and the government officials allow its existence when no policies or laws prohibit it (Woo, 2000). Maume’s (2004) study agreed with the U.S. Department of Labor by stating that the glass ceiling exists when there are artificial barriers that prevent non Whites

from moving into higher level career positions, and went even further to identify females as having such experiences.

This glass ceiling exists for Asian Americans when it comes to achieving positions that entail policy and decision making (Varma, 2004). The small number of Asian Americans and even smaller number of Asian American females holding the positions of presidencies and vice presidencies in community colleges can be explained by the existence of a glass ceiling.

According to Fujimoto (1996), the Federal Glass Ceiling Commission Report of 1995 found that the major barriers to career advancement for Asian Americans, including Asian American females, were the accepted stereotype of non-leadership qualities. These qualities include being non-confrontational, politically passive, and not wanting to lead (Fujimoto, 1996).

Fujimoto (1996) reflected upon the academic success and number of Asian American who were college students in the United States (724,000 or 5% of all students in 1993), faculty (5%), and executive administrators (1.5%) in the 1991-1992 academic year. There is a definite percentage differential between the number of students and faculty as compared to executive administrators. It would appear that the progression from college student to faculty, and then to executive administrator would be a natural or traditional pathway for Asian Americans. One would think that it should be about the same percentage or number of Asian Americans, and yet it is lacking by 3.5% or 4,791 executive administrators. Fujimoto (1996) states that the Asian American stereotypes of being passive, unassertive, indirect, and oriented to technology prohibit others from seeing them in

leadership roles. He further defines the Asian American female stereotypes as inflexible, obedient, motherly, not politically savvy, erotic, and fragile. Even more so than the Asian American male, the Asian American female stereotype could easily be seen as an external barrier to a leadership position. The stereotyping and the existence of a glass ceiling could help explain why so few Asian Americans and even fewer Asian American females attain the positions of community college president and vice president. In addition, below the glass ceiling are the higher educational positions of mid-level managers and faculty. The number of mid-level managers and faculty who are Asian American outnumber that of vice president and president. The glass ceiling, in this case, would be placed before the hierarchical positions of president and vice president so that Asian Americans, and even more so Asian American females, do not achieve such positions frequently. Figures 1 (in Chapter One) and 2 (in Chapter Two) present the number differential for these positions.

Chan (1989) and Min and Kim (2000) discussed the existence of the glass ceiling for Asian Americans and attaining executive administrative positions in higher education institutions (Chan, 1989) and other professions (Min & Kim, 2000). Chan (1989) noted that most Asian Americans are in mid-level administration, particularly deans of engineering or natural sciences, the two areas in which they have stereotypic reputations of competency.

Substantiating Chan's (1989) conclusions, Suh (2005) found that the majority or 14.5% of the Asian Americans in student affairs worked in the area of minority affairs, multicultural affairs, or the cultural center, and 13.7% in budgetary

management. The greatest percentage of Asian Americans in minority affairs and budgetary responsibilities in student affairs suggests that they can only be leaders in an area that they are genetically born into unlike Whites, and the stereotyping of Asian Americans as being skilled in the area of finance.

Very few have looked at the group that is even further discriminated against than Asian American males, that is Asian American females (Wilking, 2001; Ideta, 1996). Specifically, very few have looked at the administrative experiences of Asian American females in academia and their barriers to the administrative positions of vice president and president in higher education including community colleges. A comparison between the hierarchical institutional power differential positions held by Asian Americans based on gender within higher education, which includes community colleges, demonstrates the existing number discrepancy between males and females (see Figure 4) (Harvey & Anderson, 2005).

Another consideration that needed to be made was the existence of other barriers, in addition to the model minority label and glass ceiling, that Asian American females experience on the path to the positions of community college vice president and president. These barriers are discussed later in this chapter.

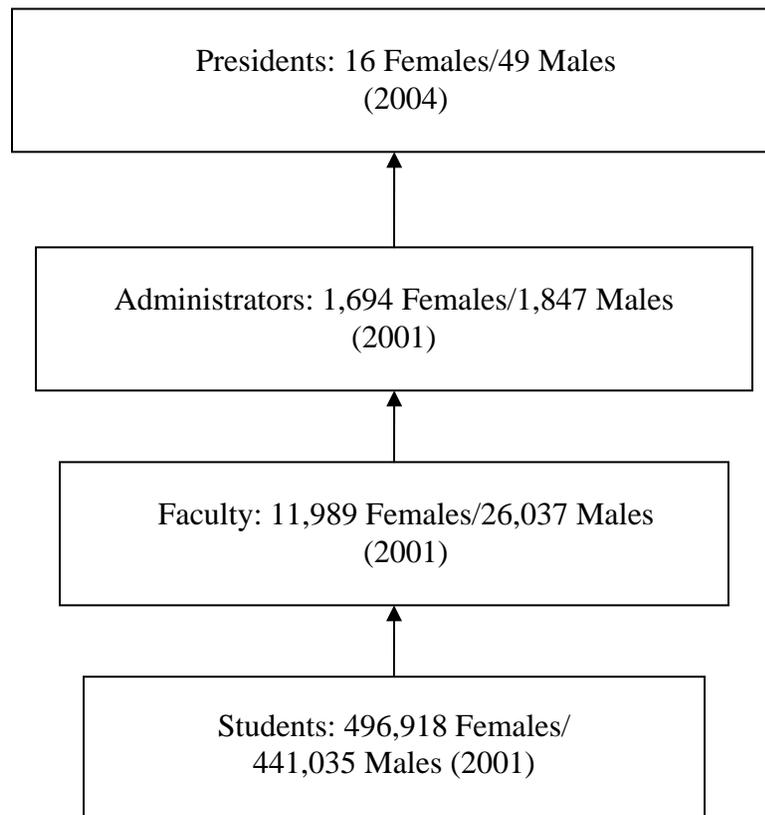


Figure 2. Asian Americans in higher education based on gender and position.

As previously mentioned in *Comparison of college students, faculty, and administrators by ethnicity*, and visually depicted in Figure 1, the number of Asian Americans decreases when the level of institutional decision making power increases, with the largest number being students and the fewest being administrators. Similarly, the number of Asian American females decreases when a comparison is made from students to presidents. The number of females in every level of the hierarchy is less than that of males (Harvey & Anderson, 2005). When looking at the position of president of four year colleges, in 1994 there were nine males and one female. In 2003, there were four males and three females. Stout-Stewart (2005) confirmed that

there were only three Asian American female community college presidents in 2003. In 2004, there were seven males and three females. The number of Asian American community colleges presidents were, in 1994, ten males and three females. In 2003, there were six males and three females. In 2004, there were eight males and three females (Harvey & Anderson, 2005). Why are there so few Asian Americans, particularly Asian American females who attain the positions of president and vice president in higher education? Perhaps there are barriers that prohibit Asian American females from attaining these senior leadership positions.

Cultural Values and Higher Education Leadership

Wong's (2002) study brought forth awareness of another stereotype of Asian Americans: Asian Americans are not thought of as leaders nor do they want to lead. Such stereotyping is a barrier for Asian Americans experience, and may prevent them from achieving the administrative position of vice president or president in higher educational institutions. Do Asian Americans present themselves as non leaders? What is it that allows others to come to such a conclusion? The answer could be the cultural values, that Kim et al. (2001) identified, that may contribute to Asian Americans not assimilating to the ways of the dominant culture as Yeh et al. (2004) concluded. It is possible that the specific Asian cultural values of collectivism, conformity, humility (Kim et al. 2001), and filial piety (Berkel & Constantine, 2005) could be barriers that Asian Americans bring with them creating internal barriers to their careers as higher level administrators.

Cultural values as internal barriers. A couple of the leadership skills that are recognized by the dominant culture are individuality and self-promotion. These

skills are somewhat the antithesis of the Asian American cultural values of the Chinese Americans, Japanese Americans, Korean Americans, and Filipino Americans as found by Kim et al. (2001).

Collectivism, harmony, and conformity are cultural values of Asian Americans. Decisions and goals are often made by the group. Conflict and disagreement are not demonstrated outwardly. Confrontation is avoided. Asian Americans also believe in being humble. Unlike the dominant White culture, Asian Americans do not value individuality or self-promotion. Both of these values cause discomfort and unease for the Asian American.

A White male leader would tend to garner recognition for himself when he is successful. He does not share the credit with others. If he does recognize others for their contributions, he tends not to identify that person by name (Albino, 1992). In doing this, the White male can maintain the accolades that come with the accomplishment. He is also engaging in self-promotion. Asian Americans tend not to engage in self-promotion but remain humble thereby demonstrating their cultural value of humility (Kim et al. 2001).

Neilson (2002) did a qualitative phenomenological study by interviewing 10 higher level Asian American administrators in higher education, and found, amongst other things, that cultural values had a “powerful influence” on their leadership styles. Specifically, Asian American leaders had humility, worked hard and collaboratively, and took risks to live up to their moral obligation to the future Asian American generations. They also stated that it is difficult to self-promote and speak assertively

(Neilson, 2002). The existence of humility, collaboration, and familial obligation or recognition is consistent with the findings of Kim et al. (2001).

A limitation of Neilson's (2000) study, *Career paths of Asian-American senior administrators in higher education: An inquiry into under-representation*, is that it did not go beyond the surface of inquiry. Her title suggests a more thorough look at the reasons why there are so few Asian Americans holding higher leadership positions in community colleges, colleges, and universities. The depth of Neilson's (2000) study was limited to the initial statements of the existence of an Asian American's cultural values.

Nevertheless, both Neilson (2002) and Wong (2002) allowed for a better understanding of the lived experiences of Asian American senior administrators, more so Wong than Neilson, including the importance of family and filial piety. The Asian American cultural value of filial piety stresses the importance of family and the time spent at work and home. The hours spent at work may cause the appearance that family is not valued, especially when you compare the hours spent at home or with family members. Some Asian American administrators feel that the cultural value of filial piety causes them to question their ability to do the job (Wong, 2002). Additionally, for Asian American females, the gender role of taking care of one's children and aging parents could also be seen as another internal barrier to vice presidential or presidential positions.

Cultural values as internal barriers for Asian American females. A question exists of whether a female, whose culture promotes the Asian cultural values that were previously mentioned, can believe that she can lead large educational

institutions and still maintain her gender role and cultural value of filial piety. Will she have the time and priority to focus on the issues of the workplace and as well as home? Even if filial piety was not valued, would the Asian American female be expected by her employer, co-workers, and subordinates to have the overriding need to be with her family members rather than lead an educational institution? These are some of the questions that may cause an inner barrier or struggle for the Asian American female leader. According to the studies of Wilking (2001) and Neilson (2002) Asian American females can maintain their cultural values and still lead, although they do experience an internal struggle (Wilking, 2001).

Wilking's (2001) study was an interpretive narrative inquiry of five Asian American female college administrators who were presidents, provosts, or chancellors. Four of these administrators were leading in California while one was leading in Hawai'i. Four were leading two year colleges and one was leading a four year institution. Utilizing the method of narrative inquiry, Wilking (2001) found that the Asian American female administrators were both negatively and positively impacted by their cultural values. Like Neilson (2002) and Wong (2002), Wilking found the cultural values of Asian American females, specifically familial obligations or filial piety, may cause an internal struggle or barrier to the time demanding administrative positions. The positive impact of the Asian American's cultural values of working hard or a strong work ethic was valued by these females. Unfortunately, American Asian females reported enduring phases of self-doubt and self-consciousness that were also tied to their cultural value of humility (Wilking, 2001). Interestingly, Leung, Ivey, and Suzuki (1994) conducted a study that looked at the

career aspirations of Asian American college students and found that the women tended to not aspire to the traditional gender roles or occupations.

Leung et al. (1994) found that Asian American females tend to choose occupations that were not traditionally associated with their gender, but instead were practical, prestigious, and monetarily lucrative. They did not specify the occupations. Leung et al. also discovered that one's choice of future occupation was not impacted by their cultural values or internal barriers. Although not stated, perhaps Leung et al.'s (1994) participants were fourth or fifth generation Asian American females, and therefore more acculturated into the dominant European American culture with less Asian American cultural values. They could also have been demonstrating the impact of biculturalism by not considering their Asian American cultural values when choosing a future occupation. Perhaps this lack of such a syndrome is only such because they have yet to attain such positions.

A limitation of Leung et al.'s (1994) study was that the participants were either a student from a particular Midwestern or west coast university, where the numbers of Asian Americans are not very high. Leung et al. did not address the impact of being a minority in the study's discussion.

A conclusion can be made based on Leung et al.'s (1994) study, in that if it is not one's internal barriers or cultural values that prohibit Asian Americans from achieving the administrative positions of vice president or president, then it must be one's external barriers.

Stereotyping and Discrimination as External Barriers

Is the external barrier of stereotyping Asian Americans as non-leaders keeping them from achieving the position of vice president or president in academia? Three studies have been done on the stereotyping of Asian Americans as an external barrier to a career as a higher level administrator in academia (Shintaku, 1996; Suh, 2005; Wong 2002). Shintaku (1996) did a mixed method study utilizing a national database along with interpretive study interviews of Asian American administrators who held the position of chancellor, president, vice president, vice chancellor, dean, provost, or associate provost. Shintaku looked at the information provided by 1,004 Asian American administrators and interviewed 11 participants, in order to answer two questions: 1) What are the factors that contribute to the participation of Asian American faculty in academic administration? and 2) Why are there relatively few Asian American faculty who hold administrative positions in higher education? The information from the interpretive, multi-campus survey revealed that Asian Americans participate less than Whites in academic administration. Shintaku compared the gender and ethnicity of these administrators noting the percentage that were in academic administration compared to the other college areas. He concluded that many White males aspire to and attain a position in academic administration. Asian American females either do not choose to aspire to academic administration or do not attain such positions. Additionally, Asian Americans tended to be employed in these leadership positions at public over private universities and colleges, and four year over two year institutions. Shintaku also looked at the level of stress caused by the subtle acts of discrimination. Although Shintaku did not define stress, he found

that Asian American females had the highest level of stress followed by Asian American males, who were followed by White females, and then White males who had the least amount of stress. Shintaku also determined that Asian American “cultural variables” or cultural values caused external stereotyping by non Asian Americans.

In order to overcome the stereotyping and the internal cultural values as career obstacles, according to Shintaku (1996) found that the following skills are apropos for future Asian American leaders:

- 1) Respect - Be respected and productive.
- 2) Commitment – Have the energy and drive to commit to the position.
- 3) Interpersonal Skills – Develop strong interpersonal skills and communication styles.
- 4) Take Risks
- 5) Governance – Involve yourself in governance beyond the classroom.
- 6) Support Systems – Develop your networks and find mentors and role models.
- 7) Diversity Involvement – Be engaged in diversity work including that which is outside of academia.
- 8) Don’t Get Funneled – Do not take a student services position or you may become “pigeon holed.”

Although Shintaku (1996) did have several significant findings there was a limitation to his study. Shintaku used telephone rather than in-person interviews for 10 out of 11 of his participants. One could speculate that a face-to-face interview may have provided greater comfort for the participant and therefore disclosure of more

personal information that was relevant to their path towards senior level administration positions.

Like Shintaku (1996), Suh (2005) also found stress to be an external barrier for those in higher level administrative positions in student affairs. Suh (2005) utilized an online survey of 518 self-selected participants who were members of the American College Personnel Association (ACPA), the National Association of Student Personnel Association (NASPA), or Asian Pacific American Higher Education (APAHE). The purpose of Suh's quantitative study was to uncover some characteristics of Asian American student affairs administrators, and the factors that facilitate or restrict the career advancement of Asian Americans in student affairs. Out of 518 participants, 117 were Asian Americans, of which 6% held the position of vice provost or vice chancellor, 1.7% associate vice president or associate vice provost, and 0% chancellor or provost. The stress factors that Asian Americans saw that restricted their movement into higher administrative positions in student affairs were high staff turnover, the thought that he or she was "the token" Asian, budgetary constraints, and campus politics (Suh, 2005). Suh did not discuss the details of these factors but a logical conclusion based on his method of data collection can be made: The use of a quantitative online survey, with no follow-up questions, would not easily lend itself to the exploratory details of in person or telephone interview.

Suh (2005) suggested that further research that included gender issues and qualitative studies to hear the experiences of Asian Americans in higher education was needed.

Limitations of Suh's (2005) study are that it was a quantitative study that could not look at the personal experiences of the few Asian American high level administrators, and that the participants had to be members of the three national or regional associations. Those who were not members were not considered.

Wong's (2002) study, as mentioned previously, was an interpretive study of 36 Asian Americans, like Suh (2005), in student services. Through interviews, Wong revealed the experience of one Asian American male who was a finalist for a senior position at a college that was lead by an Asian American president. After the Asian American male did not get the administrative position, a board member who was on the hiring committee stated that they could not have him in the position. This decision was attributed to their already having an Asian American president. Having two higher level Asian Americans would have the appearance that Asian Americans were "taking over." This action was the 21st century's "yellow peril." Discrimination against Asian Americans still exists.

The three studies of Shintaku (1996), Suh (2005), and Wong (2002), have brought forth valuable information concerning Asian American females and discrimination. Together they lead us to the conclusion that a study is needed to look into the high level of stereotyping and discrimination of Asian American females.

Stereotyping and discrimination as external barriers for Asian American females. It is possible that Asian American females experience different or more discrimination than their male counterparts? Wilking (2001) found the external barrier of stereotyping interfered with an Asian American female's leadership. This stereotyping was based on the Asian American female's race and gender. They were

either the “geisha,” that is “quiet, sweet, and obliging to men,” or the “dragon lady,” that is “aggressive, calculating, sensual and cold-hearted (Wilking, 2001).”

The small stature and youthful appearance that often is the physical attributes of Asian Americans, particularly females, was also reported by the participants as negative attributes that only added to the barriers that they experience. This particular barrier of age and height has been noted by the research of Hune (1998). To counter this youthful appearance, one of Wilking’s (2001) participants did not dye her graying hair so that she would appear her age and thereby receive more respect.

Essentially, Asian American females experience a “double-bind” (Montez, 1998) or “double jeopardy” (Chan, 1989), that is the discrimination and stereotyping based on “two systems of inequality (Cole, 2005),” their gender and ethnicity. Like their male counterparts, Asian American females experience the same barriers based on their ethnicity. In addition, Asian American females experience the cultural values that can be both internal and external barriers.

Summary of Barriers to the Vice President and President Positions for Asian Americans

The barriers that limit Asian Americans from achieving the position of vice president and president are both internal and external in nature. They also are brought upon them by their own Asian American ancestors and family members as well as those at their place of employment. Unlike other non Asian cultures, many of the values can be seen as opposing the skills of those that the dominant culture sees as conducive to leadership. The Asian American female may also see the cultural value of filial piety as one that she cannot ignore. Therefore, she may see it as an internal

barrier to her aspirations of a college president or vice president. Yet, Leung et al. (1994) found otherwise, as the female Asian American college students did not feel constrained by her cultural values. This could be explained by the concept of acculturation and generational change as discussed in Chapter Two. Instead, the Asian American females found the external barriers of stereotyping and labeling to be more of a career obstacle or barrier. One of the areas of inquiry of this study was the existence of internal and external barriers experienced by Asian American females while seeking a position as vice president or president. If they did or were currently experiencing the negative effects of these barriers, then it is imperative that these barriers be removed. Removal will allow Asian American females to gain the same leadership positions that are traditionally and predominantly held by White males. These external barriers seem to have made it difficult for many Asian Americans to go beyond the glass ceiling to the positions of vice president and president.

Summary of the Discrimination Against Asian Americans

Asian Americans have long experienced acts of discrimination in the United States. These acts were government sanctioned. Today, discrimination against Asian Americans continues to exist with the label of the “model minority” and the presence of the glass ceiling can be seen as barriers to their desired career positions. Perhaps the cultural values of Asian American women are the barriers to their attainment of presidencies and vice presidencies. A question as to why there are few Asian American higher education leaders remains.

Discrimination Against Asian American Females as Higher Education Presidents and Vice Presidents

Not many Asian Americans lead two and four year higher education institutions. There are even fewer Asian American females than males in the positions of community college vice president and president.

One study that looked at the gender and ethnicity of college presidents was done nearly 20 years ago by Wilson (1989), who found that 11 non White females led universities, five led private four year institutions, two led public four year universities, three led historically black colleges, and 17 led community colleges at that time. Out of these 17, one was Asian American. Wilson found no Asian American female in the position of president at any of the universities or four year colleges. Ideta (1996) found that, in 1995, there were two Asian American female higher education presidents. Although, a press release by the University of Hawai'i's University Relations announced that Rose Tseng was chosen to be University of Hawai'i at Hilo's new chancellor (University of Hawai'i, 1998). Tseng was the first Asian American female chancellor of any higher education institution (Satchell, 2007).

In 2000, there were five Asian American female presidents in higher education, one of which was a president of a community college (Turner, 2007). As previously mentioned, Harvey and Anderson (2005) reported a similar finding of few Asian American female community college presidents; in 1994 there were three. In 2003, there were three. In 2004, there were three. The research shows that the highest number of Asian American female presidents in community colleges ever is three.

The research does not indicate if these three women are the same women in 1994, 2003, and 2004.

Facilitators for Asian Americans Female Vice Presidents and Presidents in Community Colleges

The focus of this study was on community colleges rather than four year higher educational institutions. In addition, the focus was on female senior administrators, rather than males. As mentioned in Chapter One, community colleges have the “open door” mission which allows for the recruitment and retention of more minority and female students. Indeed, community colleges have seen an increase in the number of non White, first generation college students, English as a Second Language (ESL) (Bumpus & Roueche, 2007; Laden, 2004), and female students over the years (Kelly, 2002; Laden, 2004; Townsend & Twombly, 2007). Part of the support that the community college needs to give to the non White students are role models and mentors who look like them not only the classroom but in administration. This would allow students and faculty to see that such a leadership position is possible. In addition, non White administrators allow for a learning perspective to occur that is more conducive for non White students (Kelly, 2002). Laden (2004) took an even stronger stance in her study that found that the proportion of non White administrators was underrepresented in community colleges as the number of White students decline and the number of Latino and Asian American students increase. In addition, the number of female White and non White students is increasing in community colleges, therefore the ethnicity and gender of the administrators should reflect this changing proportion.

Wolverton, Guillory, Montez, and Gmelch (2002) found that minority female administrators had a conceptual framework that allowed them to achieve their current positions through a change of mindset that included three attributes: Competence, credibility, and confidence. Competence was defined as the “deep grounding” or knowledge of one’s job. Credibility was defined as integrity and skilled performance that allowed a positive reputation to develop among her colleagues. Confidence, which was the most important of the three attributes, was a belief in one’s abilities and continued success (Wolverton et al. 2002). This conceptual framework could aid the Asian American female in moving to the administrative positions of vice president and president from the internal barriers brought upon by the cultural values of humility and collectivism.

With humility, it is difficult for one to acknowledge their success and skills. While collectivism looks at the success of the group not the individual. Therefore, if the Asian American female cognitively accepted the attributes of competence, credibility, and confidence, the need to remain humble and not having ownership of leadership would be lessened. The Asian American female could then navigate or work within the current structure created by the dominant European American culture. This is similarly recognized by Wilking’s (2001) conclusion.

Wilking (2001) concluded her research with the following theory which could aid Asian Americans to go beyond the glass ceiling: “The participation rate of Asian Pacific American (APA) females in CEO positions within higher education is negatively influenced by the strict adherence to traditional APA cultural values; however, its impact can be reversed by effective mentoring and networking.”

Ideta (1996) engaged in a narrative inquiry of 10 Asian American female senior level administrators at higher educational institutions focusing on their “critical incidents” that they saw as a turning point for change in their professional lives. Ideta discovered three common themes through the participants’ stories:

- 1) Strength through adversity – They increased their psychological strength due to the acts of ethnic, gender, and class discrimination.
- 2) No ownership of success – They attributed their cultural values of humility and “good fortune” to their success. They gave credit to others, including peers, family, mentors, for their job attainment and skills.
- 3) Pursuit of excellence – Cultural values of hard work, not bringing shame to one’s family through failure, and meeting parental expectations allowed for one to work towards success.

Both Wilking (2001) and Ideta (1996) found that the Asian American female’s cultural values played a significant role in their leadership style, personal strength, and explanations of success. Wilking (2001) concluded that abiding to one’s cultural values could have a negative effect, that is being stereotyped and having limited career achievement. A limitation of Wilking (2001) and Ideta (1996) studies is that neither focused solely on the female leaders in community college leaders.

Interestingly, the cultural values that Asian American females could be both barrier and facilitator to their positions of community college president and vice president. As a barrier, both internal and external, the values of filial piety, harmony, humility, and conformity may prohibit them from going beyond the glass ceiling to

senior leadership positions. As a facilitator, the same four cultural values, filial piety, harmony, humility, and conformity may allow for a successful leadership style.

There is a clear need to better understand the experiences of the Asian American female who seeks to lead a community college. It is also clear that Asian American females are not attaining the positions of college president or vice president at a percentage that is equal to the Asian American female population or Asian American female student population. This is not so for White males. The percentage of White males who attain the community college presidencies and vice presidencies surpasses the White male population and White male student population. Fortunately, some Asian American females have achieved the position of vice president or president. They often attribute their career achievement to role models, mentors, and other factors.

Asian American Female Role Models, Mentors, and Other Factors

In examining the experiences of Asian American presidents and vice presidents, researchers have discovered that many attributed their success and future success of other Asian Americans to mentors, role models, and other factors. Several researchers and former Asian American leaders have concluded that Asian Americans seeking a vice presidency or presidency benefit from mentoring (Fujimoto, 1996; Neilson, 2002; Shintaku, 1996; Wong, 2002), especially those who are Asian American females (Ideta, 1996; Montez, 1998; Wilking, 2001). Others have concluded that Asian Americans need role models to see that it is possible to achieve such influential administrative positions in academia (Saigo, 1999; Shintaku, 1996), particularly for Asian American females (Ideta, 1996; Wong, 2002).

Mentoring is a form of another's aiding or facilitating the protégé's career path. In this situation, the protégé is the individual moving toward a leadership position at a community college or university, the mentor is a seasoned senior administrator. With each mentor-protégé relationship, there are five variables to be acknowledged, the intent, role, involvement, mutual respect, and reciprocated benefits (Mertz, 2004).

Aside from mentoring are the role models that could allow Asian Americans to see that it is possible to achieve the positions of vice president and president in higher education. A role model is someone whose characteristics or traits are emulated by another (Mendez-Morse, 2004). Mertz (2004) differentiated between the role of a role model and mentor with a conceptual model that compared the level of intent and level of involvement. The intent of role models is the psychological development or modeling that they provide. The intent of the mentor includes the psychological development and continues with professional development or advising and career advancement or "brokering" with colleagues and others who could provide career opportunities for the protégé. The level of involvement is much greater for the mentor and protégé as compared to the role model and observer. Unique to mentoring is the existence of mutual respect by the protégé of the mentor and that by the mentor by the protégé. Additionally, both the protégé and the mentor experience the rewards or benefits of the relationship (Mertz, 2004).

With so few Asian Americans, and even more so Asian American female, senior level administrators in colleges and universities, those who may even entertain the possibility of such careers do not have many individuals to follow. Saigo (1999)

points out that the majority of role models we see are European Americans with very few exceptions being Asian American. Until more Asian Americans hold positions of vice president or president, it will be difficult for Asian Americans seeking such positions to find mentors and role models who experience similar barriers. The lack of Asian American mentors should not deter Asian American females from seeking out a mentor. Seeking a mentor whose is part of the traditional dominant culture that is White males, could also provide insight, perspective, and increased knowledge, that can then increase one's competence and confidence. In addition, having opportunities to engage in projects and work opportunities with this traditional mentor will also increase the non White protégé's credibility (Wolverton, 2002), including that of the Asian American female. In any event, researchers have determined that it is important to have both mentors and role models as facilitators for Asian Americans.

Interestingly, several Asian American female administrators have attributed other factors, beyond role models and mentors, as facilitators to breaking the glass ceiling to higher administrative positions. These factors can be associated with their cultural values. They are luck or having "good fortune" and working hard so that their families would not experience the shame of their failure (Ideta, 1996; Wilking, 2001). It must be noted that what the Asian American higher administrative females saw as "other facilitators" to their job attainment and success, non Asian Americans saw as their weaknesses and a stereotype associated with all Asian American females. If you achieved your position because of luck and not because you earned it, then you do not deserve it. If you value the respect of your family members then you will not put the needed effort, dedication, and hours to the profession. Ironically, it is not that Asian

Americans do not feel that they have earned the hierarchical position with institutional power but that it is their need to remain humble that prohibits them from boasting and publicly taking all of the credit.

Summary of Discrimination Against Asian American Females as Higher Education Presidents and Vice Presidents

There are very few Asian American females who have held and do hold the leadership position of community college president. Fortunately, some Asian American females do attain the positions of community college president and vice president. This attainment can be attributed to their ability to avoid or disregard the barriers or overcoming them with the aid of the facilitators. Their achievements allow others to see that it is possible to break the glass ceiling to the position of community college president.

Summary of the Literature Review

The review of the literature revealed that researchers have discovered both internal and external barriers of Asian American females to career advancement in the higher leadership positions at community colleges. The internal barriers identified for Asian Americans, and more specifically for Asian American females, included the cultural values of non-assertiveness, humility, filial piety, family recognition, and generational success that surpasses the previous generation. Additional internal barriers were the biculturalism of Asian Americans and the acculturation that comes with each succeeding generation.

The external barriers placed in front of Asian American females were the discrimination that includes stereotyping, label of model minority, and the glass ceiling. Beyond the external barriers is the internal barrier of cultural values.

Asian American females also experience facilitators that aid them in attaining leadership positions. Several researchers stressed the importance of mentors and role models for Asian American females planning to advance to the position of vice president or president in higher education. Mentors can aid in the breaking down of external barriers, while role models can do the same for internal barriers.

With the assistance of mentors, role models, and other factors, a small number of Asian American females have achieved the administrative positions of vice president and president at community colleges.

The studies that have been done that focus on Asian Americans can be compared by the characteristics of their participants, specifically if they are employed at a two or four year college institution, if there are males or females, the level of administration, and the state in which the institution was located. The following table summarizes the characteristics of the studies that are similar to this one.

Table 5

Studies on Asian American Higher Education Leadership

Researcher/Year	N	Gender	Institution	States
Wong (2002)	36	M and F	2 and 4 year	Hawai`i and CA
Neilson (2002)	10	M and F	2 and 4 year	Not identified
Wilking (2001)	5	F	2 and 4 year	Hawai`i and CA

None of these studies focused on only Asian American female community college presidents and vice presidents who were not necessarily employed by a college that was located in a state that had a large percentage of Asian Americans. Therefore, such a study is needed to continue to fill the void in the scholarly literature.

There are only a few Asian American females who have achieved the positions of vice president and president in postsecondary academia. Therefore, quantitative studies cannot be conducted. Instead, an interpretive study of these few leaders at community colleges needs to be conducted. It is logical to conduct a narrative inquiry of these few female vice president and presidents, specifically those in community colleges, as they have yet to be the focus of any scholarly research. No scholarly study has ventured to uncover the possibility of stereotyping, and that racial and gender discrimination are barriers that have continued the effects of past government sanctioned acts of prejudice. No scholarly study has uncovered the possibility that it is the Asian American female herself who becomes her own barrier by maintaining her cultural values, specifically humility and harmony. No scholarly

study has ventured to state the possibility that there is a glass ceiling for Asian American females seeking these administrative leadership positions. This study explored the experiences of Asian American females who have attained the vice presidencies and presidencies at community colleges in an effort to bring about awareness to the discrimination and lack of social justice still exists in American in the 21st century.

Chapter Three

Methodology & Research

The three brothers looked over their gifts. The one with the mirror said, “Look at this wonderful mirror. . . . How would you like to see what my future bride is doing right now?” They looked into the mirror and when they saw her they were all terribly upset. She was lying on the ground – dead! “Quick!” said the brother with the sleigh, “Get onto my sleigh and we’ll be there in the twinkling of an eye.” In a moment they were with her. The youngest brother poured the magic medicine into her mouth. She stood up, and was healthy as ever. She smiled, looking at the three brothers one by one (Van Deusen, 1996, p. 11).

This study looks at the experiences of the few Asian American females who have achieved the highest leadership positions of community colleges. It appears that Asian American females have not been able to reach these positions easily. With so few becoming community college presidents, and the “stories” collected through research, the possibility that injustice has been experienced by many Asian American females was explored. There is an acceptance of the preexisting leadership makeup, that is, the institutional power structure should be predominantly White males. The acceptance of that White males, and to a lesser degree White females, is a false consciousness by our current society. Asian American females can lead educational institutions. This has been proven by the few women who are and were community college leaders.

Research Questions

This study focused on four primary research questions. The primary questions were posed in order to hear the experiences of current community college Asian American female presidents and vice presidents which I mentioned in Chapter One.

In addition to the primary questions, I also asked secondary or follow up questions to uncover the nuances of their responses. The research question, “What is the experience of Asian American females who have sought advancement in leadership positions in community colleges?,” was followed up by asking the participants to tell their stories about their career paths, positions in academia, and hiring experiences.

In order to explore the second primary research question, “What is the hiring process experience of Asian American females who have sought the position of community college vice president or president?,” I included the questions, “How many times did you attempt to become a vice president or president?,” and “Do you think your ethnicity or gender affect the hiring process that you experienced?”

The third primary research question, “Do barriers to attaining the position of community college vice president and president exist for Asian American females?,” as well as, “Do these barriers continue to exist,” was followed with, “Have you found that your ethnicity and gender has determined the experiences you have had during your career pathway to a higher level administrator?,” “What are your cultural values?,” “Are your cultural values founded in Asian culture?,” “Do you find that you are bicultural in your behavior and expectations at work and home?,” and “Do you encounter stereotyping toward you based on your ethnicity and or gender?”

The fourth primary research question, “Do facilitators that aid in breaking down the barriers to attaining a position of higher level administration in community college exist for Asian American females?,” as well as, “Do these facilitators continue to exist,” was further discussed when participants provided answers to , “Do you or have you had any role models or mentors?,” and “What experiences of factors

do you attribute your ability to achieve your community college administrative role?” These primary questions allowed me to discuss the possibility that the participants had engaged in acculturation and biculturalism.

In order to uncover the answers to this study’s primary questions, I asked each of the participants the Guiding Research Questions (see Appendix A). I did not limit myself to the prepared guiding research questions. I adapted the questions when it deemed necessary throughout the conversations so that rich, in-depth stories were shared. The questions and conversations were open-ended and free flowing and partially driven by the participant and redirected by the researcher, which is a practice of the narrative theory (Gross, 2004). I believe that my ethnicity, approachability, familiarity with the institution of community college, and my sincere career goal toward a vice presidency allowed me to ask personal and sometimes uncomfortable questions. The study participants were five Asian American females who were either community college presidents or vice presidents.

The trustworthiness of this study is supported by the study’s design, theoretical framework or methodology which was critical race theory, and the theories of inequality of Emile Durkheim and Karl Marx. In addition, the trustworthiness of this study is supported by the logic behind the choice of participants, method of data collection, and analysis of the data which uncovers the barriers, facilitators, and themes. All of these factors are presented in this chapter along with a personal disclosure. The personal disclosure puts forth the possibility of the researcher’s biases or “pre-understandings” of the participants’ perspectives and

experiences. Also included in this chapter is the discussion of the use of human subjects as participants and the considerations that were made.

Critical Race Theory as a Methodology

This study explored the experiences of the few Asian American females in the leadership positions of vice president and president in community colleges. It is imperative that these women have a voice in a professional career where they are so few in number. Not hearing these women's stories means that the experiences of Asian American female community college vice presidents and presidents are not worthy of an audience. The critical race theory as a methodology allows for the "unveiling of the illusions" (Neuman, 2003) or stereotyping of Asian American females as submissive and non leaders, and allows us to see that it is possible for them to be successful community college presidents and vice presidents. To accept the current structure of higher education leadership would mean to accept that Asian American females cannot and should not seek these positions of influence and decision making. To question the existing structure could allow for societal change (Neuman, 2003), and allow for equality and social justice for Asian American females. The critical race theory allows Asian American females who have reached the upper level leadership positions in community colleges to be counted and acknowledged. We need to hear their experiences of being stereotyped, struggles to overcome the internal and external barriers, and triumphs of being treated with justice in order to change attitudes towards and expectations of Asian American females by the dominant culture as well as other non Asians. Asian American females are not the "model minority," nor the "geisha" or "dragon lady." Other Asian American females

need to hear the stories of these presidential and vice presidential females in order to see that they can overcome the barriers, including those that are based on internal cultural values or self-doubt to these leadership positions. The glass ceiling must be shattered to non existence.

The critical race theory helps bring social justice to those who have been ignored, have experienced injustice, and are powerless. Critical race theory reveals the underlying reasons for what has long been the norm, that is, many White male senior leaders in community colleges and so few Asian American females. Critical race theory can support the change for more Asian American female community college presidents and vice presidents. As stated by Neuman (2003, p. 81), the critical race theory approach can “uncover myths, reveal hidden truths, and help people to change the world for themselves.” The purposes of critical race theory are the emancipation and enlightenment of those who are discriminated against (Hultgren & Coomer, 1989). This study attempted to do just that, by bringing to awareness to those who are uninformed the fact that there are very few Asian American female community college presidents and vice presidents both past and present. In addition, this study attempted to enlighten Asian American females who seek the positions of community college president and vice president by bringing forth the experiences of those who hold such positions. According to Neuman (2003) the criteria for truth exists in the critical race theory. By bringing awareness to non Asian American females, this study will allow others to see a comparison of the number of Asian American and non Asian Americans who are community college leaders. In addition, presenting the experiences and “stories” of the Asian American female community

college presidents and vice presidents will allow others to see the discrimination and stereotyping that they experience.

The criteria for truth in critical race theory (Neuman, 2003) in this study are:

a) Smash myths and empower people to change society radically.

Stereotypes of Asian American females exist as mentioned previously in *Stereotyping and discrimination as external barriers for Asian American females*.

The stereotypes of “geisha” and “dragon lady” provoke images that are not seen by the dominant culture as being leaders in academia. The exotic and submissive “geisha,” and demanding and unrelenting “dragon lady” were not found as characteristics of the Asian American female community college presidents or vice presidents of this study.

The critical race theory can also empower Asian American females, by making non Asian American females aware that the labels of “dragon lady” and “geisha” are not ones that cannot be placed upon Asian American females simply because of their ethnicity and gender. In addition, the critical race theory can empower Asian American females by bringing awareness to the disproportionate number of White male community college leaders in comparison to Asian American female community college leaders. In turn, the awareness and recognition of unfair stereotyping could then allow more decision makers to see Asian American females as community college presidents and vice presidents.

b) Do away with false beliefs that hide power and objective conditions.

The belief that Asian Americans are the model minority only undermines their attempts to reach the positions of vice president and president. The truth is that there

are not many Asian Americans, particularly Asian American females, in vice presidential or presidential positions at community colleges. There are many Asian American students and faculty, but only 49 male and 16 female presidents, as mentioned previously in *Current discrimination of Asian Americans: The glass ceiling*. When a comparison of all non White higher level administrators in academia is made, Asian Americans have the lowest number with the exception of American Indians. The false belief of Asian Americans, as the model minority, holding a high number of community college presidencies and vice presidencies contributes to the continuing institutional power held by non Asian Americans. In community colleges, the positions of vice president and president are held mostly by Whites, followed by African Americans and Latinos.

c) Inform us by unveiling illusions, and d) supply people with tools needed to change the world.

This study brings forth the past and more recent experiences of Asian American female community college presidents and vice presidents. These experiences include past barriers and facilitators to their current positions. These experiences are ones that have not been heard about community college leaders in a scholarly study. It is possible that these experiences will change the views that others will have of Asian American female leaders in academia. In addition, this study could introduce information that changes how all Asian American females are seen, and thereby, enable them to achieve more professional leadership opportunities including those that are non higher educational institutions.

According to the critical race theory, the truth of the discrimination and stereotyping of Asian American females that is brought forth through awareness and publication can only bring about more informed individuals, including those who are in the position of hiring and retaining Asian American female community college vice presidents and presidents.

Along with the four criteria for truth of critical race theory are the key concepts that can be found in the experiences of Asian American females in higher level administrative positions in community colleges.

Key concepts.

The key concepts of critical race theory are false consciousness, hegemony (Lather, 1984; Morgaine, 1994), emancipation (Bredo & Feinberg, 1982a; Morgaine, 1994), and researcher as change agent (Bredo & Feinberg, 1982b). False consciousness is the acceptance that the existing structure must remain (Lather, 1984; Morgain, 1994). Who is currently making the decisions? Are the makeup of those decision makers consistent and never changing? In this study, the existing institutional power structure is the dominance of White males and females in the positions of community college vice president and president. As more non White students and faculty attend and work at the community colleges, more non White administrators should also exist. This is not the case. This false consciousness could remain especially if no one questions the rare career pathway to the administrative positions of vice president and president for Asian American females.

Hegemony is the accepted predominance of the dominant culture group over another (Morgaine, 1994). The dominant culture group in the United States is Whites.

The number of Whites who hold higher level administrative positions in community colleges is much greater than any other ethnic group. Asian Americans, and particularly Asian American females, are the smallest in numbers when looking at those who hold the positions of vice president and president in community colleges. It appears that no one questions this hegemony. Yet, when a comparison is made between the percentages of White students to Asian American students, more Asian Americans should hold the positions of community college presidents and vice presidents than the current percentage. The percentage of Asian American higher level administrators is not representative of the number of students. It is clear that as this disproportionate percentage is not questioned as the number of Asian American females holding community college presidencies has been consistently three from 1994 to 2004.

Emancipation is the social justice that allows a dominated group to be given equality (Bredo & Feinberg, 1982a; Morgaine, 1994). Given the existence of hegemony in community colleges of Asian American females as not being able to lead, emancipation of Asian American females in the arena of vice presidential and presidential positions needs to occur. The information uncovered by this research could allow for the beginning of emancipation for Asian American females to occur as people hear that so few hold the positions of vice president and president.

My role as researcher brings forth a greater awareness of the hegemony that exists in community colleges and the need for the emancipation of Asian American females. In doing so, I am a change agent that is acknowledged by critical race theory

(Bredo & Feinberg, 1982b) to further explore and bring forth valuable information to change the current institutional community college structure.

In addition, critical race theory can aid in discovering the value in the Asian American female's experiences while seeking a position of vice president or president. These experiences include their internal cultural values that could be barriers, a struggle with the pressure to acculturate, and the ongoing stereotypes and expectations of Asian American females. The information gathered in this study allows others, including other Asian American females, to hear the experiences and struggles of Asian American females who have achieved the positions of vice president and president. The few Asian American females who are presently in these leadership positions can reconstruct the existing social structure of community college administration that can be seen as an outmoded, tradition laden reality. Critical race theory allows for action and change in the existing inequalities (Comstock, 1982), in this case, allowing more Asian American females to enter and maintain the positions of community college president and vice president. Social and organizational structures are slow to change. The awareness of the current racist idea of who should lead community colleges can bring about equality for Asian American females. Critical race theory causes emancipation for the discriminated, in this case Asian American females. This study could be a change agent for future research and hiring practices.

Critical race theory is the methodology or framework by which this study can be trustworthy, acknowledging that both racial and gender inequality exists for Asian American females seeking the positions of vice president and president in community

colleges. The question of why this inequality exists can be asked. Sociologists can explain this with their theories that substantiate the existence of inequality in societies.

Theories of Inequality

Sociologists explain the existence of inequality in a society with functional analysis. Functional analysis recognizes that a society is a whole unit that is made up of several interrelated parts. These parts work together to allow the society to work or function. Emile Durkheim, a founder of functional analysis or functionalism, stated that without the interrelated parts, or the dominant and minority groups, society would be in an abnormal or pathological state (Henslin, 2004).

It appears that Asian Americans, particularly Asian American females, and other non Whites have the “role” of community college students and faculty. Whites have the “role” of community college leaders or administrators. According to functionalists, if Whites do not continue to lead our community colleges the result would be cognitive disequilibrium or unbalance. The general “American” accepts that Whites, particularly White males, will be the community college president or vice president. To see a non White female community college president would cause confusion and disbelief, since this is not the “normal” ethnicity and gender of what was envisaged.

Another sociological theory that explains why inequality exists for Asian American females in academia leadership is Karl Marx’s conflict theory. Conflict theory recognizes that there is an appearance of cooperation between groups, yet, under the surface, there is discord. This discord is due to the competition for

resources. Marx recognized the need for control and power as a class issue. The few who were in control of production had power over the many laborers (Henslin, 2004). This power and class issue can also be viewed as a power and ethnicity issue (Feagin & Feagin, 1999).

Many of the original Asian immigrants were brought to the United States as laborers. The Chinese Exclusion Act and the Gentleman's Agreement controlled the number of Asian immigrants that entered the United States. The Alien Land Laws prohibited the movement of Asian Americans from working the land to owning the land. The miscegenation laws controlled the mixing of the Asian American blood with that of Whites. Collectively, the laws of the past have demonstrated the existence of control and decision making power over Asian Americans. Today, conflict theory may explain the low number of Asian Americans, particularly females, who are community college presidents and vice presidents. There is a struggle for leadership power between the White and non White ethnic groups. This struggle, according to the functional analysis theory, is non-existent since Asian Americans, in the minds of Whites, play their part in society by continuing their status as students and faculty. There is no question that Asian Americans are not being passive and accepting their positions in which they are "allowed" to hold. Therefore, this acceptance is merely a perception of Whites.

This study will look at the struggle that Asian American females continue to wrestle as they tell their stories of the barriers and the lack of facilitators to their current positions. They were also asked to reveal, with the method of narrative

inquiry, their present day experiences includes ongoing acts of discrimination and the internal struggle to work with their cultural values.

Narrative Inquiry

The method of narrative inquiry will be used so that the experiences of Asian American vice presidents and presidents in community colleges can be heard within the framework of critical race theory. Critical race theory reveals the historical establishment of the current structure and understanding of what exists (Comstock, 1982). There is an under-representation of Asian American females and overrepresentation of White males, in vice presidential and presidential positions universities, colleges, and community colleges. By unveiling the social constraints or internal and external barriers of the current Asian American female community college leaders, other Asian American females may be able to liberate themselves. This liberation comes in the form of awareness that other Asian American females are able to lead and navigate in their daily lives while experiencing the same impact of their cultural values and actions of others. Knowing that other Asian American female leaders have similar experiences, more upcoming Asian American females could consider leading community colleges. With more Asian American females planning careers as community college presidents and vice presidents, there will be an increase in available candidates for future positions. This will then increase the number of Asian American females in community college senior leadership positions. Comstock (1982) specifies that the critical race theory that can provide a prospective that can “develop an interpretive understanding of the intersubjective meanings, values, and motives held by all groups of actors in the subjects’ milieu.” For Asian

American females, the cultural values that include humility and filial piety, as well as the gender role, and stereotyping could be counterproductive to the perceived expected abilities of a vice president or president. In order to gain a clearer understanding on the Asian American female's perception, beliefs, and values that impact career paths, this study facilitated the much needed dialogue. The dialogue, unlike an observation, allowed for a more intricate expression and interpretation that may differ from that of the dominant ideology (Comstock, 1982). The dominant ideology in higher education organizations is that of White males and females. The need for emancipation of Asian American females may be the result of such dialogues.

Narrative inquiry is the study of individuals and their stories and reported experiences. It is a fairly new method of research that is founded in the discipline of education and the historical thoughts of John Dewey. Dewey valued the experiences of individuals within the context of the situation. In other words, you cannot take experiences out of context, place, or time in that each is part of a continuum of one's past, present, and future (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

Narrative inquiry explores personal stories and experiences that allow for reflective knowledge and empowerment of those sharing their past (Creswell, 2005). In addition to the participant's stories is the relationship that developed between the author and participant. It is inevitable that the researcher's own experiences, perspective, and interpretation of the story become part of the interview and analysis (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). The key concepts of narrative inquiry are experiences of an individual, chronology of experiences, historical impact (Clandinin & Connelly,

2000), life stories, restorying, a context or place, coding of themes (Creswell, 2005), tentativeness of the story, the understanding and certainty of the actions and situation (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000), and collaboration between the researcher and participant (Creswell, 2005).

Narrative inquiry looks at the experiences of an individual that are personal and social. These experiences serve as a “lens” for understanding a person and/or situation. One experience impacts the next, thereby making them continuous and a collective perspective over a person’s lifetime. This continuum of experiences allows for a chronology from past to present to future to form. Creswell (2005) referred to this as a chronology of experiences, which Clandinin and Cortazzi (2000) referred to it as a historical impact. The Asian American female would experience each new barrier differently than the next simply because it has happened before. If the barrier was the cultural value of not promoting herself, and she was not offered the position of vice president, she may then decide to present herself differently at the next hiring opportunity. The Asian American female may decide to no longer be humble and speak to her accomplishments at the next interview for community college vice president. The Asian American female, like anyone else, would base her future endeavors and decisions on her past experiences. The method of narrative inquiry allowed for one’s historical impact or chronology to be explored.

The informal conversations that occur between individuals are life stories in that they have a beginning, middle, and an end. They also tend to have a protagonist, predicament, struggle or conflict, and a turning point or crisis (Creswell, 2005). The Asian American female is the protagonist seeking the administrative position of vice

president or president that entails encounters with situations or people who are barriers or facilitators to her career goal. The turning point for the Asian American female is the decision to continue on her career path toward vice president or president at a community college or to cease her travels or turn down another path. To cease would mean to remain in her current job or position in the hierarchy of power. To turn down another path could mean leaving academia all together. In this study, the Asian American female administrators did not go down another path. Through narrative inquiry others will hear the beginning, middle, and, possibly, the end of their journey or story.

In narrative inquiry, it is the responsibility of the researcher to “restory” the conversations so that information is gathered and placed in chronological order. In addition, the researcher must describe the setting, characters, actions, problem, and resolution. The context or places in which these stories occur is also important in narrative inquiry (Creswell, 2005). These aspects of restorying occurred in the Asian American female vice president’s and president’s stories in this study.

A challenge for the researcher is the coding of themes found in the stories (Creswell, 2005). Themes could be told in different ways utilizing different words or phrases. It is up to the researcher to ensure that these themes are not only found in each story, but a comparison between stories is made. The Asian American female vice presidents and presidents told stories that had themes of cultural values or the role of mentors or other barriers and facilitators they encountered while moving toward their current leadership positions.

The tentativeness of the story refers to one's "position" or perspective by which we experience situations and gain knowledge. This position can easily shift over time and is always open for revision (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). In this study, the position or perspective of the Asian American female president or vice president has been one that was dictated by her past in a lower position in academia. As her occupational position changed so did her experiences. What did not change is her gender and ethnicity.

Narrative inquiry also includes the understanding and certainty of the actions and situations. This key concept lends to the acceptance of other interpretations of a situation. It is also allows for possibility of alternative situations (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). The Asian American female perceived her opportunities for advancement based on the existence of role models and mentors. Her stories allow others to see her experiences and interpretations.

Narrative inquiry acknowledges that collaboration occurs between the participants and the researcher. It is important that the researcher confer with the participant in the restorying and that a negotiation of what was experienced and what is perceived is accepted by both (Creswell, 2005). Doing so allows for an accurate reflection of the experiences, along with the perception of the researcher that may allow for more details and clarity. Thus, as the Asian American female narrated her experiences, the researcher recorded and later interpreted the stories. Then both the participant and researcher agreed that the transcriptions reflected the experiences of the Asian American female administrator, and also what was heard by the researcher. Each participant's transcriptions were mailed to her along with the E-mail Member

Checking Script (see Appendix B). It must be noted that although the title of the member checking script includes the word, “e-mail,” it was agreed upon, by both researcher and participants, that in order to protect the participant’s privacy and anonymity, the transcripts should be sent via postal mail rather than e-mail. One of the participants asked that the transcripts be mailed to her residence rather than workplace to ensure that those whom she worked with would not review her responses. The other four participants were comfortable with the transcripts being mailed to her workplace. Both the participant and researcher played an active role in sharing and retelling of the career experiences of the Asian American female.

Utilizing narrative inquiry to explore the experiences of the few Asian American females who have achieved the positions of vice president or president of a community college allowed for their stories of their past to have meaning, and could bring forth important change for those looking to follow the same paths. As an Asian American female community college dean who, as the researcher, was present when the participants disclosed their experiences and told their stories there is a great likelihood that I impacted the stories told by the participants. This impact included contribution to the stories and information being omitted by the Asian American female participants. The inclusion of my stories and experiences and the inevitable impact on the information shared by the American female presidents and vice presidents is acknowledged and conventional practice when utilizing narrative inquiry. To further acknowledge the impact of the researcher on the information gathered in this study a personal disclosure is presented.

Personal Disclosure

I am Asian American. I am bicultural. I am fourth generation Chinese American and third Japanese American. My father was Chinese American and my mother was Japanese American, specifically Okinawa American. Fortunately, at the present time, the U. S. Census does differentiate between Japanese Americans from Okinawa Americans. This is not so for other Asian American groups. For many years, the census did not differentiate between any of the groups of Asian Americans. As a child, neither did I.

I was also a first generation college student, as my parents' highest educational level was high school. As a first generation college student, I learned to navigate the college culture and procedures. I earned a bachelor of science in Human Development at the University of Hawai`i at Manoa. I had not intended on going to earn a master's degree until one of my undergraduate professors suggested that I was "graduate material." At that point I applied to four graduate programs, three of which were not in Hawai`i but in the continent of the United States. I was accepted into three out of four of them and decided to attend Washington State University's Child Development program and received a Master of Arts degree. Not long after graduating, I married a Jewish, Hungarian-American and Polish-American from New Jersey. After a short stint in Ann Arbor, Michigan, and back to Pullman, Washington, we found ourselves in Honolulu, Hawai`i, where I had a position as an Assistant Professor at Kapi`olani Community College teaching human development courses. We were there for nine years and had two children who are Chinese American, Okinawa American, Hungarian American, and Polish American. We then moved to

Olympia, Washington, where I took a position of Professor and Program Coordinator of Early Childhood Education and Parent Education. After seven years, I became a Dean for Instruction at Clover Park Technical College in Lakewood, Washington. This career shift from the “good” side of teaching to the “dark” side of administration was not one that I had not planned.

My travels to several states, including several trips to New Jersey, have allowed me to experience the lived experience of being a part of the majority ethnic group (Hawai`i), but also the minority ethnic group (Washington, Michigan, and New Jersey). I have actually traveled to 28 states, but have only lived in three.

I had been teaching adults for 16 years, and have recently moved in the direction of more formal administrative leadership in the community college system as Dean of Instruction. My decision to move into a dean’s position commenced with the need to make a bigger impact, especially for those who are disadvantaged, disempowered, and disregarded. I know what it is like not be part of the dominant culture. I know what it is like to be a minority female. I know what it is like for an Asian American female to lead a community college campus through accreditation and other major college endeavors. I would eventually like to move into a vice presidency in the area of instruction. I have already experienced some of the internal and external barriers toward this career goal. This study has provided me further insight and an opportunity to be a participant researcher as I explored the barriers of those who share my gender, ethnicity and hold those upper level positions to which I aspire. The scholarly information that I contributed is non-existent in peer reviewed publications and doctoral dissertations. This research may contribute to the change in

the dominant ideology as to what minorities, especially female minorities, can achieve. It is important for me to make an attempt at changing such an ingrained ideology so that my children, particularly my daughter, will not have to encounter what I and generations before me have.

My stories added to and were confirmed by the stories of the women whom I interviewed. As Asian American females working in community colleges, we discovered that there is a very similar if not identical perspective or lens by which we interpret our experiences and stories and proposed strategies to other Asian American females who want to further understand the professional journeys in higher education.

Study Participants

The study participants were five Asian American females who were either community college presidents or vice presidents. The population from which participants were chosen was Asian American females, specifically, Chinese Americans, Filipino Americans, Korean Americans, and/or Japanese Americans, born and raised in the United States, who are currently community college presidents or vice presidents. The studies conducted by Berkel & Constantine (2005), Kim et al. (2001), and Wilking (2001) supported the decision to interview those who were Chinese American, Filipino American, Korean American, and/or Japanese American. The decision to focus on only these four Asian ethnicities was determined by the cultural value similarities (Berkel & Constantine, 2005; Kim et al. 2001; Wilking, 2001). Based on the study done by Yeh et al. (2004), the generation of the participant, with the exception of the originating generation that immigrated to the United States, did not matter. The impact of acculturation reported by Lavenda and Schultz (2001)

supported the decision to recruit participants who were not the originating generation to the United States. Those who were not a part of the immigrating generation would more likely have a lesser degree of Asian cultural values and a higher degree of biculturalism than those in the first generation (Willgerodt et al., 2002).

Previous research focused on Asian American college students (Berkel & Constantine, 2005; Kim et al., 2001) or faculty. None of the studies looked solely at vice presidents and presidents. This study disaggregated these administrators so that the experiences of the most powerful and influential college administrators could be heard.

The participants of other similar studies were administrators at two year and four year colleges (Ideta, 1996; Neilson, 2002; Shintaku, 1996; Suh, 2005; Wilking, 2001; Wong, 2002). No study looked at only community colleges senior level administrators. This study focused on participants who led community colleges. Thus, with the past research in mind, the participants in this study were community vice presidents and presidents. It is important to acknowledge that this study did not disaggregate the collected information from the participants based on their ethnicity. Even though, the point of Asian Americans always being placed in one ethnic group, and thereby making all Asian Americans the same, was not the intention of this study's researcher. Choosing to interview individuals from the four ethnic groups was substantiated by previous cultural value research that concluded a similarity based on religion, and for Filipino Americans, the cultural influence of Asian Americans (Kim et al. 2001). The decision not to report the ethnicity of individual participants was determined by the need to not reveal the identities of the few Asian American females

who are community college vice presidents and presidents. Therefore, the information gained by this study is presented as a collection of stories, rather than five distinctive interviews, told by one ethnic group that is Asian American. This reporting decision was made so that the researcher could honor the participants' request for total anonymity.

The number of possible participants was dictated by the number of Asian American females who held these leadership positions in the United States. There were three Asian American female presidents in community colleges in 2004. Based on the research findings, it was not known how many would be community college presidents in 2006, let alone how many were vice presidents. Many of the reports on the ethnicity of vice presidents included all administrators. There was no disaggregated data that I have found to determine how many Asian American females were current or past vice presidents or current presidents in community college.

It should be noted that the highest leadership positions in community colleges are sometimes not titled as presidents, therefore people who hold other titles that are comparable, such as provost or chancellor, needed to be considered as potential participants. Some community colleges do not have the title of vice president in their leadership hierarchy, but instead the "second in command" is the position of dean. Other community colleges have both the titles of dean and vice president, with the latter being higher in the hierarchy than the former. The inconsistency of these two titles, vice president and dean, caused me to recruit participants who were vice presidents and not deans to allow for a somewhat consistent level of responsibility amongst all of the vice president participants.

I engaged the assistance of friends, colleagues, and cohort classmates to forward names of those administrators whom they knew could be prospective participants. I also looked at many community college websites in an effort to locate participants. The one difficulty that hindered my ability to recruit participants is the surname of females in the United States, who either retain their maiden name or choose to change it due to marriage, does not always come from their ethnicity. Therefore, to assume that a woman is Asian American based on their last name is not infallible.

Snowball sampling (Creswell, 2005) was also utilized by asking individuals who have been identified as an Asian American female community college president or vice president for names of others who have the same ethnic, gender, and career position. On several occasions, the participants suggested others who may want to participate in the study even before I had an opportunity to ask for referrals.

Seventeen Asian American females were contacted to participate in this study (see Appendix C for E-mail and Telephone Recruitment Script). Out of these 17, one was a former colleague, and five others were personal acquaintances of my friends, colleagues, or classmates. I did not have any relationship or connection to the 11 others. Out of the 17, three of the prospective participants were not born or raised in the United States, and therefore brought the prospective participants down to 14. Out of the 14, five chose to participate in this study. These five were all acquaintances of my colleagues, friends, or cohort classmates.

I believe that because this study was sensitive in nature, asking these women about the barriers and experiences they encountered, could be potentially harmful to

their careers, being that they were still in a presidency or vice presidency, only those who had a personal connection to someone I knew were willing to trust my intentions and promise of anonymity and confidentiality.

Once the possible participants were identified, they each reviewed the Informational Letter (see Appendix D), Informed Consent Document (see Appendix E), and Guiding Research Questions (see Appendix A) sent via e-mail. Each participant sent their signed Informed Consent Document back to me, at which time I contacted by telephone or e-mail to schedule the interviews.

Face-to-face Interviews

In order to develop sense of trust and comfort, I chose to interview each participant face-to-face close to or at their work environment. I decided to go to their workplace knowing that it was a place with which they were familiar and therefore comfortable for them. I did observe a frequent occurrence at these women's workplaces: Whenever someone asked who I was and what we were doing, the participant was careful either to partially to or not disclose the reason for my visit. In the case of partial disclosure, the Asian American women did not state that I was studying the barriers and facilitators to their leadership positions. This further stressed the importance of anonymity that these women wanted to retain.

Choosing to interview the participants in a place with which they were familiar meant that I would be traveling. My travels took time and financial means as I drove or flew to four states totaling a distance of 11,292 miles.

In addition to interviewing the participant in a place familiar to her, I also chose to interview each participant twice, once informally over a meal, and once

formally at their place of work, on two consecutive days. Due to unforeseen circumstances, one participant was interviewed with a two week hiatus between the informal and formal interview. The informal interview was over breakfast or lunch for the duration of one to two hours. The time differential was dependent upon the participant's schedule. The formal interview was scheduled for two hours and was audio taped. Doing two interviews also increased the participant's level of trust of and comfort with me. To develop further a sense and trust and comfort, I encouraged each participant to ask me questions during the informal interview. They did ask me questions as we discovered some similar backgrounds, experiences, and acquaintances. I strongly believe that these breakfast and lunch "conversations" were irreplaceable by any written, telephone, or e-mail encounters as they allowed authentic, rich, and personal responses. A sense of rapport and camaraderie as fellow Asian American women in academia was commencing with similar experiences, perspectives, and challenges. I knew at the end of each second interview that the participants did reveal very personal and powerful experiences and thoughts. I knew this because of the specific subject matter that was shared, and by the confirming eye contact and nonverbal communication that transpired between me and the participants. If words were spoken, I would say that the participant said, "I made myself vulnerable to you." I answered nonverbally with a look that said, "I understand and will take care of you." By this statement I meant that I would not intentionally reveal any information that will allow the readers to identify you. I will also not include quotes that are very personal and not need to be included in this

study. Verbally, I responded by saying, “Thank you. I really appreciate your trusting me and wanting to share your experiences.”

Face-to-face interviews allowed us to converse with both verbally and non-verbally. We could see each others’ reactions, eyebrows rise, slight smiles, and tears of sadness or melancholy. I say “each others’” because this narrative inquiry allowed us to share stories, frustrations, and perspectives that come with being Asian American women in leadership positions in academia.

I transcribed all of the formal interviews for two reasons. One reason was to keep the women’s identities anonymous on the rare chance that someone asked to do this task would recognize their voices or places of work. The second reason was to put me back “in the moment.” Listening to the audio taped conversations reminded me of my thoughts and emotional reactions that transpired during those insightful hours where bonds and connections were developed. The transcriptions were sent to each participant by postal mail.

Participants were instructed to review the transcriptions and edit, add to, or delete any of the statements that had been recorded during the interviews. None of the participants changed any wording. One participant sent back clarifications of dates and acronyms. The review of the transcripts allowed for member checking.

Human Subjects-Institutional Review Board and Remaining Ethical

Consideration of the human subjects was acknowledged and therefore this study was reviewed by a governing body prior to its commencement. This study was approved by Oregon State University’s Institutional Review Board (see Appendix F for Institutional Research Board Approval Letter). I abided by the *Human Research*

Handbook (Oregon State University, 2002) to ensure that I conducted the research in an ethical manner. This ethical manner included the informing the participants of my research and the “risks,” “benefits,” and their rights which included their decision to withdraw from the study at any time. The participants were also told that they could ask questions and receive feedback at any time before, during, and after the study (Locke, Spirduso, & Silverman, 2000). As mentioned previously, all five participants completed the informed consent document, and were encouraged to contact me with any questions or concerns.

Anonymity. Anonymity of the subjects was a very important assurance that I gave each of the five participants. Doing so was not only due to my need to remain ethical, but also protect the identities of the participants and keep a promise that I had made.

The Informed Consent Document asked each participant if she wanted to utilize a pseudonym so that her identity would not be revealed in all transcribed and reported information. All five of the participants requested that I utilize a pseudonym. As my study progressed, I came to realize that utilizing a pseudonym would not guarantee them anonymity. There are so few Asian American female community college presidents and vice presidents. If each woman’s statements were identified as “hers” or a particular pseudonym, there is a great chance that the reader may be able to identify that Asian American president or vice president. To further protect the identities of the participants, the reader will find that there is no consistency in the order of the presentation of the quotes as answers to the Guiding Research Questions.

At the participants' requests, the researcher did not identify the institutions at which they worked, nor the cities or states in which they reside. The level of anonymity that is maintained in this study testifies to the small number of Asian American females who are community college presidents and vice presidents. It also testifies the degree to which these women's stories and statements are confidential and personal. The reader of this study should not attempt to identify the person who is being quoted. What is important is that the perspectives, experiences, and challenges of these women be voiced and acknowledged as existing and having occurred. Asian American female presidents and vice presidents need to be heard.

Stories and Themes

In keeping with the method of narrative inquiry I utilized the participants' stories that were told during the interviews. I looked for any themes that were apparent in the participants' stories as well as those that appeared among several participants' responses. Some of these themes appeared in the initial interviews or conversations. Others appeared or continued to appear in the second interviews where the predetermined or follow up questions were asked.

As with any narrative inquiry, attention was paid to the continuity of the experiences as well as the time and place (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). One's experiences, barriers, and facilitators will be acknowledged for the collective impact on the Asian American female. In addition, the themes associated with the participants' acculturation and biculturalism will be noted. If the experience was a one time occurrence, then it is possible that it did not affect the thoughts and actions

of the participants. Yet, this assumption is only that, an assumption. An experience could have a lifetime effect.

It should be noted that because these interviews were qualitative and narrative in approach, the questions were not limited to the study's primary research questions. Other questions included the Guiding Research Questions as well as others that were determined by the conversations with the Asian American female vice presidents and presidents. In addition, the conversations included the questions and inquires made by the participants. Such reciprocal questions are a part of the narrative inquiry method of research.

Acknowledging when an event occurred, or where it occurred, are important aspects in the retelling of a story (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). It will be important to acknowledge if the experiences occurred early in one's career pathway or more recently. It was also important to determine if the experiences occurred at work or home. Time and place revealed further information that led to understanding the experiences of these females. Both concepts put the story into context.

Another aspect of narrative inquiry that was considered was the impact of the relationship between the researcher and the participants (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). It is important for both the interviewer and participant to be comfortable so that a level of confidentiality can be developed. This comfortable relationship can also impact the kind of story the participant tells as well as what is reported by the researcher. I believe this was especially so in my situation, where there was a great likelihood that my experiences were similar to the participants'. This similarity might have allowed participants to have more self-disclosure, but also more bias on my part

when interpreting the information. Narrative inquiry allows for my experiences to add to the participants' experiences and become part of the final "story" told (Creswell, 2005). In any event, it is important to ensure that the participants felt comfortable with the information they tell.

Strategies to Ensure the Soundness of Data and Analysis

Trustworthiness of the themes and experiences found in the information gathered from the participants occurred through the process of transcript review by the participants or member checking (Creswell, 2005). As mentioned earlier, the participants did not change the transcriptions with the exception of one individual who corrected dates and clarified acronyms.

While it is important to have brought forth the experiences of the participants, especially in a case where emancipation was sought, it is also important to respect their privacy (Gross, 2004) and thereby allowing the participants to review and edit the transcribed materials. Soundness of information as well as respect toward the participants was maintained.

Another concern when collecting data through narrative inquiry was the reliance on a participant's memory. Clandinin and Connelly (2004) bring clarity to the possibility by stating that one's memory is indeed fact, no matter what transformations have occurred, as long as the degree of disguise is minimal. One's memories become their autobiography and therefore they remain as fact rather than fiction. Clandinin and Connelly note that narrative inquiry is trustworthy approach by stating, "a good narrative (has) an explanatory (and) invitational quality, authenticity,

adequacy, and plausibility.” These Asian American females told stories were clear and unwavering, supporting the statement that their memories did not falter.

Summary of Methodology and Research

This chapter introduced the methodology of critical race theory and research method of narrative inquiry. It also presented the researcher’s personal disclosure and the steps that were taken to complete the collection and analysis of the data. The theoretical framework and methodology allowed for this qualitative research to be a valid research study of Asian American females who are community college vice presidents and presidents. The steps to complete the data collection and analysis, as well as the researcher’s personal disclosure, were presented to permit a more sound presentation of the findings and interpretations of the experiences of these women. To explore the experiences of community college Asian American female vice presidents and presidents, questions about their perceived barriers and facilitators were asked. The responses of the five Asian American female presidents and vice presidents allowed the researcher to have an unambiguous insight into their past and present encounters, challenges, and successes. These responses are presented in Chapter Four.

Chapter Four

The Stories and Responses of Five Asian American Female Community College Leaders

They named him Momotaro, or Son of a Peach, because of the way he had come to them.... One day Momotaro came to his foster parents and said solemnly, "Your goodness to me has been higher than the mountain and deeper than the sea. I do not know how to thank you enough." "Why," answered the old man, "it is a matter of course that parents should bring up their son. When you are older it will be your turn to take care of us" (Haviland, 1967, p56).

The above quote from the Japanese folktale, *Momotaro*, tells of the cultural value of filial piety by which many Asian Americans abide. This cultural value includes all family members, especially Asian American mothers who have a deep rooted need to take care of both their children and aging parents. This chapter presents the "conversations" and "stories" of five Asian American female vice presidents and presidents in community colleges. Included in the conversations and stories is the discussion of cultural values and how much they determined these women's career decisions, leadership styles, and pathways to their current positions.

With so few Asian American females having the position of community college president or vice president, it is important to present all of their views and responses where it is applicable. As mentioned in Chapter Three, it is important to preserve the identity of these women, and therefore the information presented will be in a collective manner with no order based on the individual. Yet, to visually differentiate between individual responses, the Asian "yin-yang" symbol is utilized. The yin-yang symbol has its origins in Chinese philosophy. The two figures that make up the symbol represent opposing sides or forces. For this dissertation, the yin-

yang symbol represents the biculturalism of Asian American women. The yin or dark figure is the feminine or the Asian cultural values of the participants. The yang or light figure is the masculine or the “American” cultural values of the participants.

As mentioned previously in Chapter Three, the narrative approach of this study allowed for the spontaneity that stemmed from the primary questions asked by the researcher. It also allowed for the responses or stories of the researcher during the interview or conversation to impact and become part of the research findings or themes. The responses received in the interviews are presented after each primary and follow up questions. Following the responses are the stories that were told by the five women.

Questions, Responses, and Stories

To understand better the backgrounds of and values by which the participants “navigate” their daily experiences the question of cultural values was discussed. The participants emphasized several Asian cultural values. These values were filial piety and harmony. Others that were brought up were a strong work ethic, the importance of what others think of you, being non confrontational, working collaboratively, and the importance of education. Several of the interview questions are presented in this chapter. As a narrative study, many questions, including follow up questions, were asked and explored. It is only the primary “guiding” questions that are presented in this chapter (see Appendix A for list of Guiding Research Questions). Following each interview question are the quotes from the Asian American female vice presidents and presidents.

What are your cultural values?

I think in some ways I have come to value my Japanese roots more in these years than I did when I was growing up. Of course when I was real small growing up I thought, no I don't want to be Japanese. My parents made me go to Japanese school but they couldn't make me learn. Now I regret that I did not pay more attention in Japanese school.

To be steadfast, not to push, not shaming, being modest, not necessarily modesty, but modest in what you can do. Being other directed, picking up cues of what's going to be done by other people....Hardworker. Shikataganai, this is the way it is it keeps going on, endure.... Reciprocity, gift giving is huge. I think where I might not have it as much as my Mom, it does influence the way I interact with people and work people too. Can't ever take, and it might not be a gift, or expect something from someone else if you can't reciprocate.

If I didn't work hard (I) didn't do my best....It gets back to doing 250%. On the other hand if you are not doing 250% others are going to think poorly of me.



I know I have a strong work ethic....Success is never accomplished on your own, never done by yourself....Learning and knowledge, no one can take that away from you....Family is more important than anything....your job is your job, your family is your family. You lose your family you never regain that.

You don't admit you have problems. You know the Japanese term called gamat. My mother taught me well, you grin and bear it. The other one is shikataganai.

My mother had taken care of the kids. His "baby" was the (family) business. We (participant and her sibling) had competed for the attention of my dad because of the (family business). He was there all the time. He was nurturing it, caring for it, making sure it was growing and developing well. My (sibling) and I struggled with that.

My father and my mom believe that the only way you can accomplish

anything is to become educated formally and informally.



I think in some ways I have come to value what I think of my Japanese roots more in these years than I did when I was growing up....One of them is responsibility to the community....It is one reason why I find community college mission so compatible with me, that sense of responsibility, that uh, you do your best. Whatever you are going to....undertake it then by god you are going to do the best you can.

You are never going to put someone in the position of having to say no to you. In other words, it is a very non-confrontational value....you don't spend the whole time confronting each other to get your own way....You are suppose to help. And it's not just bottom up, it is top down. Um ah, obligation on the part of the top to look out for, to take care of (those you supervise). I should tell my boss that [chuckle]. I left the workforce when I had my child and I stayed out for a year and a half...The end result of the impact has been good looking at the long term....I think my son sacrificed as much in a sense for our (participant and spouse) careers as much as we sacrificed for him. He grew up literally on (the) campus.

The ability to compartmentalize. We talk about that as a Japanese society necessity....I've learned to wall off, this is work, this is my life. I work long hours but when I get home and I close that door, I literally close out the world. It's not there....That is why I stay here late. I prefer to stay here till 10 o'clock trying to finish something up that has to be done than to take it home to work on it. Because I don't want to cross contaminate [chuckle].

There was never a question in my mind that I would go on to college and I would continue on if that is what I wanted.



(I) don't have children so (I) have more options. I have to take care of my mother, but I don't have children who are going to school or college. Independent facility....I think it was important for us for family. But I know that other people, like they would never have allowed their mother to leave....They would be a part of the family to come live. So I know that that part is different, because we have been more influenced by the White influence.

Education...I think education is still, you know, important.



I think I have been able to break the existence of cultural values in me only because I don't think I am typical. I moved away from home as soon as I had "wings." I was of age, I was out of there. I had a mother who left the family and went to (another state) to study. And probably would have stayed (in that state). She was an very independent person got her nursing training....Most of my friends' mothers were housewives or did not work outside of the home. My mom always did. We (myself and sibling) often found ourselves home alone with my grandmother because of obligations to the job. I did not feel we were raised in a typical Asian home.

It is just the way I choose to live and I never associated personally with my being Asian or female, and it's just the sign of the time as just who I am....I never lived my life that way.

(My husband) kind of raised the girls, because I was on some sort of career track and I didn't like staying home....I'm fine with it. He's fine with it. They are fine with it....So my goal, part of it was to support him, so he can quit working. I kind of took pride in doing that, part of it was because it wasn't what people expected, that's all. I liked the idea of being distinct from that.

I really restrain myself in terms of showing my true emotions. I always get comments on how I maintain my composure, and part of that is that I was a female and how I was brought up.....I believe in collaboration....don't make waves.

The cultural values that the five Asian American female vice presidents and presidents identified with included family or filial piety, collaboration and non confrontation or harmony. As for filial piety, the emphasis was on the impact of being a parent in the earlier years of their career paths when their children were younger. The women's emphasis on family meant that some jobs were not accepted, residential moves were made, and other sacrifices made, which slowed down or temporarily changed their career paths. The filial piety, for the most part, did not include the obligations these women felt toward their aging parents. It did transfer to their

understanding of the employees' family situations. For a couple of the participants, filial piety was understood when family situations impacted her staff. As one of the women stated, "your job is your job; family is family."

One of the participants discussed her Asian cultural values of collectivism and self-control. Collectivism reflected that individual's style of leadership and decision making. Self-control reflected that individual's need not to demonstrate her emotions, especially when they experienced frustration or disappointment.

There is a consistency in the Asian cultural values that were reported by the participants with the findings of other researchers. Wilking's (2001) study found that Asian American female college presidents value filial piety just as this study's five Asian American female community college leaders. The cultural values of harmony and non confrontation were also consistent with that of Kim et al. (2001), Berkel and Constatine (2005), and Yeh et al. (2004). The other values that were found in some of this study's participants were collectivism and self-control. This finding is consistent with Kim et al's (2005) study. This study did not find that the participants valued humility unlike Kim et al's (2005) study.

The navigation through one's daily life also includes the combining of two cultures, that is, the Asian culture and the "American" culture. This combining or being bicultural stems from a generational change of one's cultural values. All five of the Asian American women were not part of their ethnicity's originating immigrating group to the United States, therefore they all had responses to the question on being bicultural.

Do you find that you are bicultural in your behavior and expectations at work and home?

I don't know if it's my personality, I just like being the boss. I was always the bossy one. But you know when I go back (home), I take my place as the youngest one....People laugh at us, (at work) I am so bossy, and yet at home, ah, I'll make the dinner for my husband. I don't know about you but they think it is funny, you know (participant), she is the boss, but at home we know that (her husband) is the boss.



One of the things that my (siblings) and I have discussed, all of us are fairly successful in our careers. So when we get together we forget that we have a different status with each other. So when it is time to drive, we all go to the driver's seat, literally. We all want to lead. The kind of respect we've earned in the workplace, we don't act the same at home, but we try to transfer that power.

I am....very process oriented which I think mainstream dominant culture are product oriented....there is disconnect. There seems to be much more of a group think (in the Asian culture). I'm not sure if it's not related to the Nisei going into the internment camp where parents had no authority anymore, especially the fathers who were not the "breadwinners" anymore.



I see that is quite true. While I play, do the dance at work, in management, win-win and all that important stuff, I do recognize how often the decisions have to be made. We've talked enough, let's go. I think if you ask my husband, the thing that most frustrates him the most, when he says, "Where do you want to go tonight?" "What do you want to do?" "What do you want to eat?" It's like, at home, I make enough decisions (at work) all day long.



With family I am (bicultural). I think it's not just bicultural as is being the (Asian) daughter....When I am home with them (it) is because I am cooking dinner for them and serve my father. My dad is very traditional. He will sit at the table and read (while) mom's running around.

Expectations of my father with me, because I am the daughter, (that) I should be helping my mom and mom should be helping me. The difference....is that (at work) I try to be helpful, and sometimes I need to delegate.

It is interesting to note that all five of the participants demonstrated biculturalism. At work these women were decisive leaders with positions of power and responsibility. Their actions often differed based on the environment in which they were during the decisions. The women's family members, spouses, parents, and siblings, experienced an Asian American community college vice president or president who was not directive, or allowed their family members to make the decisions. No matter what environment these women found themselves, they were always aware of their identities as Asian American females. This also held true as they decided to advance their careers into higher leadership positions in community colleges.

Four of the five Asian American female community college leaders discussed the negative impact of their physical appearance. This negative impact was the assumptions that hiring decision makers, and other staff members of the community college made about their leadership ability and reasons as to why they were chosen to lead the institutions.

What is your experience as an Asian American female when seeking advancement to a leadership position?

I spent 30 years in (a state in which Asian Americans were the majority).. So I um, I think, until I moved to (a state in which Asian Americans were the minority)....I thought of myself as an Asian American female seeking advancement....But experiences here as an Asian American female seeking advancement to leadership positions is very very different.

When they look at you and you look different from what they are used to, and they are looking for something to kick you off (screen you out) they will.



Well I think it is sometimes very difficult to separate the gender issue from the racial issue....Did people respond to me because I was female versus that I was Asian?



I've had (experienced) through the ranks.... (the comment), "Well, there was pressure to hire you because you are, you know (Asian)." At the time it wasn't proven (that I was hired because of my ethnicity), and (yet) I felt badly and was speechless.



I've had doors opened for me by (another) Asian American female. I'm not saying that the doors may not have been open without her, but it did make a difference.



The perception of diversity is that you are not qualified. You are hiring someone for diversity and they are not qualified, that's their perception. We have to get past that.

All participants talked about the number of years that they had been employed in institution of higher education, specifically, community colleges. The range of service for these women prior to becoming a president or vice president was 20 to 30 years. During those years prior to a presidency or vice presidency, all of the women held positions that progressed through the hierarchy in the colleges. These positions include classified staff, counselor, coordinator, director, faculty, assistant dean, associate dean, dean, and vice president. One position that was common for four out of five of these leaders was faculty member.

When inquiring about the participants' career pathways, specifically, the number of times each person applied for their current position title before being hired, the response varied from one to five. In the case of one attempt, the person held the

position in an interim status and then selected as the permanent administrator after a national search. For several of the women, the question they asked themselves was whether or not they were hired solely because they were an Asian American female who qualified as a finalist in the hiring pool. The women were very aware of their gender and ethnicity, and the impact of their physical appearance on those making the hiring decisions as well as others in the community colleges.

Do you think that your ethnicity or gender affected the hiring process that you experienced?

Well, I think it is a double whammy when you are a female and an Asian....I think it could be a disadvantage....And it is also very different, I think depending on what Asian group, whether you are a national or international or not....So I would say more that I am in an environment, even though they might speak about diversity or whatever, they don't walk the talk. Being an Asian and being a woman didn't have anything to do with how well I thought I could do the job....It's irrelevant people!

We might not be the right color. We are so assimilated.



(There are) people who already assumed because you are a woman and not White....and anything you do wrong they say, "see, right." Whereas if you are a White male and fumble it is not a problem. Someone is questioning your hiring anyway. When something goes wrong people have a tendency to point those things out.

The Asian community (came) together over the fact that I am a vice president is wonderful....to say, we need a strong voice. They brought the assembly people, the senators, the mayors from around the city, principals K-12, faculty members, staff. I doubt the Asian community has recognized what strength and power they have, not only from a political sense but an economical sense.



Yeah, I would say so. I think when you look at someone's qualifications, the fact that you have additional qualifications can be an advantage, and that is about fit, so I don't think it was the

only thing. But if it were the only thing, I would not want the job.

I'd like to think that it was more than just that (a token) that you know I have a lot of experiences with the community and legislature, that up to this point, that even though I wasn't a president, that I had experiences that presidents did....I do think the Chancellor was looking for diversity.



Yeah, I do think I was hired because I was a woman. I think it was a plus for me.



I do think that my diversity put me up front....I think there was a lot of pressure from the past board that the chancellor had also of pressure to hire a person of color....I think I was a curiosity.

The participants acknowledged that their gender and or ethnicity were factors in being hired for their current positions. One of the participants went even further with her response by commenting on the impact of her faulty decisions. When errors or failures occur, according to one Asian American female, it is an opportunity to say that the leader should be a non Asian male, because he would not have made such mistakes. She felt that errors of White males are not attributed or attached to their ethnicity or gender.

The Asian American female's awareness of the impact of her gender and ethnicity on others continues beyond the hiring process. After she has attained the leadership position, she continues to be aware of the effect of her physical appearance. In addition, the Asian American female recognizes that her cultural values may not have allowed her to consider the career pathway to a community college vice president or president.

Have you found that your ethnicity and gender has determined your experiences during your career pathway to a higher level administrator?

I wouldn't have necessarily thought of it (being a president or vice president) myself, ah, if (my mentor) hadn't had faith in me, if she hadn't seen something in me, that I never really thought of for myself....I don't know if that is particular to Asian(s) or anything like that...I would never thought of it on my own. I think that it is too bad, if it is totally dependent upon someone else to see it in you rather than seeing it in yourself. I don't know if it is culturally or seeing more role models or having it more attention paid by organizations to encourage women, especially minority women, to think about leadership positions. Because despite how capable they may be, it doesn't always enter your consciousness that this would be a good career for you.



I don't think I actively sought advancement to different positions, I think things sort of just came to me... A lot of women in community college administration, we just find the path and start going down there. Like Mike (researcher's mentor) said, "this would be good Marcia, why don't you do that. "



In every place someone "planted the seed" (made the suggestion to go into administration). It wasn't something that I wanted to do. Some said, here is a job, you can do it. And I said okay.



I have been given some opportunities that others may not have only because they wanted to have (minority) representation at X, so it has opened some opportunities for me. On the other hand you get really feeling over used and tired.

There were three experiences that these women point out as the result of their being Asian Americans and female. One of these experiences was their unintended career choice of community college leader. These women did not see themselves as community college vice presidents or presidents. It took another individual, typically

a mentor or supervisor, to encourage them to consider such leadership positions. The second experience recognized was the acknowledgment that it is advantageous to be an Asian American female. This advantage allowed for opportunities that were positive career experiences. The third type of experience meant that the respondents had to represent all diversity groups because so few leaders of color exist. This representation is not possible since an individual who is one or two or even four Asian American ethnicities, could not represent all non White groups let alone all Asian American groups. Being asked to be the college's non White representative can be exhaustive and demeaning. As one of the participants stated, "Yeah, they put me on the diversity committee. I stopped attending."

In addition to the Asian American females' hiring and career ascent the specific barriers or obstacles placed "in front" of them were discussed.

Do barriers to attaining the position of community college president or vice president exist for Asian American females?

I think barriers exist in the stereotypes of Asians. I was just talking to a friend yesterday (and) she feels that (employees of the college) don't treat me the right way, and you know Marcia, no words came out of my mouth. I didn't say it. It begins with F and rhymes with luck. But I didn't say it. And then I said it....They think that because (they) are taller than I am and (they) are White, that (they) gang up on me, and they don't understand that I have never felt that way.

The (former) President....was really tall, like 6 feet 5 inches. One day we had a groundbreaking for the new building. And a colleague said, (pointing the participant out to the President) "Have you met (the participant name)?" (The former President), "Oh yes, I met her when I came in." I thought, he didn't meet me. He is thinking that I am the secretary. Then we had a foundation event. He (attended). (A colleague) said (to the former President), this is (the participant name), Vice President for Instruction. (The former President) looked shocked. Like oh you are kind of funny, but I was thinking you sexist racist pig. I know how you would think.



I always wished that I was taller....There is that impression you get, that impression with the petite, that Asians are petite, and well the nice part is emphasized, physically we are non threatening because given the stereotype, we are non threatening, and given certain functions, that I will wear my highest heels that I have....You know, I can't dwell on things because I know I will get sucked into the negative aspects of it. I try not to do that. I try to remain as positive as I can. So it might bother me and then I try to learn how to adjust and move on.

In a position like this, some of the people of color here at this institution are upset because they don't feel that I did not get enough or the proper respect from....faculty....I think when they hired me this institution was in shock when they hired me because I was so different....They (were).... moseying along, (I) appeared, and I was seen as the big bad wolf or the grandmother.

Sometimes I play up to the roles that people expect me to have as an Asian female. I play it out depending on what I want to get out of the situation. If the opportunity presents itself for me to play out the stereotype then I will. But I have to see some benefit of it. I just won't play out the stereotype.



Overall it is our kind of conceptual barrier to seeing ourselves in leadership position(s). That is the only real barrier to make things happen. We just don't think about it.

I'm taller than my mother. I am taller than my siblings. I grew up thinking I was tall....It has come up jokingly among the chancellors fairly often.



Because you are going to show that it had nothing to do with (being an Asian American female), and that you are really capable, and blah, blah, blah.

We hired a Japanese American man....Some people commented on that he wasn't strong enough, wasn't decisive enough.

We may not see ourselves that way (as a vice president or

president)...And so, when we might feel left out, we may not choose to do things that are usually necessary to help one pave the way....We don't have many role models as Asian American males who have started the pathway....I don't think people necessarily think of us as though there is issues of mentoring that guide you along or that you get inspired by.

I try to raise the chairs so that I am tall as (non Asians). When I have a meeting I am looking around for a chair, and (non Asians) ask what are you doing, and I say I am trying to be as tall as you.



I think sometimes (non Asians) do not know how to treat you. They have stereotypically looked at you the immediate reaction is that they formulated that. I think when they sit down with you then it is a whole different thing. There is that old movie, where the Japanese American, someone says to him, "Oh you speak English very well." And the Japanese American says, "Berkley, 1967. I surprise you?" I think there are a lot of still some of those people who ask those very incredibly insensitive questions. They ask you where you are from? I say, "(the U.S. city I was born)." "No, where are you from?" "You mean my forefathers?" "Where are you from originally?"I try to educate them. I think there are subconscious barriers. Also the very subconscious that goes on in people's minds about Asians. We are such a different culture from China to Japan to Vietnam to Korea for anybody to clump us together is outrageous and we know that happens....I think people are shocked when you speak up....the eye contact....The way you carry yourself. Is it submissive or diminutive in manner?....Are you unscrupulous?....Are you doing things that we can't trust....You know those stereotypes are there.

I think the height thing is dependent upon on how you deal with it. You get overlooked when you walk in the room. There is no doubt about that. When everyone else is taller than you, you get overlooked. That means you have to do other things to be seen. You have to speak a little more clearly, you got to articulate. You have a presence that other people don't who are being seen. People larger than you because they are obese will be seen first, than someone who is slight. It takes time (to know me), a little more time. That's okay, I want people to take time to get to know me. I tell folks that people do not remember what you say and they do not remember what you do. They remember how you make them feel. And once they remember what they feel, then they will remember what you said.

Although the short stature of the majority of Asian American females lends them to invisibility by non Asians, the descriptor of “cute” or “Asian doll” and physical harassment by others occurs. “Some of them put their arms around me....Some of them think I am cute and small.” One of the participants mentioned that she made the statement, “Do you want me to come to your classroom and be a cute little Asian doll?,” as a comment that she has heard in the past referring to how some non Asians view Asian females.

Yet, this “invisibility” and “cuteness” also lends itself to be memorable because there are so few Asian American females, particularly in academic administration, as one of the women stated, “They remember you and you don’t remember them.” Or, the non Asians mistake the Asian American female for another Asian American female. In the latter case, a person’s facial features become blurred to the non Asian. To a non Asian, the physical characteristics of a specific individual are not differed from others. Thus, the mistaken identity frequently occurs.

Another barrier that was mentioned by several of these women was one that can be considered an internal barrier. This internal barrier is not thinking of oneself as a leader. If you do not see yourself as a leader then you will not take steps towards such a career position.

Despite of the barriers that exist for Asian American females, they continue to preserve and recognize the facilitators or aids that exist. The facilitators for Asian American female community college vice presidents and presidents include individuals, parents, educational attainment, leadership institutions, and good luck.

Do facilitators that aid in breaking down the barriers to attaining a position in higher level administration in community college exist for Asian American females?

Role Models

People don't know that there are role models. You view them from afar and respect and admire them....I think the political figures in this community (names of two Asian American women)are amazing. They are in a position that they are and they are role models. They are role models for the Asian women in this community.



I think they exist but we need to seek them out....It is hard to find a role model because there is so few of us....My father used to coach little league. My mother would be my homeroom mom. I think they tried to (be leaders), you know, as much as they could.



As I was growing up, I think one reason why I don't acknowledge a lot of limits is because I look at my mother. She was a business woman, a business owner long before we had the minority small business special loans or special categories and you get special help. She was a small business owner when it was hard to be a small business owner. And she became a single parent when my father died I was in seventh grade.... She never let any of that stop her ever....She definitely had a tremendous impact on my sense of being able to do what ever I set out to do. She has also had a tremendous (impact) on my on my sense of needing to do my best, being a service to the community. These are all things that came from her.



There is no one person who I see doing good work. That in the community I see relating to faculty, there is not a person. Part of that is my thing, where I don't believe anyone is perfect. [Chuckle]. I'm never going to find that perfect leader. It is highly situational. I am going to always strive for good leadership or what I think leadership should be. But I am not going to spend my time looking for him or her.

I had a mother who left the family....to study. She would have stayed (there). She was a very independent person and got her nursing training. While all of my friends'mothers were housewives or did not work outside of the home. My mother always did. From then, even prior to my being born,

my (sibling) being born, we often found ourselves home alone with my grandmother because of her obligations to the job. I did not feel we were raised in a typical Asian home.



(Asian American female leaders) don't have role models as Asian American males who have started the pathway. I don't know if I am unique. We need to figure out a pathway.

My mother was a leader, volunteer of the church. For a long time (she) did not lead because she had me....She did high school PTA, junior high PTA, and elementary PTA, and all these, I don't know how many times (she) helped the women of the church....She was a leader in that way....She put her desires on hold, especially with the internment, reinforcing the women and the children....(My parents) heavily influenced how I think about things. The heavy obligation from my mother and liberal thinking of my father.

Mentors

I think I had a number of mentors, and they were all people I admired and they were people I thought were really sincere in helping me.... Most of them are White male(s).



I don't have any Asian American women that I have asked to mentor me....I had people who said (they) should be (my mentors), but they were not able to mentor me, maybe because they couldn't mentor me, one because I didn't accept them, mainly because they were White males, and they couldn't relate to things that were important to me....I didn't know any Asian Americans, women of color naturally, besides being the vice president. We didn't have any people at all in senior level in our institution.



I don't have a lot of mentors or role models who are Asian women, so it is harder.



Well I have women who have been mentors to me, strong women.... Mentoring to me (is) setting the bar, helping people see themselves and visualizing where they can be. All (my mentors) have done that for me.

Leadership Training

There are formal facilitators and organizations that are formed...Asians don't come together. They don't develop networks. They don't develop support systems and what they need. Those individuals who are able to do that, ethnic groups or divide along gender lines or professionally, they then are capable of moving up faster because there are support systems. There is strategy to that....Formally....those organizations do become the facilitator or aid in breaking down those barriers. Breaking down the barriers that are out there.



I just thought that if you are good, you get what you deserve. That is the kind of attitude that connections don't matter, that was ingrained in me as a child.... So I think in part, the Asian American female....(needs to attend) groups like the Kaleidoscope group where they are talking to women about how to be, to some degree unfortunately, somewhat like a White woman or White male. How to dress. I was really innocent not realizing how many people learn how to interview for presidency.

Luck and Advancing in One's Career

It's a crapshoot. I have been in the enough processes to know that it is a crapshoot. And if it is meant to be it will happen, and if not it won't. And because I am faithful, I tell myself, God will watch over me, it's not in his plan then I won't go (to that community college).



Oh I think sometimes it is serendipitous. I think that does play a role. I think it fits....Right place, right time....So when you say timing or luck, I think it is about luck. Luck is about timing and place, things falling into place....I think you have control over picking the right time and place. You have control over being prepared....So I think access and equity is about preparation and opportunity. If you are not prepared and the opportunity isn't available, then you will never have access. But you have certain amount of control over the preparation. And that is what you have to deal with. And when you do and the opportunities are available, then you can take advantage of it.



To me, good fortune and good luck is simply recognizing the opportunity in whatever the circumstances, what ever comes your way

and recognizing it. And that becomes good fortune. Which is not to say that there have not been times when I said, "Wow, look at how everything fell together." By and large, I have always felt like it was up to me, how I take any given circumstance. I can make it positive or I can let it go. And if I really want something, it is my responsibility to make it happen. So I guess in that sense, good luck and good fortune, chance is always there, chance is always important part, happenstance is always a important part of your life, but it is your ability to see the opportunity and to grasp it.



I am not superstitious. Superstitious is not the right word. I do believe the Japanese and Presbyterians are kind of aligned with a turbulence in their relations.... Luck has happened to other people. I am not envious of that. It is just like, did they set it up themselves, or are they in the right place at the right time?...I am responsible for my own destiny to a degree. And it is probably more in relationship if I didn't work hard, didn't do my best, it's not going to go my way.

Parents' Educational Achievements

Both of my parents.... have a high school degree. My mother has a high school degree that she got in the (internment) camp. Once dad got out (of the internment camp), got a technical degree...studied hard and (received) a professional engineering license. When I think about the two of them, it is amazing what they have accomplished.

Asian American Females' Educational Achievement

I started a doctorate but personally other things have happened. And do I want to do this, (earn a doctorate), or do this (another activity)? I want to do something else which meant that I wasn't going to go to graduate school at the time.



I didn't see anything that I wanted to do with a Ph.D. And I wasn't, I was teaching already with a master's....I was actually in a tenure track position but wouldn't get tenure without a Ph.D. Even with that I didn't see any, there wasn't any drive in me to go and get it.... It was never an issue with respect to the position, so probably in the future (of upcoming leaders) it will become an issue....I just never felt the need. I just never felt the need. The timing and the practicality. After I had my son, what was it going to do for me?

The Asian American females identified and elaborated on the facilitators to breaking down the barriers that exist when traveling the path towards a community college vice presidency or presidency. These facilitators were role models, mentors, leadership training, good luck, parents' education, and their own education.

Role models in academia are difficult to find since there are so few Asian American female presidents and vice presidents in higher education. For all of the participants, their parents, particularly their mothers, were identified as role models. Although the parents were not community college leaders, they did demonstrate leadership skills and characteristics that participants emulated both in their philosophy of living and daily work.

Mentors were defined as individuals who the Asian American female respected and admired. Mentors also assisted in visualizing the future career paths for the participants. With so few Asian American community college vice presidents and presidents the participants reported having mentors who were White and male.

Leadership training was also identified as a facilitator to breaking down barriers. The skills and opportunities that leadership institutes teach and offer include interviewing and networking. Although the importance of leadership training was acknowledged, it was also noted that the manner by which they are currently organized and conducted is not appealing to many Asian Americans.

Luck in advancing one's career was also a facilitator for most of the women. Instead of referring to "luck" or "good luck" the women used the terms "happenstance" and "serendipity" and defined it as being in the "right place" at the

“right time.” More importantly was the need to be prepared as far as one’s educational attainment, job experience, and skills, when the career opportunity arose. In other words, the Asian American female did not attribute success solely to luck, rather, their professional experience warranted the position of vice president or president.

Other facilitators that were identified were the Asian American females’ parents education and her own educational attainment. All of the participants’ parents saw the importance of having an education beyond a high school degree although not all were able to complete their high school education. Some of the parents did earn bachelor’s degrees and other professional training certifications. No matter what the level of education the parents earned, the participants’ parents stressed the importance and expectation of their daughters’ college education.

All of the daughters did receive a baccalaureate and master’s degree. Not all of the participants obtained a doctoral degree. The words, “not practical,” were stated a few times, referring to the time and need for such a degree. Not all of the participants found the opportunity to earn a doctorate when it presented itself or never thought it would impact their career. The women either had family obligations that prevented them from earning a doctorate or had not planned to be a community college vice president or president. Thus, if their career did not require her to have a doctorate, the participants did not see any need to continue her education, it was not practical.

Whatever the career paths the participants took, they each imparted words of advice to other Asian American females.

What advice do you have for other Asian American females seeking higher level administrative positions?

You might want to think about the pathway and it might come faster. Like the choices you might make....The other thing is that we don't have a lot of cheerleaders; we don't have people paying our way, so still we are going to have to make it happen....Follow your passion.



Be okay with who you are. There is an advantage to who and what you are and use that. I think that....my height, how people perceive me, there is an advantage.



If you have gotten to the point where you actually think....I want this, then you have passed all the barriers that there are. There is no reason why you can't or why you shouldn't....I have felt for myself, there isn't a limit and it isn't just me. If you want it you can do it....If you want it will happen.

These women give other Asian American females more than a sense of hope, but also the perspective that she has the right and capability to be a community college leader. A major step identified by the Asian American female leaders was to for the women to see themselves as community college leaders. Do not wait for another individual to make the suggestion or tell you that you should become a community college leader. Asian American females can and do become community college presidents and vice presidents therefore, others should make it their career goal long before mentors and role models make the suggestion.

Summary of the Stories of Five Asian American Female College Leaders

The conversations in which the participants engaged revealed their perspectives and experiences. The stories they told included their childhood memories and individuals they have encountered along their career pathways,

including spouses, children, colleagues, supervisors, and staff members. The participants were very strong and independent individuals, with stories that include strong perspectives and attitudes. The perspectives and attitudes included the cultural values, awareness and being reminded of their gender and ethnicity, and the impact of their role models and mentors. The experiences of these women included their daily actions that demonstrated their biculturalism, long career pathway, and the negative experiences of being stereotyped, harassed, and unnoticed. A visual summary of the facilitators and barriers that Asian American female presidents and vice presidents experienced is presented in Figure 3.

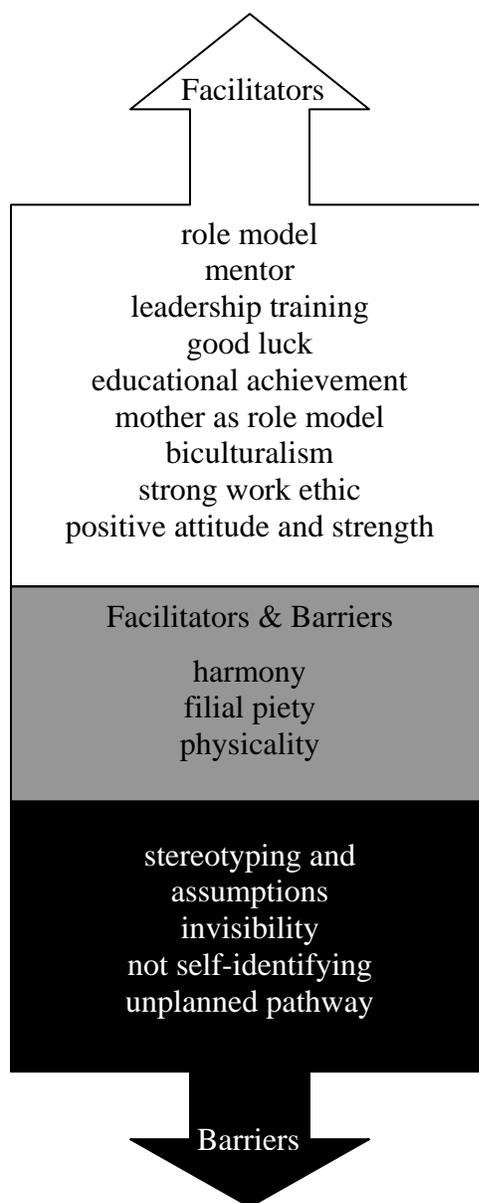


Figure 3. Facilitators and barriers for Asian American female presidents and vice presidents in community colleges.

The stories presented through the narrative inquiry by the Asian American female vice presidents and presidents brought forth several themes. The stories also

allowed for some answers to the research questions presented in Chapter One. The themes and answers to the research questions are presented in the next chapter.

Chapter Five

Themes, Research Questions, and Theories

‘How splendid the gate looks!’ Yu Lang exclaimed. The great entrance gleamed in the winter sunlight. It looked glossier and redder than ever for it had lately been given a new coat of a special red varnish called lacquer....Upon it were some raised golden symbols which were the Chinese word for ‘good luck to this household.’ ‘We are already for the New Year,’ Old Chang said....‘It is well,’ the Old Old One said.... ‘When our red gate is shut tight, we shall seal its cracks with paper. Then nothing can come in and spoil our New Year luck’ (Carpenter, 1973, p. 48-49).

The stories told and thoughts revealed by these five groundbreaking Asian American female presidents and vice presidents of community colleges included their pathways to their current positions, the experiences that they encountered, as well as their internal and external barriers and facilitators. Out of these stories themes were identified. This chapter includes a discussion of the relationship of the Asian American female’s experience to inequality theory and critical race theory. Finally, this study’s research questions as well as the themes that arose from each are addressed.

The themes that were identified through this study include: mothers as role models, biculturalism and bicultural efficacy, unplanned pathways and not self-identifying, earned leadership positions, a strong work ethic, the stereotyping or assumptions of others, Asian physicality, fracturing the glass ceiling, and positive attitudes and strength. These themes were discovered through the answers that participants gave in response to the primary and secondary research questions. In

addition, many other spontaneous topics were addressed and explored through additional questions.

Mothers as Role Models

All five of the Asian American female leaders identified their parents as role models. This was especially so when they discussed the strength, resilience, and leadership of their mothers. Although their mothers and fathers may not have held leadership positions or titles that are recognized by our society, they were leaders in their own right. This theme is consistent with the findings of Kawahara's (2007) study of Asian American female leaders, where their parents possessed the leadership quality of extroversion. They did not demonstrate the stereotypes of Asian Americans which include females being "sweet" and "demure" (Kawahara, 2007).

In this study, the subjects' mothers demonstrated that anything was possible, including their daughters achieving any career choice. Four of the mothers were first generation immigrants to the United States. One mother was a second generation Asian American. Consequently, four of the participants were second generation while one was third generation Asian American. The career choices differed for the three generations. As one of the women stated, "My mother is typical, the strength behind the family and I know that. If she was born when I was born, I have no idea what she would have been." As a part of the second generation, these women challenge the traditional female roles of mother and wife, and take on the roles that were reserved for males. These are opportunities that their mothers did not have (Suh, 2007), although they possessed the strength of leaders (Kawahara, 2007), and took appropriate opportunities to emphasize that to their daughters. One participant shared

this childhood story to explain the strength and self-confidence that her mother was trying to instill in her:

This was Halloween. This is the first time I experienced something painful because it shakes your trust in humanity. I was trick-or-treating with my girlfriend. I was walking down the street, some older kids came by and stole my bag (of candy). First off there was the thought, this was my candy and someone stole it from me. Then there is the why would someone do that. I worked hard (to get the candy) and this person did that. I went home crying and my mom held me and did what she could. Then she said, you are going back out there. She dressed me in my kimono (to have a different "costume") and got me back out. Her thing was, never cry over spilt milk. Figure out what you need to, and try something different.

The discovery of the theme of "mothers as role models," came about from the responses that the Asian American females gave to the fourth primary research question, "Do facilitators that aid in breaking down the barriers to attaining a position of higher level administration in community college exist for Asian American females?" as well as the secondary question of, "Do you or have you had any role models or mentors?" All five of the participants saw their mothers as mentors and thereby facilitators to their current senior leadership positions.

Another generational difference was the need of the second and third generation participants to meld the cultural values in their everyday lives.

Biculturalism and Bicultural Efficacy

The participants were very aware of their cultural values and how they could be both barriers and facilitators. As barriers, the cultural values of humility, harmony, and filial piety could make it more difficult to attain, maintain or be successful in the senior leadership position. As one of the women discussed her career pathway and the

time it took her to attain the position of president or vice president, “I probably would have progressed faster into a presidency had my kids been at a different age....There were conscious choices that I made that would have stopped my progression.” There is recognition that as a mother, one has the obligation and desire not to have the job impact one’s child negatively. Therefore, these women may not move into the next position on the hierarchy of leadership if it means disrupting their child’s life with less time spent together or a change of residence, and consequently, change in the child’s school. One participant even moved for the sake of her child’s education. Moving meant a better educational opportunity for her child. Moving also meant a temporary career shift to the private sector for the participant.

The Asian cultural value of humility made it difficult for some of the participants to engage in self-promotion. A couple of the women felt that upcoming young Asian American women need to become comfortable with self-promotion since that was a leadership characteristic expected by the dominant White culture. Just as Turner (2007) found in her interviews with three non White four-year college presidents, including Rose Tseng, Chancellor of University of Hawai`i-Hilo, these women had to learn how to “step out of their comfort zones” so that others would recognize them and their leadership abilities.

The presidents and vice presidents also saw their Asian cultural values as facilitators to their job success. With the internalized value of harmony, the leadership style in which several of these women engaged was shared governance and/or collaborative. Such a leadership style is not only based on an Asian cultural value of harmony, but also often possessed by women both Asian and non Asian.

The theme of biculturalism and bicultural efficacy became evident through the Asian American vice presidents' and presidents' responses to the secondary question, "Do you find that you are bicultural in your behavior and expectations at work and home?" All five of the participants demonstrated some level of biculturalism as they integrated the values of Asian culture and Euro-American culture. Their biculturalism was demonstrated through their "switching" of expectations and communication with those who were Asian American versus those who were not. In addition, the roles that the participants took on were more "Asian" at home, providing for their spouses or parents, and more "American" at work, leading their staff and making college policy and procedural changes.

In addition, these Asian American females had demonstrated bicultural efficacy, as they developed relationships "inside" and "outside" of their ethnic groups. One of the women explained the need to be bicultural as she stated, "There is that dichotomy for us. And we have to have our antennae to figure out when and where....to maintain our sanity."

Unplanned Pathways and Not Self-Identifying

It is interesting to note that all five of the Asian American female vice presidents and presidents did not start off their careers in higher education with the intention on becoming a senior leader. All of the women started at lower ranks on the decision making community college hierarchy. One individual was initially in a classified position at a community college. This is unlike some community college leaders who come from the private business sector. Even more fascinating is the finding that four of these women held positions as college faculty. This is consistent

with Rose Tseng, the first Asian American chancellor, who said she, “wanted to be a teacher, never thinking that she would be an administrator” (Turner, 2007). Why do these women not plan to become presidents or vice presidents? Did they not see themselves as community college leaders? The answer could be in their cultural values. The traditional cultural values of Asian Americans encourage humbleness and to be mindful of the collective group. The generally accepted leadership method of the dominant culture is to be in the “spotlight” and a desire to be recognized for your efforts and successful decisions. This form of leadership can be seen as the antithesis of being humble and group oriented.

For these five women, it was the suggestion of a trusted individual, usually a mentor that put them on the pathway to becoming community college vice presidents and presidents. They did not self-identify as leaders.

Perhaps it is possible to see these women’s career choices and paths as a result of having luck, good fortune, or as Bandura (1982) put it, “chance encounters.” According to Bandura, chance encounters are based on reciprocal influences of one’s personal and social factors. The personal factors are the skills they possess. In this case the personal factors would be leadership skills. The social factors are the “circles” in which people “move.” In other words, the people they choose to talk to and interact with. If others are aware of one’s career intentions, and are in positions to communicate such career openings and other such information, then one’s social factors are increased (Bandura, 1982). Together, if one is prepared for those leadership positions and letting the appropriate people know their interest and

intentions, then the chances are one would be “lucky” and have “good fortune” and attain their career choice.

Several of the participants spoke to chance encounters that they did not necessarily believe to be luck or good fortune. As one of the participants stated, “It wasn’t something that I wanted to do. Someone said, here is a job, you can do it. And I said okay. I did my homework, sent in my application, and got the job....In every place someone ‘planted the seed’.” The theme of unplanned pathways was revealed when the questions of “What is the experience of Asian American females who have sought advancement in leadership positions in community colleges?” and “Do barriers to attaining the position of community college vice president and president exist for Asian American female?” as well as a discussion of the occupations and positions they experienced primary to their current leadership positions. Some of the women spoke of their career goal of being a teacher. Four of the five of the Asian American female administrators were community college instructors at one point in their career pathways. Interestingly, the discussion of Asian American females as not having planned for such strong prestigious community college leadership positions was not immediately identified in the conversations. Instead, the theme of unplanned pathways came forth after other barriers such as physical appearance, stereotyping, and assumptions made by others. Instead of luck or good fortune, the participants attributed their ability to attain such decision making leadership position to being prepared for the “next step” or career opportunity.

Earned Leadership Positions

All five of the participants held previous positions in the community colleges that started at lower levels of the decision making hierarchy. The participants held “pre-vice presidential” positions for a number of years, which ranged from 20 to 30 years. In addition, all of the participants held a position in academia when they were chosen for their current positions of vice president or president.

As mentioned previously, none of the participants planned to hold such leadership positions. One of the women stated, “I never had goals that said, okay at five years I would be a dean, and five more years I am going to be a vice president. I sort of went along.” Another participant said, “I hadn’t thought of myself in this position, but once (my mentor) said, ‘Do you want it?’ I thought, oh yeah.” But what is evident is that all five of the women spent many years contributing to the community college mission of providing an education for all those who seek it. Each of the participants “earned” her current position having “paid her dues” in various community college positions. Like the theme of unplanned pathways, the discovery of the theme of earned leadership positions came through the women’s discussions on their past jobs following their obtaining graduate degrees. This topic of job history was part of the response to the primary research question, “What is the experience of Asian American females who have sought advancement in leadership positions in community colleges?” No matter what their position in the community college, all of the women were dedicated to their jobs and higher education.

Strong Work Ethic

Another theme that surfaced for all of the women was the need to have a strong work ethic. This work ethic was a characteristic that was instilled in them as children by their parents, or was needed to prove to their superiors, colleagues, and employees that they were the “right choice” for the college’s president or vice president. This need of the Asian American females to demonstrate their ability was confirmed by a statement made by one of the women, “I think the tendency for most is that when you get the position you do 250% because you are going to show that it had nothing to do with (your ethnicity) and that you are really capable.” This theme was consistent in the participants’ answers to the secondary research question, “What are your cultural values?” as well as the primary research question, “Do barriers to attaining the position of community college vice president and president exist for Asian American females?” Those who stereotype Asian American females would not have expected them to succeed as strong leaders. Therefore, demonstrating their strong work ethic allows for others to see the Asian American female as having leadership qualities.

Stereotyping and Assumptions

The stereotypes and assumptions of submissive and non confrontational were unfounded. All five of the participants stated that it took time for others to accept them as leaders. Before they were accepted as leaders, stereotyping and assumptions were often made by others. For some, the stereotypes and assumptions continued no matter how successful she was. The stereotypes or assumptions put upon these participants included the inability to confront others, indecisiveness, and being mild

mannered. There also appeared to be an assumption for four of the women that they were chosen to lead because they were the “politically correct” choice. In four of the community colleges where the women were employed, the senior level of leadership, deans, vice presidents, and presidents, were mostly White men and women. The four participants who were from these institutions were the only non White senior level administrators. They were the only Asian American senior level administrators in their institutions.

Knowing that choosing an Asian American female for a vice presidency or presidency may be a politically correct action on the president’s or board of trustees’ part, one of the women openly confronted the possibility with her prospective supervisor:

I don’t want to be hired because I am a woman or an Asian, or any of those reasons. I want to be hired because I am qualified and all the other things come along with it, and all those other things I can work with. But I can’t do anything if you don’t support me because you think I am unqualified. If you already put out there that I was hired because of all those other reasons then I don’t have a chance.

Her statements demonstrated her need to be open and upfront with not only why she was chosen to lead the institution, but also the thoughts and assumptions of the staff and faculty. The assumption was that she was chosen to lead the institution because she is Asian and a female. Was she chosen because of her ethnicity coupled with her gender?

The theme of stereotyping and assumptions by others was present in the responses that the participants gave to the secondary questions, “Do you encounter stereotyping toward you based on your ethnicity and or gender?” and “Have you

found that your ethnicity and gender determined the experiences you have had during your career pathway to a higher level administrator?" The candid inquiry by the Asian American female leader, who was quoted above, demonstrated her willingness to discuss the reasoning behind the president's decision as well as the assumptions of others. In this situation, the Asian American female stated that she felt her inquiry "set the record straight," with her supervisor. She was also telling him that she needed his support by letting others know that she is was chosen because of her leadership experience and qualities. This participant's candidness demonstrated her self-confidence and need to be sure that she was chosen for the right reasons and not because of her ethnicity and gender. The participant's question also demonstrated her ability to be confrontational. She did point out to the researcher that she would never really know if her ethnicity and gender were the determining factors. Several of the participants pointed out that being an Asian female can only be one more "plus" to their candidacy that was added to their leadership qualities and experiences.

Beyond the assumptions and stereotyping made by non Asian Americans, was the impact of the physicality of the Asian American female vice presidents and presidents. The two physical characteristics, being Asian and female, are presented as they enter rooms, and therefore, are what others initially judge them on.

Asian Physicality and Invisibility

Asian Americans tend to be slight and diminutive in stature. For many Asian American females the descriptor adjective is petite. The participants that were petite talked about the fact that their physical appearance can be seen as a hindrance or barrier towards and in their current leadership positions. Being small in stature often

causes a sense on “invisibility” amongst larger more physically imposing individuals and colleagues. They are not seen immediately and thereby are subjected to being ignored. Another assumption of being slight in stature is not being able to lead. The leader must be someone who strong and commanding. A petite Asian female is not what people see when they envision a “leader.” She is the physical antithesis to the White male whom people are used to being the community college president. Several of participants spoke of changing the height of the chair on which they are sitting so that their eyes meet the line of vision of others who are present. Another adjustment for one of the participants was the height of her shoe heels. Wearing shoes with taller heels allowed her to be temporarily taller. Several of the participants mentioned the need to speak clearly and loudly so that they would be seen and acknowledged.

It was noted by one of the participants that when she was indeed younger, her youthful appearance made the staff she was supervising question if she indeed had the knowledge and supervisory experience she needed to lead them. Thus, the youthful appearance can be a barrier earlier in one’s career pathway.

On the other hand a youthful appearance of an Asian American female can also be an attribute or facilitator. Typically, Asian American females look younger than their White counterparts. Thus, they feel they can remain in their leadership positions longer as they are not subjected to the stereotyping or assumptions that older leaders may receive. Perhaps the participant’s youthful appearance allows others to see them as energetic with full intellectual capacity unlike their White counterparts. Like the theme of stereotyping and assumptions, the theme of Asian physicality resulted from the conversations that followed the secondary questions of

“Do you encounter stereotyping toward you based on your ethnicity and or gender?” and “Have you found that your ethnicity and gender determined the experiences you have had during your career pathway to a higher level administrator?” Even though Asian American females cannot change their physicality of height and youthful appearance, a few have been able to still attain the senior leadership positions of community college vice president and president as they continue to “fracture” the glass ceiling.

Fracturing the Glass Ceiling

Obviously, all five of this study’s participants have achieved leadership positions that do not come easily to non Whites. The number of non White higher education presidents is small in number. The glass ceiling that is a barrier for Asian Americans to senior leadership careers found by Hune (1998), Lai and Arguelles (2003), and Woo (2000) remains in 2007. A contrary perspective may be seen if one considers the fact that there are Asian American higher educational presidents and vice presidents. Therefore, people may not see a glass ceiling for Asian Americans. Yet, the number of Asian American females who have succeeded to break the glass ceiling and attain community college presidencies and vice presidencies (Opp & Gosetti, 2002) continues to remain disproportionate to the percentage of Asian American females in the United States (U.S. Census, 2000a). The percentage of Asian American female community college presidents and vice presidents is far below the percentage of Asian American females in the United States. The percentage differential of Asian American females as compared to the Asian American female senior leadership is -4.2%. This negative percentage differential between the college

leadership and United States population is also true for African Americans (-2.2%), Latinos (-7.7%), and American Indian (-.5%) females. The differential for White females is +5%, with more White females represented in the roles of presidents and vice presidents than the percent who makeup United States population.

The theme of fracturing the glass ceiling rather than “shattering” it is used because of the number of Asian American females who have become community college vice presidents and presidents are few. The participants discussed this when answering the primary question, “Do barriers to attaining the position of community college vice president and president exist for Asian American females?” The fact that a glass ceiling exists for Asian American female community college leaders does not dissuade the few who have “fractured” the glass ceiling. The “invisible” barrier remains in the career path for Asian American females, and yet these five vice presidents and presidents maintain a positive attitude and remain strong.

Positive Attitudes and Strength

All five of the Asian American female leaders demonstrated tremendous strength as they forged along their groundbreaking career pathways towards the highest community college leadership positions. The women spoke to their experiences and perspectives as college leaders.

I knew it was going to be a challenge coming here. I think it was hard at times to accept the fact that they probably took great pride in the fact that they not only found a qualified good candidate, but sort of you know here was another, you know, here was, I shouldn't say token, because I don't think they didn't really.... But they were very proud of the fact that I was other than a White, Caucasian.



You need to understand that you are a human being too. You will take (comments and criticism) personally because you are a human.... Adjust to it, and what hurts is the attack when you have doing it to be kind. If you can believe with your beliefs and values and did the right thing, you are not going to feel the attack as much. If you can, then your integrity is in place....We make decisions with our heart.

You get scared. You get emotionally beaten up, sure you do. I've been doing this for 30 years....All the women of color (who were at a leadership institute), I was very proud because I know when I started there weren't that many women, and there weren't that many women of color. So in some ways, I consider it a badge of honor that I am what I am....I hope to not lose that part of me that understands that being a woman brings to that position a quality that a White male normally would not have.

The Asian American female vice presidents and presidents acknowledged that there are barriers some of which were very hurtful statements and actions by non Asian Americans. The discussion of “healing” was brought up, as the women acknowledged they did heal every time then went to their own homes. At home they could be themselves, let their defenses down, and relax knowing that they were not being judged. In order to face the difficult daily lives, situations or people, they needed to remain strong and have positive attitudes, often turning the negative statement or situation into a learning experience. The theme of positive attitudes and strength came about when answering the unplanned question of, “What advice do you have for Asian American females seeking the vice president or president position at a community college?” and primary research question, “Do facilitators that aid in breaking down the barriers to attaining a position of higher level administration in community college exist for Asian American females?” All five women were very encouraging and yet, very forthright in their responses when giving advise as well as responses to the other questions that allowed the themes to emerge.

Summary of the Themes

The themes brought forth through the conversations with the five Asian American female administrators were mothers as role models, biculturalism and bicultural self efficacy, stereotyping and assumptions, unplanned pathways and not self-identifying, earned leadership positions, strong work ethic, Asian physicality and invisibility, fracturing the glass ceiling, and positive attitudes and inner strength. The consistency of these themes found in the stories from the women, suggests that their gender and ethnicity have a tremendous impact upon their lives. This impact is both within themselves and their experiences as children and adults. Within themselves is the inner barrier of self-doubt, or lack of self-identification as a powerful community college leader. The cultural values of humility, non confrontation, and filial piety could contribute to not seeing oneself as a vice president or president. The Asian American females acknowledged their need to integrate both their “Asian” and “American” selves by demonstrating biculturalism. For the most part, these women are accepting of their biculturalism and thereby experience bicultural self-efficacy.

Another theme is the mothers of these women as role models. Their mothers were strong leaders in their own right. Given the “place” and “time,” these first generation women took care of their families, owned and operated small businesses, and brought together and supported their community. The participants have taken the examples provided by their mothers and became strong leaders in their own “place” or community colleges, or “time” as part of the second and third generations. As community college leaders in the 21st century, these women have “fractured” the glass ceiling or invisible barrier to the highest community college leadership

positions. In doing so, they have given hope to others who desire to follow them, as they shared their experiences and words of advise. This hope is based on their sharing their stories as well as being role models and mentors to other Asian American women.

Five Asian American Female Leaders' Responses in Relation to the Research

Questions

This study of the experiences of Asian American female community college presidents and vice presidents allowed for a better understanding of why so few hold such prestigious leadership positions. Asian American females have both internal and external barriers that may prohibit or at least are obstacles to attaining community college presidencies and vice presidencies. The barriers are stereotyping and assumptions, invisibility, not self-identifying, and unplanned pathways. Stereotyping and assumptions as well as invisibility are external barriers put upon the Asian American females by others. Not self-identifying and unplanned pathways are internal barriers that the Asian American females create for themselves. The cultural values of harmony and filial piety are both barriers and facilitators for the Asian American females seeking leadership positions. These cultural values are also internal barriers. Yet, at the same time, they can be facilitators to the community college senior leadership position, as both provide the need desire to include the perspectives and decisions of others as well as respect the human need to cultivate their familial relationships. In addition, the barrier of physicality was also a facilitator. The Asian petite body structure can cause the female to be ignored and feel invisible, and at the same time is unique in a crowd of White administrators. This uniqueness can also

cause visibility and remembrance, allowing for actions and statements to be heard and not forgotten.

The number of facilitators uncovered outnumbered the barriers. The facilitators included role model, mentor, leadership training, good luck, educational achievement, mother as role model, biculturalism, strong work ethic, and positive attitude and strength.

In addition to the barriers and facilitators, nine themes were revealed in this study. These primary and secondary questions explored in this study allowed themes of the Asian American female senior administrator's experiences and perspectives to be revealed.

The first primary question was "What is the experience of Asian American females who have sought advancement in leadership positions in community colleges?" This question contributed to the revelation of the themes "Unplanned Pathways" and "Earned Leadership Positions." All five of the participants were employed at a community college or colleges for a number of years prior to becoming a vice president or president. One can say that they "paid their dues," as none of them came from outside of academia or specifically, community college. In addition, none of the women had the goal of senior administrator when they started their career paths after they received their undergraduate degrees. It appears that these women did not see themselves as leaders in community colleges. Someone whom they respected and, for some mentors, saw these women as leaders. That person encouraged them to consider the important role of community college vice president or president.

Four out of the five women could see their being female and Asian American having an impact on their career pathways. One Asian American female was employed in a region that was more diverse, and therefore felt strongly that her ethnicity and gender did not impact her career experiences. This individual felt her diverse workplace was a factor in her not experiencing many barriers to her current position.

The second research question, “What is the hiring process experience of Asian American females who have sought higher level administrative positions in community colleges?,” revealed the power of a mentor. One of the participants was fortunate in that she was “tapped” by her mentor to be an interim senior administrator, which later turned into a permanent appointment. The other four participants were not so fortunate, as they had attempted to attain their current positions a number of times.

There was often a question as to whether or not they were chosen as finalists and then the position of vice president and president because they were Asian and female. For one participant, it was important that this question be answered by the individual offering her the position. For others, the question remains as to whether their ethnicity and gender increased their chances of being finalists or was the deciding factors to their current positions. In every case, there came a time when each woman concluded that her gender and ethnicity as deciding factors no longer mattered. They were all successful in their positions and had proven that they were very capable vice presidents and presidents. The third primary research question, “Do barriers to attaining a position of higher level administration in community college

exist for Asian American females?,” was followed with the secondary research questions, “If so, what are they? What is their impact? Do these barriers continue to exist?” These questions revealed the themes of “Strong work Ethic,” “Fracturing the Glass Ceiling,” “Stereotyping or Assumptions,” and “Asian Physicality.” All five of the Asian American female presidents and vice presidents found that they did experience barriers to and during their current positions. These barriers were stereotyping and assumptions of their behavior, lack of role models, leadership training institutes that are not seen as applicable to Asian Americans, and not self-identifying as a leader.

The one participant who lived in a diverse region did not experience the stereotyping and assumptions that the other four experienced. The other four shared experiences that demonstrated that non Asians expected them not to be the leader, to be the mediator, not political minded, or not decisive. One of the participants stated that when she lived among a greater Asian American population, that the Asian American men tended to be the group that denied her further ascent to a leadership position.

Interestingly, a barrier that was acknowledged by all five of the participants was the internal barrier of not self-identifying as a community college vice president or president. All five of the women disclosed that they did not plan to be a vice president or president. In each of their cases, others, usually mentors, made the suggestion to apply for the leadership positions.

As far as the continued existence of barriers for the participants, the general consensus was “yes” the barriers will continue to be put in the paths of these women.

There continues to be a lack of role models in community colleges who “look like them.” The role models that they saw were either non Asian or Asian American females not in academia. Until there are more Asian American female community college vice presidents and presidents, role models will continue to be uncommon.

The leadership training institutes that are made available for community college leaders or those moving in that direction were seen as not applicable for Asian Americans by several of these women. This was explained by Asian cultural values of humility and collectivism. In the leadership trainings, the participants are encouraged to promote oneself, lead the group, and asking for assistance when needed. Some of the Asian cultural values are the antithesis of the leadership skills being promoted by the leadership institutes. Perhaps the lack of self-promotion means that the hiring decision makers are not aware of the Asian American female’s strengths, experiences, and successes. This explanation could partially explain why so few Asian American females are community college presidents and vice presidents.

The fourth and final primary research question, “Do facilitators that aid in breaking down the barriers to attaining a position of higher level administration in community college exist for Asian American females?,” and secondary research questions, “If so, what are they? What is their impact? Do these facilitators continue to exist?,” contributed to the finding of “Mothers as Role Models” and “Fracturing the Glass Ceiling.” The facilitator identified by the participants was their parents. The participants stressed the important role their parents played in the development of who they are today, both in personality and career choice. Their parents were seen as supportive, strong, and tenacious. Education was encouraged, specifically attending

college immediately following high school. For all five women, going to college was never a question but an unspoken expectation. All of the parents felt that a college education increased one's knowledge and or opened opportunities for their daughters.

The daughters also saw their parents as strong individuals. Several of them were forced into the internment camps and had survived the harsh living conditions there, as well as the fact that their homes, land, and jobs were taken away. Once released from the camps, these tenacious Asian Americans literally had to start over. The characteristic of tenacity that the parents held was transferred to their Asian American female daughters. Even though not all of their parents are still living, the impact and strength they imparted still exists in these five women.

The themes of "Biculturalism and Bicultural Efficacy," and "Positive Attitudes and Strength" cannot be associated with just one of the primary research questions. Instead, these two themes came up at various times and often more than once within one conversation.

Summary of the Research Questions

All of the primary and secondary research questions of this study were addressed by five Asian American female community college vice presidents and presidents. Not only were the research questions addressed, but they were "launching pads" for other topics of discussion. It is apparent that the Asian American female senior administrators are aware of the barriers and facilitators. This awareness was always at the forefront of their minds as the women went through the hiring processes, and continued while in their current leadership positions. This awareness and the impact had not caused these strong female leaders to pause or cease in their

career aspirations. They acknowledge the situations that they are placed, the responses they received, and the difficulty of facing the stereotyping and assumptions made by non Asian American females. Yet, these women have chosen to not allow these experiences to make them cynical and concede their career paths. The women continue to be hopeful and positive as they persevere despite the thought that Asian American females are well represented in senior administrative community college positions. Perhaps, the inequality theories of Durkheim and Marx could explain the underrepresentation of Asian American females as vice presidents and presidents, but this study did not find such theories to be adequate explanations.

Asian American Females and the Inequality Theories and Critical Race Theory

According to sociologists, Durkheim (Heinslin, 2004) and Marx (Feagin & Feagin, 1999), there will always be a minority group or groups that are satisfied with their “positions” in life. In addition, Durkheim and Marx found that the majority or dominant group should wield the power and decision making. These inequality theories do not explain the dissatisfaction, stereotyping, and assumptions put upon Asian American females who are in the community college leadership positions. For these women, the number that is currently in the presidencies and vice presidencies should not be an acceptable norm for our society.

Inequality Theories

Acknowledging that Asian American females can successfully lead community colleges as presidents and vice presidents makes it very difficult to understand, let alone accept, how anyone can be a proponent of inequality theories of functionalism and conflict theory. Durkheim, through his functionalism theory

(Heinslin, 2004), would have found the lack of Asian American female leaders to be a state of equilibrium. It is “normal” to have the majority of community college presidents and vice presidents that are Whites, even if the number of White community college leaders goes beyond the percentage of Whites who live in the United States. At a minimum, what may be acceptable or “normal” would be an equal percentage of Asian American female community college leaders to the percentage of Asian American females in the United States’ population.

The other inequality theory presented in Chapter Three was that of Karl Marx. Marx’s conflict theory looked at power and socioeconomic class, which can be transferred to power and ethnicity (Feagin & Feagin, 1999). Marx’s conflict theory would substantiate that having only three Asian American female community college presidents is not an issue even for Asian Americans. If it were an issue, then Asian Americans would stand together and their dissatisfaction would be heard. Since they are not heard, it must not be problematic or unwarranted. On the contrary, it can be argued that Asian Americans are stating that the disproportionate number of Asian Americans, and specifically Asian American females, who are leading higher education institutions, including community colleges, is not acceptable. The difficulty in being aware of this stance is that there are very few research studies that focus on the topic of few Asian American leaders, as well as the cultural values of harmony and humility that may cause many Asian Americans from making others aware. In any event, it is a fact that there are very few Asian American females in the power position of decision making in community colleges. This fact needs to be

acknowledged by Asian Americans and non Asian Americans. The reasoning for such acknowledgement can be substantiated by the critical race theory.

Critical Race Theory

It is clear that the few voices of the Asian American female community college vice presidents and presidents need to be heard because of the void in scholarly research. It is also clear that social justice is needed to “equal the playing field.” Every candidate for a community college presidency and vice presidency should be judged on their merits and scholarship rather than cultural values, gender, and ethnicity. Critical race theory opens the door for social justice as it promotes the uncovering of myths and hidden truths. The one myth as stated in Chapter Three is that there are many Asian American female community college executive administrators. The hidden truth is that is a small number of Asian American female community college vice presidents and presidents. The research has consistently found three Asian American female community college presidents in 1994 (Harvey & Anderson, 2005), 2003 (Harvey & Anderson, 2005; Stout-Steward, 2005), and 2004 (Harvey & Anderson, 2005). This study also located three Asian American female community college presidents. What is unknown is if there are more than three Asian American female community college presidents today. Given the historical data, the chances that a large number of American Asian females are community college vice presidents and presidents is highly unlikely.

Another myth as well as stereotype is that Asian American females are quiet, submissive, exotic, as well as demanding and unrelenting. The hidden truth is that Asian American females are capable leaders and have the characteristics required to

make the executive decisions of community college vice presidents and presidents. A question remains as to whether Asian American females are not going to engage in hegemony or the acceptance of the dominant culture retaining a disproportionate number of leadership positions. The numbers have shown that the percentage of White male presidents and vice presidents outnumber the percentage of White males who reside in the United States. The percentage of Asian American female executive community college leaders is not comparable to the percentage of Asian American females in the United States. The emancipation of Asian American females needs to be considered for the future success of other Asian American females looking at careers in community college leadership. Emancipation is also important for the success of Asian American female community college students. One's physical appearance and biculturalism should not determine their leadership opportunities. This study is a step in the direction that will allow for community college leadership change.

Summary of Asian American Females and Inequality Theories and Critical Race Theory

The logic of Durkheim's and Marx's inequality theories of functionalism and conflict theory are not acceptable explanations for the underrepresentation of Asian American female community college vice presidents and presidents. Having very few Asian American females in the highest leadership positions is a start. The number of Asian American females who are community college vice presidents and presidents needs to increase. The critical race theory explains why not many Asian American females hold the esteemed leadership positions in community colleges. The myths,

untruths, and false consciousness of Asian American female leaders is explored and hopefully begins to be undone with this study. The increase in the number of Asian American females as community college vice presidents and presidents would allow the beginning of their emancipation so that they are given the same level of acceptance, respect, and number of opportunities that White males receive.

Summary of Themes, Research Questions and Theories

The themes that were brought forth by the stories of these five Asian American female community college vice presidents and presidents along with the exploration of the four research questions bring about new awareness and understanding. This study has brought forth information on past research that focused on Asian American female administrators, and experiences and perspectives of current presidents and vice presidents. This research presented the barriers and facilitators of Asian American females seeking community college leadership positions. This research also presented the experiences of Asian American females during their leadership tenure. The barrier and facilitator themes suggest that discrimination of Asian American females who seek and attain the positions of community college leaders continues to exist.

Chapter Six

Summary and Future Research and Future Practice

Father, I sold our mule with the all the logs, exactly as it was. "Oh my poor child," he muttered, "so the hard-hearted bai has swindled you as well." "But I received a fair price for the wood," she said quietly. And she handed him the silken robe.... Thereupon, Aina-Kizz unrolled the robe before her father's astonished gaze and the golden coins showered upon the floor.... How he laughed and cried in turn, listening to her tale. She ended the story thus: "Father, where the rich keep their fortune, so the poor keep their cunning. A girl's wise head is better than a man's full purse" (Riordan, 1984, p. 46).

This study of Asian American female community college vice presidents and presidents was very revealing in that it not only explored an area that was neglected in the scholarly research, but also took a frank look at why the number of Asian American women holding the senior leadership positions are so few. This chapter will discuss this study's findings of barriers and facilitators of the Asian American female community college vice president and president as it relates to existing research, future research and future practice.

Adding to the Existing Literature

As an Asian American female community college administrator, I believe these five Asian American female community college presidents and vice presidents felt a connection to me. I was an "insider" who shared the some of the same cultural values, parental expectations, barriers, and facilitators with the women. I was also an "insider" in that all of the five women did have a personal connection to someone that I knew. Thus, there was a level of trust that they had in me to protect their identities and to present their quotes in context. Together, the six of us would add to the

existing literature on the experiences of Asian American female community college leaders.

Other existing research. There have been several research studies that look at Asian Americans and higher education leadership, and yet none focused solely on Asian American female vice presidents and presidents at community colleges. The three studies that came closest to this study based on the characteristics of the participants were that of Wong (2002), Neilson (2002), and Wilking (2001). Wong, Neilson, and Wilking all focused on both two and four year higher educational institutions. Wong and Neilson's participants were male and female Asian Americans. Wong and Wilking's studies looked at the senior administrators who were from two states, Hawai'i and California. With those differences in participant characteristics, it is Wilking's findings that most comparable to this study.

This study did have some findings that were also found by Wilking's (2001) narrative study of five Asian American female college presidents. According to Wilking, Asian American female presidents experienced self-doubt of their abilities and the "fraud syndrome." This study also did not support some of Wilking's findings. None of the five Asian American female vice presidents and presidents doubted their leadership abilities, and did not mention experiencing anything even close to the "fraud syndrome" or feeling that they should not be in their current positions. Wilking also found an internal struggle amongst the five college presidents. This struggle was due to their cultural value of family obligation or piety. In this current study, family obligation was not a large factor in their current positions. The five participants in this study either had no children, children that were grown, or

parents who were taken care by their siblings or a shared responsibility. Therefore, what might have been a filial obligation to their children when they were younger is no longer existent as they have moved along their career pathways into senior leadership positions. Perhaps the Asian cultural value of filial piety toward one's aging parents is not as strong as was for previous generations.

Another finding of Wilking (2001) was the continued stereotyping of the Asian American women as the "geisha" or "dragon lady." The women in this study experienced the assumptions that they lacked leadership qualities, which may relate to Wilking's finding of the label of "geisha," as it is possible to relate the characteristic of "lacking leadership ability" with being passive and submissive. In addition, the label of "dragon lady" was not stated in the conversations with this study's participants. Although this study did not focus on the stereotyped labels, it did look at the barriers, which may include the labels. Two of the participants described themselves as having the attribute of "bossy," which can be seen as a characteristic of the "dragon lady." Another "dragon lady" attribute could be a "strong work ethic." This strength could then be interpreted as a characteristic of a "dragon lady." It could be speculated that the strength of the stereotyped labels associated with Asian American females is decreasing. A study that focused on these specific labels could reveal if the Asian American females continue to be seen as "geishas" and "dragon ladies." One label that does continue to be associated with Asian Americans, even by other non Whites, is "model minority."

Irony of the Label “Model Minority”

In doing this study, the researcher engaged in many conversations with non Asian American colleagues and senior leaders and community colleges. Often, after the topic of research was stated by the researcher my non Asian colleagues looked puzzled. They did not realize that there were so few Asian American female community college vice presidents and presidents. The question that should be asked is, “Why would Asian American females be known as the model minority when they are not able to achieve the executive positions that their White counterparts do?” Perhaps the label should be revised to “model minority students,” to reflect the percentage of Asian American females who are college students, and therefore, no one will mistake this label to mean “model minority community college vice presidents and presidents.” This irony continues to exist even when the purpose of the research was to give Asian American female senior administrators a voice.

Irony of this Study

The irony of this research study entails the limited number of Asian American female community college presidents and vice presidents. With so few of these women holding these powerful positions, it is not possible to report all of the details of their stories. To do so, would mean risking the recognition of their identities. Such recognition could mean jeopardizing their maintaining their current executive positions. To honor the researcher’s promise of anonymity to these five women, it was imperative that the particulars such as who, when, and where, remain unwritten. Yet, these five women demonstrated tremendous courage by agreeing to participate in this study. The stories of these female leaders have brought forth a greater awareness

of their struggles and triumphs as they continue to demonstrate they are strong individuals and successful administrators.

Implication for Future Research

Future research on Asian Americans as higher education leaders is needed. More research on Asian Americans administrators in academia will allow non Asian Americans to know and understand why there are so few leading community colleges and universities. This knowledge and understanding may allow those in the position of hiring senior administrators to see Asian Americans, specifically Asian American females, as higher education, specifically community college, vice presidents and presidents.

Scholarly research also needs to focus on the “non survivors.” The participants of this study were the Asian American female “survivors,” those who did get hired to lead community colleges. What is not being researched are the “non survivors,” the Asian American females who have attempted to achieve the position of community college vice president and have failed numerous times and thereby have given up attaining such a position. Perhaps the stories of the “non survivors” would be riddled with more barriers than what has been found in this study. In addition, the details of who, what, and where could be revealed by the researcher since the “non survivors” do not, and perhaps no longer desire to, hold senior leadership positions. These details could then allow for greater social justice and revelation of the experiences of Asian American females seeking the community college vice presidency.

Although perhaps difficult to accomplish, future research should also capture the prospective participants who did not want to be interviewed. Several of the Asian American community college senior leaders did not respond to my e-mail inquiry to participate. Did they choose to not respond because of fear of being identified? Did they choose to not respond because they had no personal connection to the researcher, and therefore did not trust the researcher's intentions? Did they not respond because they recently experienced a significant barrier to a leadership position and therefore their responses were too "fresh" or recent making them feel too vulnerable? If a researcher could interview all of the Asian American female community college presidents and vice presidents, then her conclusions would be more complete.

Additional studies should focus on comparing specific Asian American groups as well as gender. It would be interesting to see the difference in experiences for Chinese American females as compared to Filipina Americans or other Asian American females. It would also be valuable to conduct a gender comparison, exploring the experiences of Asian American females to Asian American males who hold the positions of community college vice president and president. The focus of study that is also needed is the comparison of non White administrators, such as Asian Americans to American Indians or Latino Americans. Do the same barriers and facilitators exist for all non White president and vice presidents?

Studies that focus on the different hiring experiences of Asian Americans who are mid level community college administrators, such as deans and directors, to that of senior level community college administrators is also needed. The question of the "thickness" of the glass ceiling can be explored in such a study. Such a question

would be, “Are there more barriers for Asian American females seeking the position of community college president compared to those seeking the position of community college dean?”

Another area of research on Asian Americans would be a comparison of the experiences of those who have achieved the position of president and vice president in four year colleges in comparison to those in two year colleges.

All future research on non White college administrators would allow for more acknowledgment that there is a lack of social justice when one considers a comparison of ethnicity of those who hold the powerful positions of community college vice president and president. The following quote by one of this study’s participants speaks to the current situation in academia.

It would be hard for any person of color to succeed in this position because we are so different, and there is not a climate to fully accept us.

Implications for Future Practice

It is the hope of this researcher that those making the hiring decisions for community college leadership positions will become more cognizant of the strengths and positive impact of Asian American female vice presidents and presidents. Decision makers such as board members, district chancellors, and community stakeholders need to see Asian American females as community college leaders. The decision makers also need to value the varied leadership styles that Asian American females could bring to the organization. The leadership styles of Asian American females is often similar to what is being touted as the “new leadership,” that is, leading through collaboration and shared governance rather than autocratic decision

making. The responsibilities and impact of the community college has gone beyond the days of its inception. The community college is an educational institution that now has a greater community and societal responsibility to prepare people for the global workforce. The community college is where change happens. The change includes a faster response to industry and stakeholders' needs as well as preparing all those who seek to transfer to universities. As the people of United States see a change in the ethnic and racial makeup of its citizens, so will the employees of the community college see change in its student population. Non White students continue to increase in number. This includes Asian Americans. The role models for Asian Americans in community colleges need to go beyond the faculty and mid level managers. The role models must include Asian American vice presidents and presidents. At the moment, such role models are limited to a few individuals.

Future practice also includes an increased recruitment and retention of Asian American females for community college vice presidencies and presidencies. Perhaps being aware of the leadership strengths that Asian American females can bring to a community college can alleviate the fear that members of the Board of Trustees and other overseeing bodies may have when looking at hiring someone who does not fit the traditional executive leadership model. There is even hope that the hiring decision makers will actively recruit Asian American females for the positions of community college vice president and president.

Once the decision to hire Asian American females as community college vice presidents and presidents is made, future practice can also include retention practices. It is clear that these Asian American females who participated in this study still

encounter barriers that could potentially impede their daily work activities. Retention practices could include support groups with members or mentors who are Asian American females. Doing so would allow the Asian American female community college vice president and president to not feel isolated and judged, but connected and understood.

In addition, the future practice of encouraging Asian American females to move towards and apply for community college vice presidencies and presidencies is needed. Since the Asian American female tends not to self-identify, it takes others such as mentors to aid them toward and suggest such a career path. Community colleges should develop practices and policies that allow for succession of Asian American females in their institution to move from non leadership to leadership positions. This practice could include opportunities for mentoring, job shadowing, internships, and interim leadership positions for Asian American females. In addition, each community college should develop internal leadership trainings that promote the practice of networking and self-promotion. These opportunities could certainly increase the number of Asian American females who seek and attain senior leadership positions in community colleges. These opportunities would also allow more non Asians to see that Asian American females can indeed be successful community college vice president and presidents.

Of course, future practice also pertains to the Asian American females themselves. There is a clear realization through this study that young Asian American females just do not see themselves as community college senior leaders. The position of community college vice president and president is not seen by the Asian American

female when planning her career pathway. The Asian American cultural values of harmony, humility, and filial piety may override any thought of such powerful positions. From the experiences told by the five groundbreaking women in this study, it is obvious that Asian American females can be successful leaders and hold the prestigious positions of community college vice president and president. They need to see themselves that way and then prepare academically, socially, and psychologically to lead.

Conclusion

It is clear that there are barriers that may impede and facilitators that assist Asian American females who seek and attain the positions of community college vice president and president. Yet, there are barriers that also can be facilitators. The barrier that emerged during the course of this study is one that is under the Asian American female's sole control: Her unplanned career path and not self-identifying herself as a community college vice president or president. The most valuable facilitators for Asian American females are their parents and mentors. The parents of Asian American females, particularly mothers, encouraged and demonstrated leadership characteristics, including tenacity, strength, and positive attitudes, for their daughters. Mentors of Asian American females open doors, encourage them to walk through the doors, and share the unwritten culture of college leadership that allow for leadership goals to come to fruition. Those deciding on who should become a vice president and president need to see that Asian American females are strong and affective community college leaders. The barriers that are the cultural values, filial piety and harmony, and physicality, can also be facilitators. The cultural values as barriers

cause the Asian American female leader to consider the impact that her career choice makes upon her family members, even if that means prohibiting her from taking a prestigious position in a different location. Yet, as a facilitator, she understands the importance of her employees' families, which then speaks to Asian American female as a leader who also cares about her employees as both workers and people. As a leader who cares about her employees and their well being, the Asian American female can also experience her cultural value of harmony as both a barrier and facilitator. As a barrier, the need to have "group think" could impede the pace of her decision making. Yet, as a facilitator, the Asian American female who values harmony may also be a more collaborative leader, one that this being valued more in the 21st century.

The Asian American female's physicality or petite stature lends herself to invisibility, being ignored, and not taken seriously as a leader. Yet, her physical appearance can be a facilitator, since she does stand out as someone who is not the same "cookie cutter" president or vice president. Hence, is it possible that looking different from the majority would mean being noticed, heard, and remembered. In the end it is really the decision of the Asian American female who chooses the path toward community college leader. Asian American females need to overcome the barriers, utilize the facilitators that could break down the barriers, and turn her cultural values into assets to for a great leader. The Asian American female needs to recognize her own leadership abilities and desires. The Asian American female needs to seek a mentor who will create opportunities and reveal the leadership "culture." The Asian American female needs to prepare herself for the position of vice president

and president by attaining a doctoral degree, attend leadership trainings, and meet the challenges of leadership opportunities that will only increase her visibility and acceptance as a leader. Once the Asian American female attains a senior leadership she must be a role model and mentor to others including other Asian American females. She must also identify other Asian American females who are future leaders, and encourage them to consider the positions of community college vice president and president.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Guiding Research Questions

Each participant will be asked the following questions during the two hour interview to encourage an open dialogue:

1. What is your experience as an Asian American female when seeking advancement to a leadership position?
2. What was your hiring process experience when you applied to your current position?
3. How many times did you attempt to become a president or vice president?
4. Do you think your ethnicity or gender effect the hiring process that you experienced?
5. Do barriers to attaining the position of community college president or vice president exist for Asian American females?
6. Have you found that your ethnicity and gender has determined the experiences you have had during your career pathway to a higher level administrator?
7. What are your cultural values?
8. Do you find that you are bicultural in your behavior and expectations at home and work?
9. Do you encounter stereotyping toward you based on your ethnicity and or gender?
10. Do facilitators that aid in breaking down the barriers to attaining a position in higher level administration in community college exist for Asian American females?
11. Do you or have you had any role models or mentors?

Appendix B: E-mail Member Checking Script

E-mail Member Checking Script

Dear _____,

Thank you again for participating in the research study. As promised, attached is the transcriptions of the interviews. Please take some time to go over them and feel free to do the following:

- Indicate what information or words you would like to be deleted from the transcription. These deletions can be due to discomfort on your part or error on my part.
- Indicate what information or words you would like to add to the transcription. These additions can be due clarity or information that you remembered after the interviews took place.

Once you have gone over the transcriptions and feel comfortable with the information, please return it either via email to marcia.somer@cptc.edu or postal mail to Marcia Somer, 7236 Steamboat Island Rd. NW Olympia, Washington, 98502.

I would really appreciate your clarifications by _____.
(date)

Sincerely,

Marcia Somer

Appendix C: Recruitment Scripts

**E-mail and Telephone Recruitment Script
(First Interaction)**

Dear _____,

My name is Marcia Somer. I am a Doctoral Candidate, in the School of Education at Oregon State University, in the Community College Leadership Program.

I am contacting you to see whether you would consider participating in a study that I am doing for my dissertation on the experiences of Asian American Female community college vice presidents and presidents. The purpose of this research study is to collect narratives or “stories” of Asian American female leaders that capture the barriers and facilitators they encountered as they moved into their career positions as well as those they have experienced more recently. The barriers could include the “glass ceiling,” stereotyping, cultural values, and gender role expectations. The facilitators could be mentors, role models, and leadership programs.

Participants of this study would be of Asian American descent only, specifically, Chinese American, Japanese American, Korean American, and or Filipino American. Participants were also born and raised in the United States.

Your participation in this study would consist of reviewing an outline of the study and signing the Informed Consent Document, both of which I am sending to you via email and postal mail, and a follow-up telephone conversation so that you have an opportunity for clarification. Once you have agreed to participate, please sign the Informed Consent Form and send it back to me via postal mail in the envelope that I provided. I will be giving you a copy of the signed Informed Consent Form when we conduct the first interview, for your records. In the follow up telephone conversation, we will also be determining a date, time, and place for the two interviews. In addition, you will be engaging in two interviews with me, with the first being about one hour in length, and the second about two hours in length. Finally, I will be sending you're an email with the transcribed interviews to allow you the opportunity to review the collected information. The length of this study will be over a period of five months beginning this February.

Please consider participating in this study. Your contributions to the current knowledge of Asian American females' experiences in academia would allow other Asian American females, such as myself, to hear the valuable words of those who have broken new ground in higher education leadership. I would be honored by your acceptance.

Respectfully,

Marcia Somer

253-589-5586 or 360-866-8119
marcia.somer@cptc.edu

**E-mail or Telephone Confirmation Message to Potential Participant in
Agreement to Participate
(Second Interaction)**

Dear _____,

I am honored by your willingness to participate in this study. If you agree to sign the Informed Consent Document I will ask you to return it with your signature in the envelope that was provided. I will also give you a copy of the signed Informed Consent Documents, at the first interview, for your records.

Do you have any further questions about this study or your participation?

I would like to at this time, set up dates, times, and places where the interviews will occur.

If you would like a summary of my research findings, please tell me or email me, and also provide a mailing address.

I am looking forward to our proceeding forward with our collaboration.

Respectfully,

Marcia Somer
253-589-5586 or 360-866-8119
marcia.somer@cptc.edu

**Confirmation Message to Potential Participant Not in Agreement to Participate
(Second Interaction)**

Dear _____,

Thank you very much for considering my offer to participate in a research study. I understand your reason for not being able to participate in the study.

If you are interested in receiving a summary of my findings please tell or email me and provide a mailing address.

Respectfully,

Marcia Somer
253-589-5586 or 360-866-8119
marcia.somer@cptc.edu

Appendix D: Informational Letter

(College Letterhead)

INFORMATIONAL LETTER FOR INTERESTED PARTICIPANTS

Date:

Dear _____,

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research study. We are inviting you to participate in our study because you are of Asian American descent, specifically, Chinese American, Filipino American, Japanese American, and or Korean American, female, born and raised in the United States, hold the position of vice president or president of a community college, and are willing to share your career and familial experiences. It is anticipated that there will be up to eight participants interviewed as a part of this study. Knowing that there are so few Asian American female community college leaders, your voice is very valuable to both this research study and other aspiring Asian American females.

Project Title: The Experiences of Asian American Females Seeking Vice President and President Positions in Community Colleges: A View of the Barriers and Facilitators

Principal Investigator: Dr. Richard Shintaku, College of Education
Co-Investigator: Marcia Somer, College of Education

PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY

The purpose of this study is to explore the experiences of Asian American females who have attained the leadership positions of vice president or president of a community college. The four Asian American descents have been chosen as participants because of the shared cultural values that other researchers have discovered. Included in this exploration is the discussion of the possible barriers or obstacles and facilitators or aids that you have encountered during your career and movement towards the leadership position. Specifically, we want to understand the existence of barriers such as stereotyping, discrimination, cultural values, acculturation, biculturalism, and the “glass ceiling.” In addition, we would like to understand the facilitators that might aid one to their leadership position, such as mentors, role models, and other factors. These factors have not been explored in Asian American female vice presidents and presidents of community colleges.

The results of this study will allow others to become better informed of the experiences of Asian American females who seek leadership positions of higher level in community colleges. It is our hope that the information that comes out of this study

will inform those who are non Asian American females, who work with or have the responsibility of hiring decisions, about the struggles and successes of Asian American female leaders. In addition, we would like the information that is uncovered in this study to be informative to and acknowledging of other Asian American females who seek to attain the position of vice president or president in community colleges.

The results of this study may be used for publication and presentation. This research study is being conducted in partial fulfillment of the Doctor of Philosophy degree requirements at Oregon State University.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS STUDY

The significance of this study is three fold:

- 1) Asian American females who are in administrative leadership positions in community colleges are underrepresented.
 - As compared to other females of color, Asian Americans are second to the lowest, American Indians being the lowest, in the number of 2-year college higher level administrators. In 1991 there were 105 and in 1997 there were 143.
 - There were two Asian American female community college presidents in 2003.
 - When comparing the percentage of Asian American females in the United States in 2000 to the number of community college administrators in 1997, there were 4.2% compared to 1.5%.
- 2) Very few studies are done on Asian American higher educational administrators.

Only six studies, all which were dissertational research, on Asian Americans and higher level administrative positions. Out of these six, three focused on the work experiences in 2 or 4 year educational institutions. No study has focused on only Asian American females in senior level, or vice president and president positions, in community colleges.

- 3) As an Asian American, it is a personal obligation to give voices to other Asian Americans, particularly females, who are invisible and unheard both administratively and in scholarly research. With very few Asian American females as vice presidents or presidents of community colleges, others who aspire to attain such positions should know what barriers to expect, and what facilitators may allow them to break that “glass ceiling.”

GUIDING RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Each participant will have signed an Informed Consent document, be contacted by telephone, and engage in two informal discussions. The first will be over a meal, in an effort to gain familiarity and self-disclosure, and the second, a two hour “interview,” where the following guiding questions lead the dialogue:

1. What is your experience as an Asian American female when seeking advancement to a leadership position?
2. What was your hiring process experience when you applied to your current position?
3. How many times did you attempt to become a president or vice president?
4. Do you think your ethnicity or gender effect the hiring process that you experienced?
5. Do barriers to attaining the position or community college president or vice president exist for Asian American females?
6. Have you found that your ethnicity and gender has determined the experiences you have had during your career pathway to a higher level administrator?
7. What are your cultural values?
8. Do you find that you are bicultural in your behavior and expectations at home and work?
9. Do you encounter stereotyping toward you based on your ethnicity and or gender?
10. Do facilitators that aid in breaking down the barriers to attaining a position in higher level administration in community college exist for Asian American females?
11. Do you or have you had any role models or mentors?

The guiding questions allow for a conversation, which will be audio recorded, and, it is hoped, will lead to an open rich discussion on one’s facilitators and barriers to their current positions.

PROCEDURES

If you agree to participate in this study, your involvement will take place sometime between February and June 2007. You will be called by the researcher so that participant questions and concerns may be addressed, along with the initial steps toward comfortable dialogue and familiarity. Afterwards, an interview date and place will be arranged through a telephone call or email. The first informal face-to-face conversation will occur over a meal. On the following day, the two hour "interview" will occur with the guiding questions to lead the conversation. Both conversations will occur within two consecutive days so that researcher's traveling time and expenses can be maintained. Finally, after transcription has occurred and shared with the participant, another discussion might occur for clarifications, through email or telephone conversation.

I look forward to having a conversation, and will contact via telephone to determine the best time for us to meet to being our dialogue. Thank you for your time and willingness to participate and contribute to this important research study.

Sincerely,

Marcia Somer

Co-investigator, Oregon State University, College of Education
(253) 589-5586
marcia.somer@cptc.edu

Richard Shintaku

Principal Investigator, Oregon State University, College of Education
(541) 737-9324
rich.shintaku@oregonstate.edu

Appendix E: Informed Consent Document

**Adult Education & Higher Education Leadership**

Oregon State University, College of Education, 403 Education Hall,
Corvallis, OR 97331-3502

Phone 541-737-4317 Fax 541-737-3655 www.oregonstate.edu/education

INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT

Project Title: The Experiences of Asian American Females Who
Have Attained Vice President and President Positions in Community
Colleges: A View of the Barriers and Facilitators

Principal Investigator: Dr. Richard Shintaku, College of Education

Co-Investigator: Marcia Somer, College of Education

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY?

This is a research study designed to explore the experiences of Asian American females who hold the position of vice president or president of a community college. Specifically, this study seeks to uncover the barriers or obstacles and facilitators or aids that Asian American females experienced as they attained the senior level leadership positions. In this study, the Asian American groups that will be focused upon are Chinese Americans, Filipino Americans, Japanese Americans, and Korean Americans. Past research has found that these particular four Asian American groups are more likely to share similar cultural values. The Asian American females' facilitators or barriers could be related to one's cultural values.

The results of this study will serve to inform Asian American females whose career goals are higher level administration in community colleges as well as those who are involved in the hiring decisions. The results of this study may be used for publication and presentation.

This research study is being done as partial fulfillment for the Doctor of Philosophy degree requirements at Oregon State University.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS FORM?

The purpose of this consent form is to give you the information to help you decide whether you wish to be a participant in this study.

Please read this form carefully. You may ask questions about the research, what you will be asked to do, the possible risks and benefits, your rights as a volunteer, and anything else about the research or this form that is not clear. When all of your questions have been answered and the purpose and procedures of the research study is clear, you can decide if you want to be in this study as a participant or not. This process is called “informed consent.” You will be given a copy of this form, Informed Consent Form, for your records.

WHY AM I BEING INVITED TO TAKE PART IN THIS STUDY?

You are being invited to be a part of this study as a participant because you are an Asian American female who is also a vice president or president of a community college. Your ethnicity is one or more of the following: Korean American, Chinese American, Filipino American, and Japanese American, and you were born and raised in the United States. It is anticipated that three to eight participants will interviewed for this study.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN DURING THE STUDY AND HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE?

If you agree to participate in this study, your involvement will take place sometime between February and the end of June 2007. This study will involve being interviewed as a way of collecting “stories” or experiences of the participants. This methodology recognizes that both the participant and researcher participate in the storytelling and perspective taking. A number of open-ended questions will help the interview process that may be elaborated with stories of one’s experiences.

During this five month study, you will be contacted in the following manner:

1. The first interaction will be the initial contact that the co-investigator/researcher, Marcia Somer, will make through telephone call or email. This will be an opportunity to request your participation, discuss the study, and send you the Informed Consent Document.
2. The second interaction will be via telephone call or email to allow the co-investigator/researcher, Marcia Somer, to answer the participant’s questions and set up the face-to-face interviews. This will include determining a date, time, and place of interviews. The date, time, and place of these interviews will be at your convenience. I am planning on traveling and conducting the interviews near your place of work or residence.

3. The third interaction will be the first interview, an informal conversation, that will occur over a meal the day before the second interview. This will last for about one hour.
4. The fourth interaction will be the second interview that starts with guiding open-ended questions, and will last for no more than two hours. This interview will be audio recorded.
5. The fifth interaction will be through email, where you will be sent the transcribed interview and allowed to make changes or deletions as you see fit.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS OF THE STUDY?

The risk to you as a participant in this study will be minimal:

- With so few Asian American female community college presidents and vice presidents, it is possible that the readers of the study could deduce the participants' identities.

To counter this risk, if requested, a pseudonym will be utilized on all forms of the written responses, analysis, and summaries of the study. In addition, the location of the community colleges that employ the participants will not be revealed if requested.

Please indicate by signing your initials if you would like a pseudonym or not:

____ Yes, I would like a pseudonym to be used in all transcribed and reported information, so that confidentiality with regard to name, institution, and location remain.

____ No, I would not like a pseudonym, and want to be identified in all of the transcribed and reported information. IN ADDITION, I would like the institution, and location to not be identified.

____ No, I would not like a pseudonym to be used in all transcribed and reported information. I would like my name, institution, and location to be identified.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF THE STUDY?

There will be no direct benefits to participating in this study. A possible indirect benefit is the knowledge that you have allowed other Asian American females who have or continue to seek similar leadership positions an understanding of what barriers and facilitators they may experience to becoming a community college vice president or president. In addition, as a participant, you have shared information, in the scholarly research, that may help those who are in the position to make senior leadership hiring decisions to be more informed. Everyone who reads this research study will have gained

knowledge of the experiences of Asian American female who aspire to be a community college vice president or president.

WILL I BE PAID FOR PARTICIPATING?

You will also not be paid for participating in this study. You will also not have any costs for participating in this study.

WHO WILL SEE THE INFORMATION I GIVE?

The information you provide during this research study will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by law. Federal government regulatory agencies and the Oregon State University Institutional Research Board (a committee that reviews and approves research studies involving human subjects) may inspect and copy records pertaining to this study. In trying to maintain confidentiality, if requested, your pseudonym will be used on all documentation including the final written research report.

The researcher will not reveal the institution, location, and name of the participants, unless the participant requests that her identity, location, and/or work institution not be kept confidential. The pseudonyms will be associated with any information, stories, or quotes. Those who do not wish to have a pseudonym will be identified with their information, stories, and quotes.

Your identity will only be known to the co-investigator/researcher, Marcia Somer and principal investigator, Richard Shintaku. Marcia Somer will personally transcribe all of the audio recordings. All audio and written recordings will be under lock and key at her place of residence when she is not reading or transcribing them. All audio recordings will be destroyed three years after the completion of this research study.

DO I HAVE A CHOICE TO BE IN THIS STUDY?

You have a choice to be in this study. If you decide to take part in the study, it should be because you really want to volunteer. You will not lose any benefits or rights you would normally have if you choose not to volunteer. You can stop participating at any time during the study and still keep the benefits and rights you had before volunteering.

You will not be treated differently if you decide to stop taking part in the study. You are also free to choose to not answer any of the questions that are asked during the interviews.

Should you choose to withdraw from this study and data has been collected, the information obtained will be integrated with the data given by other

participants in this study. Your information will be stored and later destroyed at the end of the three years as discussed previously.

WHAT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS?

If you have any questions about this research project, please contact:

Dr. Richard Shintaku	or	Marcia Somer
402 Education Hall		7236 Steamboat Island Rd. NW
Oregon State University		Olympia, WA
Corvallis, WA 97331		98502
(541) 737-9324		(253) 589-5586 or (360)
866-8119		
rich.shintaku@oregonstate.edu		marcia.somer@cptc.edu

If you have any questions about your rights as a participant, please contact Oregon State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) Human Protections Administrator at (541) 737-4933 or by email at IRB@oregonstate.edu

Your signature indicates that this research study has been explained to you, that your questions have been answered, and that you agree to take part in this study. You will receive a copy of this form.

Participant's Name (printed):

(Signature of Participant)

(Date)

Appendix F: Institutional Review Board Approval Letter

TO: Richard Shintaku
Education

IRB #: 3485 (The Experiences of Asian American Females Who Have Attained
Vice President and President Positions in Community Colleges: A View of
the Barriers and Facilitators)

Level of Review: Expedited

Expiration Date: **01/31/08**

Approved Number of Participants: **8**

The referenced project was reviewed under the guidelines of Oregon State
University's Institutional Review Board (IRB). The IRB has **approved** the:

Initial Application Continuing Review Project
Revision
with a (if applicable): Waiver of Documentation of Informed Consent
 Waiver of Consent

A copy of this information will be provided to the full IRB committee.

- **CONSENT FORM:** All participants must receive the IRB-stamped informed consent document. If the consent is in a format that could not have stamp placement (i.e. web site language, email language, etc), then the language must be **exactly** as the IRB approved it.
- **PROJECT REVISION REQUEST:** Any changes to the approved protocol (e.g. protocol, informed consent form(s), testing instrument(s), research staff, recruitment material, or increase in the number of participants) must be submitted for approval before implementation.
- **ADVERSE EVENTS:** Must be reported within three days of occurrence. This includes any outcome that is not expected, routine and that result in bodily injury and/or psychological, emotional, or physical harm or stress.
- **CONTINUING REVIEW:** A courtesy notice will be sent to remind researchers to complete the continuing review form to renew this project, however – it is the researcher's responsibility to ensure that continuing review occurs prior to the expiration date. Material must be submitted with adequate time for the office to process paperwork. If there is a lapse in approval, suspension of all activity including data analysis, will occur.
- **DEVIATION/EXCEPTIONS:** Any departure from the approved protocol must be reported within 10 business days of occurrence or when discovered.

Forms are available at:

<http://oregonstate.edu/research/osprc/rc/humansubjects.htm>.

If you have any questions, please contact the IRB Human Protections Administrator at IRB@oregonstate.edu or by phone at (541) 737-8008.



Date: February 1, 2007

Elisa Espinoza Fallows
IRB Human Protections Administrator