Job Crafting During College and University President Transitions: A Narrative Study of Board Professionals

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my mother, Maria, a champion of finding meaning in work and my inspiration. My mother was a bus driver for the New York metropolitan area. She saw her job as an important role in making sure people got to where they needed to be. Whether it was the early morning rush hour crowd or the late-night partiers, she was proud of getting them to work on time or ensuring they got home safely. At her funeral her fellow bus drivers arrived together, wearing their uniforms and carrying a large display of flowers. It was a parade in her honor.

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throughout the process. I had the privilege of getting to know them so well as part of this work. This study would not be possible without their stories.

Abstract

Job Crafting During College and University President Transitions:
A Narrative Study of Board Professionals

A wave of presidential transitions is expected in higher education within the next several years (ACE, 2017). While the transition of a president can be a monumental and celebrated occasion for a college or university, it is many times accompanied by work disruptions, job uncertainty, and turnover of senior administrators (Overend, 2011; Smerek, 2013; Reed, 2017). One role that is particularly significant and vulnerable during a presidential transition is that of the board professional. The board professional is the primary liaison, planner, adviser, and staffer of a college or university president and governing board. Board professionals are expected to work with the new presidents to move the institution forward, helping them navigate significant challenges and increasing the likelihood of a smooth and successful transition (Cieslak & Mersereau, 2008; Reed, 2017). For board professionals, presidential transitions can provide opportunities for growth but are also associated with uncertainty as they often lead to continuous changes and turnover (Gaval, 2009; Quinn, 2007; Reed, 2017; Smerek, 2013).

Job crafting is one approach that helps employees such as board professionals adapt in complex work situations such as those brought on by presidential transitions (Berg, Dutton, & Wrzesniewski, 2008; Demerouti, 2014; Hakanen, Seppala, & Peeters, 2017; Kaltiainen, Lipponen, & Petrou, 2018; Petrou, Demerouti, & Schaufeli, 2018; Zhang & Parker, 2019). Job crafting is a process where employees shape their jobs physically by either changing their tasks at work or their interactions with the individuals

they work with, or shape their jobs cognitively by changing how they perceive their work (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001).

This narrative study focused on board professionals' experience with job crafting during a presidential transition. Eight board professionals who underwent a presidential transition were interviewed for the study. Findings from the study were highlighted within themes of how board professionals shaped new relationships and reframed existing ones throughout the transition; how the significant and unique role of the board professionals influenced their job crafting; and how the board professionals' loyalty to the president as well as to the institution, its mission, and its students was linked to their job crafting.

Keywords: job crafting, board professionals, presidential transition, narrative research

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Chapter 1: Introduction

In the United States, a wave of college and university presidential transitions is expected within the next several years. The American Council on Education (ACE, 2017) reported that the average age of college presidents has been steadily rising with 58% of current presidents aged 60 or older and the percentage of presidents over age 71 increasing from 5% in 2012 to 11% in 2016 (p. 7). According to ACE (2017), 54% of sitting college and university presidents are expected to leave their current positions by 2022 and 78% are planning to step down by 2026. The number of presidential transitions is expected to rise even further with shifts in the presidency such as shorter tenures of six to seven years versus the longer lengths of service of the past (ACE, 2017).

A presidential transition is defined by the departure of the sitting president through the first one to two years of a new presidency (Gaval, 2009; Lohse, 2008; Overend, 2011). The presidential transition is a significant period for a college or university because it signals change and marks an important time for the institution's history (Gaval, 2009). It is also accompanied by high turnover of senior administrators who work directly with the presidents (Jackson, 2018; Overend, 2011; Smerek, 2013). These transitions by their very nature disrupt work environments, leaving those who work at the institutions uneasy with the ambiguity and uncertainty of the process (Jackson, 2018; Overend, 2011).

One little-known role that is particularly significant and vulnerable during a presidential transition is that of the board professional. The board professional is the primary liaison, planner, adviser, and staffer of a college or university president and governing board (Reed, 2017). Typically a member of the president's office staff, the

board professional's job ranges from a support role, such as administrative assistant coordinating the functions of the president and the board, to a senior university leader serving in the president's cabinet and participating in more strategic discussions at the highest level of the institution (Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges [AGB], 2015; Cieslak & Mersereau, 2008; Reed, 2017). As the liaison between the president and the governing board, supporting a presidential transition is an essential part of the board professional's role (Cieslak & Mersereau, 2008; Reed, 2017). A board professional is expected to support the presidential search and work with the new president to move the institution forward, helping him or her navigate significant challenges to increase the likelihood of a smooth and successful transition (Cieslak & Mersereau, 2008; Reed, 2017).

Studies on college and university presidential transitions have found that for staff members such as board professionals who work directly with the president, the transitions can provide opportunities for growth and development (Gaval, 2009; Quinn, 2007; Smerek, 2013). For board professionals, a presidential transition can be a rewarding time in which they have the greatest impact on the history and future of the college or university (Reed, 2017). This time of transition can elevate the board professional's role at the institution (Reed, 2017).

A presidential transition can also be a very challenging time for those who work directly with the president. It often leads to continuous changes and turnover within the administration (Gaval, 2009; Jackson, 2018; Overend, 2011; Smerek, 2013). The transition is associated with uncertainty and job insecurity for the president's direct staff members whose tenures are typically questioned during this period (Gaval, 2009;

Jackson, 2018; Overend, 2011; Quinn, 2007; Reed, 2017; Smerek, 2013). For a board professional, the transition can be a lonely period; it is said to be a time of anxiety that brings about feelings of being in a "no man's land" (Reed, 2017, p. 60). Board professionals are encouraged to "do a lot of soul searching" during a presidential transition and to be strategic with their career (Reed, 2017, p. 63).

Whether due to reductions or increases in workforce, organizational restructuring, introducing new technology, or leadership transitions such as those expected in higher education, today's workplaces are continuously changing and employees such as board professionals have to manage the ambiguity and uncertainty of these changes (Petrou, Demerouti, & Schaufeli, 2018; Scott, 2019; Zhang & Parker, 2019). Job crafting is one approach that helps employees adapt in these complex work environments (Berg, Dutton, & Wrzesniewski, 2008; Cameron & McNaughtan, 2014; Demerouti, 2014; Hakanen, Seppala, & Peeters, 2017; Kaltiainen, Lipponen, & Petrou, 2018; Kira, Balkin, & San, 2012; Petrou, Demerouti, & Schaufeli, 2015; Petrou et al., 2018; Zhang & Parker, 2019). Defined as "the physical and cognitive changes individuals make in the task or relational boundaries of their work," job crafting is a process where employees customize the designs of their jobs in personally meaningful ways (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001, p.179).

When job crafting, employees shape their jobs physically by either changing their tasks at work or their interactions with the individuals they work with, or they shape their jobs cognitively by changing how they perceive their work (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). Employees are typically motivated to job craft when they feel their needs are not being met at work (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001), when their working conditions are

not optimal (Frese & Fay, 2001), or when they encounter uncertain and ambiguous situations at work (Grant & Parker, 2009). Under these conditions, employees take charge and redesign their jobs in order to improve the job for themselves, according to their needs, goals, and values (Petrou et al., 2018). In complex work environments, job crafting provides a sense of control and helps employees build acceptance for the changing situations (Petrou et al., 2018; Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001).

For board professionals the transition could lead to new opportunities (Reed, 2017). It may also be a time of anxiety and uncertainty (Reed, 2017). A great deal of focus is placed on presidents throughout the transition period while this important role that is key to the success of the presidency often goes unnoticed (Overend, 2011).

Statement of the Problem

With an expected surge in presidential transitions at colleges and universities, it is important to understand if and how board professionals experience job crafting as an approach to shape their jobs in personally meaningful ways when navigating the transition. Most of the limited literature available on presidents and transitions in higher education is autobiographical with many prominent former presidents writing about their experiences (Jackson, 2018). Of the little empirical research that exists on presidential transitions, it is mostly focused on presidents rather than senior administrators or members of the executive team (Jackson, 2018).

Research on proactive approaches such as job crafting sheds a light on how board professionals adjust to the complex work conditions brought on by presidential transitions. Understanding the process of how they craft their jobs is significant to ensuring positive outcomes for board professionals throughout and beyond presidential

transitions. Additionally, research on the board professional's experience is an important contribution to the literature on presidential transitions.

Several areas for future research were identified from the current theory and research on job crafting. First, to better understand the process of job crafting, additional qualitative research was needed. While most of the research leading up to and shortly after the conceptualization of Wrzesniewski and Dutton's (2001) job crafting model had been qualitative, quantitative studies have dominated the job crafting research since then (Lazazzara, Tims, & de Gennaro, 2019; Tims & Bakker, 2010; Zhang & Parker, 2019). The quantitative studies have produced generalized insights on the job crafting process, but every employee is unique and the ways in which employees craft their jobs differs greatly from one employee to the next as well as between and within jobs (Wrzesniewski et al., 2003). While quantitative studies are favorable for exploring the relationship between antecedents, outcomes, and factors influencing job crafting, they do not delve into individual experiences and the context behind employees' actions (Creswell, 2013; Lazazzara, Tims, & de Gennaro, 2019). Qualitative research is needed when the context or setting has to be understood and can only be established by talking directly to people and through in-depth descriptions and narratives (Creswell, 2013; Hartman,1990; Lazazzara, Tims, & de Gennaro, 2019).

Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) conceptualized their job crafting model from qualitative research such as their study on hospital cleaning staff. For the study, 28 members of a hospital cleaning staff were interviewed about the nature of their work. They found that while one group of hospital workers described themselves as cleaners, a second group saw their job as an "integrated whole, rather than as a set of discrete tasks

(e.g., cleaning rooms)" (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001, p. 191). The second group of hospital cleaners saw their role as critical in healing patients. Wrzesniewski and Dutton's research showed how employees craft their jobs cognitively by perceiving who they are and why their work matters in broader terms. It also provided an in-depth description of the process that cannot be obtained from quantitative approaches. Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) encouraged qualitative research because "studying narratives of work may be the better way to study job crafting, for crafting takes many forms and directions, involving how people see their work and themselves in their work" (pp. 196–197).

In addition to the mainly quantitative studies, empirical studies on job crafting had primarily focused on the behavioral aspects of the process such as task and relational job crafting. Since changing perceptions of one's job does not necessarily involve changing anything physical or objective about the job, such as the tasks being performed or with whom one is interacting, there has been little research on and recognition of the cognitive components of job crafting (Bakker, Tims, & Derks, 2012; Tims & Bakker, 2010). As can be seen in Wrzesniewski and Dutton's (2001) research with hospital cleaning staff, cognitive job crafting involves employees changing how they think about tasks, relationships, or jobs as a whole. By intentionally changing the way in which they think about their jobs, employees are influencing the meaning they derive from their work (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001).

Recent job crafting literature recognized the importance of cognitive job crafting, especially in jobs where there is little opportunity for task and relational job crafting (Bruning & Campion, 2018; Niessen, Weseler, & Kostova, 2016; Slemp & Vella-Brodrick, 2013; Zhang & Parker, 2019). Some researchers deliberated where cognitive

job crafting fits within the job crafting process and others considered whether it is a first phase in the process (Niessen et al., 2016; Slemp & Vella-Brodrick, 2013; Zhang & Parker, 2019). As a first phase in the job crafting process, employees would frame their job cognitively; this would then lead them to engage in task and/or relational job crafting. An understanding was needed of how the job crafting process unfolds and where and how cognitive job crafting fits and influences the process over time (Bruning & Campion, 2018; Niessen et al., 2016; Slemp & Vella-Brodrick, 2013; Zhang & Parker, 2019).

Purpose Statement and Research Questions

The purpose of this narrative study was to understand how board professionals experience job crafting during a presidential transition. The presidential transition period for the study was defined as beginning with the announcement of the departure of the sitting president, followed by the search and selection process for the new president, and continuing through the first one to two years of the new president's term. The study focused on board professionals who experienced a presidential transition within one to two years of the beginning of the study. Board professionals were asked to describe their job experiences throughout the presidential transitions. To understand where cognitive job crafting fit within the job crafting process, board professionals were asked to describe how they perceived their jobs throughout the transition experience, from the departure of the sitting president through the first one to two years of the new president's term. The research question guiding this study was: how do board professionals at colleges and universities describe and make meaning of their job crafting experiences during a presidential transition? A sub-question was: how do the board professionals perceive

their jobs throughout the entire transition experience, from the departure of the sitting president through the first one to two years of the new president's term?

Statement of Potential Significance

Most of the research on presidential transitions in higher education has focused on the role of the president (Jackson, 2018; Overend, 2011). Little attention has been paid to the experience of senior administrators such as board professionals, a frequently unrecognized group of higher education professionals who work directly with presidents and therefore have a significant role in the success of presidential transitions (Jackson, 2018; Overend, 2011; Reed, 2017). Failure to manage the dynamics of this important role throughout a presidential transition could result in a loss of valuable resources for the institution as well as potential reputational cost (Jackson, 2018).

This study adds to the literature on presidential transitions in higher education, providing insight on the role of the board professionals throughout the process. Findings on the experience of board professionals provide insight into how they managed throughout the transition. With a surge of presidential transitions expected in higher education, the findings from the study are more significant than ever. When undertaking a presidential transition, board professionals can job craft as a strategy to minimize turnover as well as feelings of uncertainty and anxiety produced by the changes and disruption in work. Board professionals can also job craft to make their jobs more meaningful, maximizing the opportunities for growth and development that arise from a shift in leadership.

The study also contributes to a better understanding of the job crafting process, in particular the cognitive aspects of job crafting, during significant organizational change,

i.e., a presidential transition at a college or university. The in-depth descriptions of the board professionals' experiences provide context for unique job crafting approaches during a presidential transition. While more research is still needed to provide a greater understanding of the components of cognitive job crafting and how and when it unfolds throughout the job crafting process, the study contributes insight into board professionals' crafting how they perceived their jobs throughout the presidential transition experience.

More generally, the findings from the study benefit employees adapting to continuously changing work environments. Almost two decades after job crafting was conceptualized, Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2020) described how the "principals of job crafting remain deeply relevant in a world where job structure is rapidly changing, putting more and more responsibility on the individual for the experience and engagement in their work" (para. 11). The findings from the study provide meaningful contributions for employees to identify opportunities to craft their jobs and bring meaning to their work.

Conceptual Framework

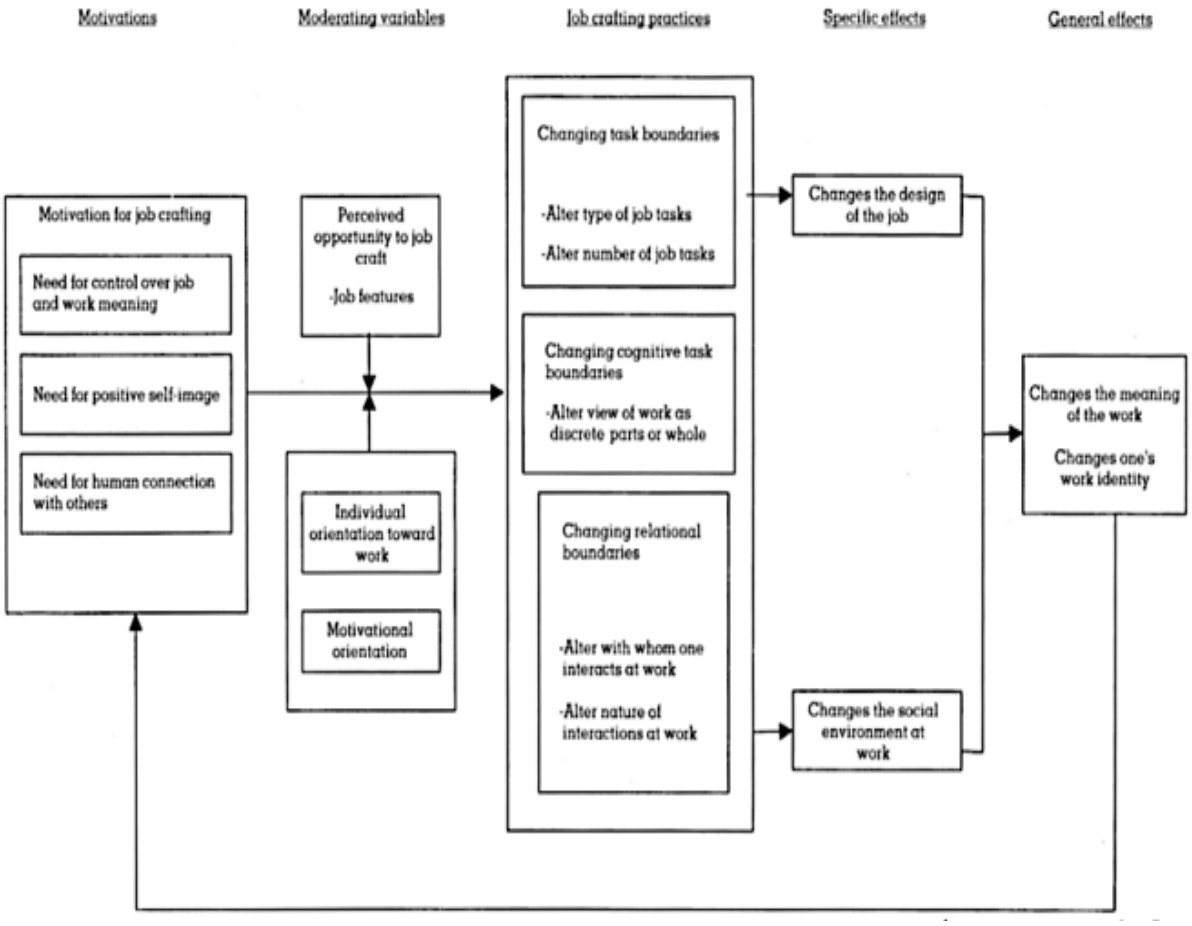
To understand how board professionals experience job crafting during a presidential transition, the study was informed by the Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) job crafting model, which includes cognitive job crafting as an important part of the job crafting process. It also drew on empirical research on presidential transitions in higher education. Chapter Two presents the literature on the job crafting models and presidential transitions in greater detail.

Job Crafting

Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) conceptualized the first job crafting model, identifying three types of job crafting—task, relational, and cognitive—through which employees shape their jobs by modifying tasks they perform, relationships with the people they interact with, or how they think about their jobs. Through their model, Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) highlight the active role employees play in shaping their jobs when choosing to do less, more, or different tasks at work, when changing the frequency and/or quality of interactions with others at work, or when cognitively changing their view of the job. These changes can affect employees' work identities and the meaning of work in their lives (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001).

The process of job crafting occurs over time and mostly involves four stages (see Figure 1): 1) motivation for job crafting; 2) perceived opportunity to job craft, individual and motivational orientation toward work; 3) changing task/cognitive/relational boundaries; and 4) changes to the design of the job and/or the social environment at work (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). The first stage concerns employees' motivation to job craft based on several needs and/or desires. The second stage involves moderating variables that lead employees to perceive that the opportunity to job craft is available to them. In the third stage, when employees are motivated and perceive they have the opportunity, job crafting occurs in various forms based on an employee's orientation and motivation to work. The last stage involves the outcomes that follow as a result of job crafting (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001).

Figure 1. Job Crafting Model



Note: Job Crafting Model. Reprinted from "Crafting a job: Revisioning employees as active crafters of their work," by A.Wrzesniewski and J.E. Dutton, 2001, *Academy of Management Review,* 26(2), p. 182. Copyright (2001) by the *Academy of Management Review*. Reprinted with permission by the Academy of Management.

The job crafting process begins when employees are motivated to do so, which can happen for a variety of reasons, mainly a need to assert control over their work, a need for human connection, or a need to create a positive self-image at work (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). Other motivations include a need to meaningfully interact with people who benefit from the work, a desire to fulfill a passion that is not being satisfied by the current job, or a need to cope with adversity at work (Berg, Grant, & Johnson, 2010; Berg et al., 2008).

Once motivated, employees are likely to job craft when they perceive that an opportunity to job craft exists, which typically means they have the freedom or autonomy to do so (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). Whether employees have a say in what they do in their jobs and how they do it will determine the initiation of job crafting behaviors (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). If an employee's job has a high degree of interdependence with processes that are interconnected with others at work, there are perceived challenges to job crafting. In jobs where employees are closely monitored or supervised by managers, there is little autonomy and therefore less perceived opportunity to job craft (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001).

An employee's work orientation and work motivation will affect what form the job crafting takes. Employees' work orientation—whether they view their work as a job, career, or calling—will influence job crafting behaviors (Akkermans & Tims, 2017; Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). Similarly, employees' work motivation—whether intrinsic and the work is done for its own sake or if extrinsic and the work is done to meet some external end—will also affect job crafting behaviors (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). Employees who view their work as a job or career tend to view work as separate from the rest of their lives (Akkermans & Tims, 2017; Berg et al., 2010; Wrzesniewski, McCauley, Rozin, Schwartz, 1997). These employees are likely to be extrinsically motivated by pay or power and engage in job crafting that limits their tasks or focuses on relational boundaries of their jobs (Berg et al., 2010; Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). Employees who view their work as a calling tend to have an intrinsic work motivation and may craft their jobs by taking on additional tasks related to their passion (Berg et al., 2010; Moon, Youn, Hur, & Kim, 2018; Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001).

Job crafting can take on various forms. When job crafting via changing tasks, employees can add or reduce tasks, emphasize tasks that are already part of their jobs, or redesign existing tasks (Berg et al., 2008; Berg, Dutton, & Wrzeniewski, 2013). An example of task crafting is a marketing coordinator who enjoys event planning and takes on those duties even though they are not part of her job description (Berg et al., 2008). When job crafting through changing relationships, employees can choose to build relationships by forging new relationships with others, reframe relationships by changing the nature or purpose of existing relationships, or adapt interactions with existing relationships (Berg et al., 2008, 2013). An example of relational job crafting is a maintenance technician who starts training new employees on high-speed equipment because he likes working with people from different backgrounds (Berg et al., 2008). Cognitive job crafting occurs when employees think about their job as a whole rather than separate tasks or relationships, narrow the purpose of their job on a specific task or relationship, or draw on mental connections between specific tasks or relationships and interests or outcomes (Berg et al., 2008, 2013). An example of cognitive job crafting is a university lecturer who likens teaching as putting on a performance because it reminds him of performing as a musician (Berg et al., 2008). Cognitive job crafting is a focus of this study.

Once job crafting does happen, outcomes for employees include a change in the way they understand the purpose of their work and how it is achieved as well as how they define themselves at work (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). Whether they believe their work contributes to making the world a better place or that it provides an opportunity to earn a living, job crafting allows employees to perform their jobs in particular ways

(Wrzesniewski, LoBuglio, Dutton, & Berg, 2013; Wrzesniewski et al., 1997). Their relationship with their work changes as they reframe the purpose of the job and experience the work differently. In response, employees can cultivate a positive sense of meaning in their work (Berg et al., 2013; Wrzesniewski, 2003; Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001).

Additional theory and research on the components of Wrzesniewski and Dutton's (2001) job crafting model are included in the next chapter's literature review. The literature review includes how the model has been modified since its conceptualization. Of particular interest is the rejection of cognitive job crafting throughout the years and the recent literature highlighting the need to understand when and how cognitive job crafting occurs as well as its relationship to other components of the job crafting model.

Presidential Transition

A typical presidential transition begins when the incumbent president announces his or her resignation, followed by a search process that generally lasts anywhere from six months to one year and leads to the selection of the new president (Gaval, 2009; Lohse, 2008). The first year of a new president's tenure is also considered part of the presidential transition (Gaval, 2009; Lohse, 2008; Overend, 2011). When circumstances of the president's departure are sudden, such as an illness or a death, many institutions hire an interim president to fill in as they search for a new president (Tichenor, 2019). Whether it is a planned or sudden transition, the process can lead to concerns, anxieties, and personnel changes (Gaval, 2009; Lohse, 2008; Overend, 2011). If managed well, the college or university can emerge a stronger institution from a presidential transition (Gaval 2009).

For an effective presidential transition, all involved must recognize the significance of its outcome for the success of the institution (Gaval, 2009; Lohse, 2008; Overend, 2011). With the average cost of a presidential transition at $100,000 and more than a year of the institution's time dedicated to the process, resources of time and money as well as the institution's reputation are at stake (Overend, 2011, p. 1). A failed presidency can cause significant damage to an institution's continuity and stability (Overend, 2011). The function of the institution and its employees are also disrupted during a presidential transition. The change in leadership causes employees to feel uneasy with the ambiguity and uncertainty of the process (Lohse, 2008; Overend, 2011).

Senior administrators who work directly with the president are key to a successful presidential transition (Overend, 2011). The effectiveness of the senior administrative team can cause a presidency to succeed or fail. A positive relationship between the president and the senior administration is important but developing that relationship can be challenging for a new president (Lohse, 2008, Overend, 2011). With a new presidency, it is difficult to gauge where loyalties lie and many of the senior administrators' positions are subject to change (Lohse, 2008). Understanding and acknowledging this anxiety is crucial to the success of such a process (Overend, 2011). Transparency and clear communication were found to alleviate the anxiety as well as providing a forum for senior administrators and others in the campus community to voice their concerns (Overend, 2011).

The following chapter includes studies that touch upon the various aspects of the presidential transition—from the departure of the incumbent president to the search for a new president, placing an interim president, and the new president taking office. The

studies focused on the unique nature of the presidential transition in higher education. One key feature of recent studies is a focus on the important role of the senior administrative professional throughout the transition and the call for more research on this topic.

Summary of Methodology

Using a narrative methodology to understand how board professionals experience job crafting during a presidential transition, the study took a social constructivist interpretative framework, assuming that knowledge is known through people's subjective experience (Creswell, 2013). Reality is shaped by how people perceive it. Participants understand themselves and their world through an interpretive process that is subjective and rooted in their culture (Spector-Mersel, 2010). Multiple meanings and realities are constructed through lived experience and the goal of the research is to rely as much as possible on the participants' views (Creswell, 2013).

The focus of the narrative approach is the rich description of participants' stories about significant experiences (Carless & Douglass, 2017; McAlpine, 2016; Riessman, 2008). A narrative study is best for capturing the detailed stories or experiences of individuals and allows for a more open-ended interview technique so that participants can construct meaning of the situations or experiences they are describing (Creswell, 2013). Narrative research also requires an open, accepting, empathetic, and trusting relationship between researcher and participant so that participants feel safe to express emotions and vulnerabilities (Carless & Douglass, 2017).

Study Participants

The sample for the study were board professionals at colleges and universities who underwent a presidential transition within one -to two years from the point in time when the data were collected. The one-to-two-year time frame was selected because it allowed for participants to have gone through the transition experience but was recent enough that the participants were able to recall the experiences in more detail. Purposeful sampling was used to obtain participants for the study who "can purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem" (Creswell, 2013, p. 156). A list of institutions that had gone through presidential transitions was obtained from the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (AGB), a membership association of colleges and universities where I serve as director for consulting services. From the list of presidential transitions, a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet was used to track information on individual institutions, including the type of institution, details on the presidential search process, and background and contact information for the board professional(s) working at the institution. This information was gathered from AGB's membership database as well as from the institutions' websites. Board professionals who had client relationships with me were eliminated from the spreadsheet.

Upon approval from the George Washington University Institutional Review Board (IRB), an invitation to participate in the study was sent to each board professional via email correspondence. The invitation included background on me (the researcher) and the study. A sample email invitation is included in Appendix A. Ethical considerations such as assuring confidentiality throughout the study were also included in the correspondence. Privacy was maintained through the use of pseudonyms and by

including very little and very general information on the institutions. All IRB regulations were complied with as they pertained to the study.

Narrative research involves a relatively small number of participants, typically from two to fifteen (Riessman & Quinney, 2005; Squire, 2013). Fifteen board professionals responded within the first two weeks of the invitation being sent. A maximum variation sampling technique was used to narrow down the number of interested board professionals. The responses were grouped by institution type and the board professional's rank. Per the maximum variation technique, eight board professionals were selected so that there was at least one representative for the institution type (public, private, larger, smaller) and rank (executive assistant, chief of staff, general counsel, vice president). The list of selected board professionals for the study was not shared and remained confidential.

Data Collection

The interviews for the study were conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic and, therefore, took place virtually. The selected board professionals for the study were invited for a telephone or Zoom video interview. All eight participants preferred a Zoom video interview. The board professionals received the interview protocol in advance of the interview. The protocol included information on the interview process as well as the questions that would be asked during the interview. The draft interview protocol is included as Appendix B. Interviews were conducted via Zoom video and were recorded using the Zoom platform. Only the audio file for the Zoom recording was used for the study. A second recording device, my cell phone, was used in case the Zoom platform failed.

This study followed a semi-structured interview approach. With narrative research, the researcher typically returns for follow-up and to check facts and interpretations (Riessman, 2008; Squire, 2013). For the study, two interviews were conducted with six out of eight participants. Two participants were not available for second interviews. The first interviews were in-depth and approximately 90 minutes long. The second interviews were shorter, between 20 to 60 minutes; they served as follow-up on particular points and interpretations as well as offered opportunities for the participants to reflect and offer additional insight.

Data Analysis

The data analysis for each participant was ongoing, beginning immediately after the first interview. The analysis process varied with each participant as the interviews were conducted between September and December 2020. The process involved transcribing the interviews and developing case narratives, followed by a thematic and structural analysis of the case narratives, and culminating in an analysis across all the case narratives.

Interview Transcriptions

The interview transcript is an integral part of the narrative data analysis. The transcript is a written record that "is composed jointly, crafted in a collaborative conversational interaction" (Riessman, 2008, p. 31). In constructing a transcript, researchers are constructing the narratives for analysis. For the study, I used the Zoom auto transcript feature and corrected the transcription for errors. I reviewed each transcription carefully while listening to the audio interviews and taking detailed notes. Once the transcripts were finalized, I sent the transcripts from the first interviews to the

respective participants for their review. Transcripts from the second interviews were not sent for feedback since the interviews were mainly to follow up on points from the first interviews.

Case Narratives

From the transcripts, a case narrative was created for each participant. For the case narrative, the data for each participant is retold in a condensed story form with a goal of preserving the participant's experiences as best as possible (Reissman, 2008). Once the case narratives were complete, a thematic and structural analysis was employed, followed by a cross case analysis to highlight similarities and differences in patterns across all the participants' case narratives.

Thematic Analysis

The thematic approach may seem very similar to other qualitative methods but in narrative analysis there is a focus on the sequencing and progression of themes within interviews (Squire, 2013). It is during this level of analysis that open coding was employed. Each case narrative was analyzed highlighting text, translating it into codes, and grouping the codes into themes on each of the board professional's experiences.

Structural Analysis

Structural analysis was employed to strengthen the thematic analysis by focusing on how the board professionals narrated their experience (Riessman, 2008). Through structural analysis the researcher slows down the narrative with scrutiny "to notice how a narrator uses form and language to achieve particular effects" (Riessman, 2008, p. 81). Combining the thematic and structural analysis allowed for the description of broad

patterns and also variations in meanings of the board professionals' experiences (Riessman, 2008).

Cross-Case Analysis

Once the thematic and structural analysis were complete, a comparison across the case narratives was conducted. This involved a thorough review of the themes that emerged from the thematic analysis as well as the structural components of the board professionals' narratives that supported those themes. The goal was to seek out similarities and differences across the eight board professionals' experiences (McAlpine, 2016; Riessman, 2008).

Validation

To document the accuracy of the findings, Creswell (2013) recommends using multiple validation strategies. For the study, techniques such as clarifying research bias, field notes, and participant feedback were used. A subjectivity statement of my background is included as Appendix C. The statement provides background on my experience working with board professionals and going through a presidential transition, which shaped interpretations and the approach of the study.

Field Logs

Narrative researchers are encouraged to maintain a log of the process throughout the study to encourage methodological awareness. According to Riessman (2008), "it fosters ongoing reflexivity—critical self-awareness about how the research was done and the impact of critical decisions made along the way" (p. 190). Another advantage of the field log is that it leaves an audit trail, which is not only useful for jogging the researcher's memory of how decisions were made but encourages truthfulness and

strengthens the persuasiveness and validity of the study (Riessman, 2008). For this study, detailed notes were captured throughout. The notes were logged after every interview to capture the experience. Details of the transcription and data analysis process were captured in the field logs to document the process.

Participant Feedback

In line with the close relationship between the researcher and participant as part of the narrative methodology, the researcher "solicits participants' views of the credibility of the findings and interpretations" (Creswell, 2013, p. 252). Participants for the study were sent their interview transcripts for feedback and the final case narratives for review and to confirm that they were an authentic reflection of their experience. This practice, along with field logs, helps strengthen the validity of the stories being told (McAlpine, 2016).

Limitations and Delimitations

The study was delimited to board professionals who experienced a presidential transition within the past one to two years of the beginning of the study. It was further delimited to board professionals working in colleges and universities in the United States. The delimitations excluded board professionals who might have worked at an institution through the presidential search and left shortly after the new president's arrival. The experience of board professionals who leave their positions during the transition could bring a different perspective to the research, depending on why they left their positions.

The delimitations also excluded board professionals who work at institutions abroad or at foundations associated with higher education institutions. There are board professionals working in foundations and international higher education institutions that

are undergoing presidential transitions. Their experiences, however, would have varied because of differences in culture and administrative structures.

A limitation of the study was the use of self-reported data as part of the narrative methodology. As with all narrative studies, the participants decide what to share from their memory and experience. The study is then limited to what the participants remember and decide to share, which could be inaccurate or often in a favorable light to the participant (Riessman, 2008).

In addition, the study was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic. While the presidential transitions being studied occurred mostly in 2019, the pandemic had an effect on higher education and workplaces all over the world. The board professionals' narratives are rooted in their current situation so the past was told from the vantage point of the present. The study cannot control whether any anxieties and uncertainties of current work environments were reflected in the board professionals' accounts of their experience during the presidential transition.

Another limitation is a potential lack of diversity of participants. While the study aimed for diversity in terms of job ranks and types of institutions represented, the study did not control for diversity in the demographics of the board professionals such as age, gender, and race. A diversity of perspectives may be lacking in the study. A representation of various ages, gender, and race would have generated varied perspectives and perhaps different findings.

Definition of Key Terms

For the purposes of this study the terms job crafting, task job crafting, relational job crafting, cognitive job crafting, board professional, and presidential transition are defined as follows:

Job Crafting

Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) defined job crafting as the physical and cognitive changes individuals make in the task or relational boundaries of their work. They identified three types of job crafting—task, relational, and cognitive—through which employees shape their jobs by modifying tasks they perform, relationships with the people they interact with, or how they think about their jobs (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). Tims and Bakker (2010) illustrated job crafting as employees increasing or reducing demands and/or resources at work. This type of job crafting focuses on results such as increased performance and person-environment fit at work (Tims & Bakker, 2010). Bruning and Campion (2018) defined job crafting more generally as "changes to a job that workers make with the intention of improving the job for themselves" (p. 500).

Task Job Crafting

Task job crafting is job crafting via changing tasks. When task crafting, employees can add or reduce tasks, emphasize tasks that are already part of their jobs, or redesign existing tasks (Berg et al., 2013).

Relational Job Crafting

Relational job crafting is job crafting by changing relationships. When relational crafting, employees can choose to build relationships by forging new relationships with

others, reframe relationships by changing the nature or purpose of existing relationships, or adapt interactions with existing relationships (Berg et al., 2013).

Cognitive Job Crafting

Cognitive job crafting involves employees changing how they think about the tasks, relationships, or jobs as a whole. Cognitive job crafting occurs when employees think about their job as a whole rather than separate tasks or relationships, narrow the purpose of their job on a specific task or relationship, or draw mental connections between specific tasks or relationships and interests or outcomes (Berg et al., 2013).

Board Professional

Typically a staff member of the president's office or a senior university leader, the board professional is the primary liaison, planner, adviser, and staffer of a college or university president and governing board (AGB, 2015; Cieslak & Mersereau, 2008; Reed, 2017).

Presidential Transition

According to Gaval (2009), the presidential transition period can begin with the announcement of the departure of the current president, followed by the search and selection process of the new president, and continuing to the first one to two years of the new president's term.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The purpose of this study was to understand how board professionals experience job crafting during a presidential transition. The research question guiding this study was: how do board professionals at colleges and universities describe and make meaning of their job crafting experiences during a presidential transition? This chapter provides a review of the job crafting literature to date as well as an overview of literature on board professionals and presidential transitions in higher education. A representative sample of journal articles, dissertations, books, and book chapters is included in this chapter. The literature is organized with an emphasis on the progression of job crafting research models as well as the evolution of the role of the board professional and an overview of empirical research on presidential transitions in higher education.

Job Crafting Literature

The job crafting literature review consisted of two database searches and a third ongoing forward and backward search of citations for relevant sources. The first job crafting literature search was an inquiry in the ProQuest Central database for the term "job crafting" located "anywhere" within a source. The other parameters of the inquiry were that the sources be full-text, peer-reviewed articles from scholarly journals. The search was general to try to capture all the peer-reviewed scholarly journal articles on job crafting. The inquiry produced 372 results. The results were sorted oldest to newest and 68 articles were chosen for further review after reading abstracts from each of the results and determining whether the articles were focused on job crafting or just mentioned the term. From the 68 articles, 37 were chosen for the literature review based on their relevance to job crafting in the work context.

The database Business Source Ultimate was used for the second search in a more targeted inquiry focusing on management and organizational development literature. The parameters for the search were the term "job crafting," full-text, scholarly (peer reviewed) journals, and English language. The inquiry produced 116 results. The abstracts from these results were read and 81 journal articles were chosen for the literature review based on their job crafting focus (whether it was the main focus of the article). Out of the 81 articles selected, 11 were duplicates of the first search.

A total of 107 peer-reviewed scholarly journal articles were obtained from the first two searches on job crafting literature. The articles spanned from 2001 through 2019 with most of the studies (92 out of 107) taking place within the past five years. Most of the studies (89 out of 107) were quantitative research designs.

The last search was a forward and backward citation search for relevant journal articles, book chapters, dissertations, and presentations. The resources were selected based on their relevance to the understanding of the experience of job crafting. This search was ongoing and captured resources that were recently published and not yet included in the review or that were overlooked in the prior searches. The search ended when a point of saturation (new information is no longer being gathered) was reached. The results of the three searches were organized in a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet that captured information on each result such as the topic, purpose, subjects, methodology, design and analysis, conclusion and results, implications, and notes. The spreadsheet provided a comprehensive database of the job crafting literature.

Job Design Models and Related Concepts

The framework for job crafting is based on seminal job design and redesign theories such as Hackman and Oldham's (1976) job characteristics model and Salancik and Pfeffer's (1978) social information processing model. Hackman and Oldham's (1976) job characteristics model focused on employee motivation and performance through work design, while Salancik and Pfeffer's (1978) model looked at job design from a different perspective highlighting the role of others for meaningful work. Job design theories have evolved, introducing new perspectives on the role of employees and their social environments in the shaping of jobs. Job crafting is mostly distinct from these job design models because of its bottom-up approach where employees take charge of shaping their jobs rather than the organization shaping the job for them. Similar concepts where employees proactively adjust their jobs to fit their needs have been developed but do not share the job crafting focus of satisfying the employee's needs regardless of managerial support or how it affects the organization.

Job Characteristics Model

Hackman and Oldham's (1976) model presented conditions under which a job could be designed or redesigned, structuring or altering the content of the work with the goal of improving employee motivation, performance, and well-being. The 1976 model focused on three variables: (1) the psychological state of employees for their internal work motivation to expand; (2) the job characteristics needed to create these psychological states; and (3) individual attributes that determine how a person responds to complex and challenging work (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). According to the model, five job characteristics of: (1) skill variety (job requires different activities using a

number of different skills and talents), (2) task identity (job has a visible outcome), (3) task significance (job has an impact), (4) autonomy (employee has freedom and independence to carry out the job), and (5) feedback (employee receives information on performance) were said to prompt employee psychological states of experiencing that their work is meaningful and worthwhile, that they are accountable and responsible for the outcomes of the work, and that they are effectively performing the job (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). The links between the job characteristics and the psychological states were moderated by employee attributes such as need for personal growth and development (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). The higher the employee's need for personal growth and development, the more likelihood of positive outcomes such as internal work motivation, quality work performance, satisfaction with work, and low absenteeism and turnover (Hackman & Oldham, 1976).

The job characteristics model, unlike the job crafting model, is a top-down approach. With the job characteristics model, the manager designs the job to fit the employee and the organization. The job crafting model emphasizes the proactive role of employees in shaping their jobs and the meaning they ascribe to their work, regardless of managerial or organizational support.

Social Information Processing Model

According to Salancik and Pfeffer's (1978) social information processing model, employees' social environments influence their attitudes towards work. The social information processing model is based on the "fundamental premise that individuals, as adaptive organisms, adapt attitudes, behavior, and beliefs to their social context and to the reality of their own past and president behavior and situation" (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978,

p. 226). Employees influence each other's attitudes towards work through information and cues they give about their feelings toward and perceptions of the job (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978).

Job crafting, similar to the social information model, takes the context of the job and attitudes towards work into consideration, but also addresses the changes to employee's work identity and meaning of work. Job crafting differs from the social information processing model in the way that feedback from designing the job is used so that "rather than simply interpreting and acting from the cues offered by the job and by others, individuals are instead interpreting and using as feedback the crafting actions they have taken in their own jobs" (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001, p. 188). With job crafting, rather than employees being passive recipients of job tasks or of social information about the job tasks, the employees alter their jobs and then use the feedback to further motivate job crafting (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001).

Related Concepts to Job Crafting

Since the introduction of the job characteristics model and the social information processing model in the 1970s, work environments have shifted and new perspectives on work design have emerged. In a review of work design literature, Grant and Parker (2009) summarized how job design theories evolved with an emphasis on relational and proactive perspectives. According to Grant and Parker (2009), relational and proactive perspectives represent work contexts such as the interdependence of work roles in broader social systems and the uncertainty stemming from the unpredictability of work dynamics such as increased competition, technology, and evolving demands. Relational perspectives of work design theories emphasize social characteristics of work such as

interactions outside of work, task interdependence, social support, and feedback (Grant & Parker, 2009). Proactive perspectives on work design focus on the uncertainty of work environments and how, in these environments, employees are not expected to just carry out jobs and tasks assigned by managers but instead actively participate in work design by engaging in proactive behaviors to create change in their jobs, roles, and tasks (Grant & Parker, 2009). Job crafting is situated in the relational and proactive perspectives of work design theories.

A main feature of the job crafting model is the employees' proactive approach to designing their jobs. As Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) point out, "the job crafting perspective follows the common call to 'write the worker back in' as an active participant in shaping both the job and its meaning" (p. 197). The individual proactive approach to job design is not just characteristic of job crafting. Other job design concepts that resemble job crafting are discussed below.

Role Innovation

According to Schein (1971), as society changes, the key to reaching adaptivity is role innovation. Role innovation occurs when employees redefine their job to suit their personal needs and, in that process, create new ways of doing the job (Schein, 1971). Role innovation also happens when situations or problems arise and the current role does not address the problem; the employee then redefines the role in an innovative way to remedy the issue (Schein, 1971; Tims & Bakker, 2010). This new way of defining the role can then help employees and the organization handle new or future situations (Tims & Bakker, 2010).

Task Revision

Staw and Boettger (1990) defined task revision as "action taken to correct a faulty procedure, an inaccurate job description, or a role expectation that is dysfunctional for an organization" (p. 534). Similar to role innovation, task revision is focused on problem solving or correction of procedures (Staw & Boettger, 1990). It works as a counter-role behavior of taking action to correct an erroneous work role.

Personal Initiative

According to Frese, Kring, Soose, and Zempel (1996) "personal initiative is a behavior syndrome resulting in an individual's taking an active and self-starting approach to work and going beyond what is formally required in a given job" (p. 38). Frese et al. (1996) further explained that characteristics of employees with personal initiative include that the employee is proactive, persistent (even in the face of setbacks), goal- and action-directed, focused on the long term, and consistent with the organization's mission. The goal is to improve how work is executed in the organization (Frese et al., 1996).

Organizational Citizenship Behavior

Organ's (1997) updated definition of organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) described it "as contributions to the maintenance and enhancement of the social and psychological context that supports task performance" (p. 91). Employees displaying OCB take on roles outside of their job tasks in service of the organization (Organ, 1997). OCB is mostly targeted at helping those within the organization and the organization itself. It includes employees proactively volunteering for activities beyond their formal job expectations (Organ, 1997).

Voice

LePine and Van Dyne (1998) defined voice as "speaking out and challenging the status quo with the intent of improving the situation" (p. 853). Voice is a proactive behavior of expression for constructive change with the intent to improve a situation. This includes suggesting more effective ways of doing things in the organization (Tims & Bakker, 2010). The organization has a great deal to gain when individuals express voice, although it does not necessarily benefit the individual (Tims & Bakker, 2010).

Idiosyncratic Deals and Role Negotiation

Rousseau, Ho, and Greenberg (2006) presented idiosyncratic employment arrangements as employees negotiating with supervisors on changes to their roles and job descriptions (2006). These proposed changes satisfy the employee and the organization (Rousseau et al., 2009). These idiosyncratic deals (i-deals) are typically negotiated by employees who have strong relationships with their supervisors and who merit special arrangements or have unique life circumstances that require flexible work arrangements (Gascoigne & Kelliher, 2018; Rousseau et al., 2006). These terms are typically negotiated on the basis of the employee's value to the organization and for the joint benefit of employees and the organization (Rousseau et al., 2006).

Role Adjustment

Clegg and Spencer (2007) presented a model of the process of job design that captures its dynamic and reciprocal nature. Clegg and Spencer (2007) proposed that high performance from employees is interpreted by supervisors as employee competency, which encourages the supervisor to trust the employee. The high performance is interpreted by the employee as competence in his or her job and leads to higher trust in

him- or herself (Clegg & Spencer, 2007). Supervisors trust employees and this trust motivates employees to adjust their own roles (Clegg & Spencer, 2007). According to Clegg and Spencer (2007), "the role adjustments result in increases in job content, which in turn lead to increased job knowledge (as well as motivation and opportunity)" which leads to "improvements in performance, which again are perceived as indicators of competence, and so on" (p. 324).

The concepts of role innovation, task revision, personal initiative, organizational citizenship behavior, voice, i-deals, and role adjustment, like job crafting, feature proactive job shaping employee behaviors. These related concepts focus on employees redesigning their jobs, sometimes working directly with managers, to fix or prevent problems or to improve situations that would then enhance their job and/or the organization. Where job crafting differs from these concepts is that it is focused on the employee's needs and goals, regardless of managerial support or organizational outcomes. Job crafting can go unnoticed by the organization and does not necessarily need to happen as a means to solve a problem.

Job crafting is not inherently good or bad for an organization (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). There have been studies that have found job crafting to be beneficial for the organization and successful organizational change (Kim, Im, Qu & NamKoong, 2018; Petrou, Bakker, & van den Heuvel, 2017; Petrou et al., 2018; Wang, Wang, & Li, 2018). Certain job crafting behaviors and their individual outcomes may lead to improvements for the organization while others may jeopardize the organization (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). Berg, Wrzesniewski, and Dutton (2010) elaborated:

> Job crafting is not always positive. It has the potential to cause harm if the crafting goes against organizational goals or produces negative side effects. Even when crafting is beneficial for the individual job crafter, it still may be harmful to the overall organization. For example, a marketing employee may craft her job by spending more time developing new branding ideas because she enjoys being creative, while what her company really needs is to focus on their current strategy. (p. 7)

Wang, Wang, & Li (2018) found job crafting to be both beneficial and detrimental to organizations. Other studies found positive and negative consequences of job crafting (Dierdorff & Jensen, 2018; Walk & Handy, 2018). An example of this is an employee who dislikes his supervisor's management style and actively avoids communicating with her, enhancing his job satisfaction but harming the organization if the lack of communication becomes detrimental (Berg et al., 2010). Job crafting can be associated with increased stress and feelings of regret (Berg et al., 2010), as well as positive job crafting outcomes include increased job satisfaction, work engagement, and personal well-being (Petrou et al., 2017; Van Winferden, Bakker, & Derks, 2017).

Job Crafting Models

To date, two models have dominated the job crafting research. Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) conceptualized the first job crafting model, identifying three types of job crafting—task, relational, and cognitive—through which employees shape their jobs by modifying tasks they perform, relationships with the people they interact with, or how they think about their jobs. Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) focused on the shift that occurs in an employee's identity and meaning of work as a result of job crafting.

The second model, the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model, was developed by Tims and Bakker (2010). This model distinguished job crafting as employees increasing or reducing demands and/or resources at work. This type of job crafting focused on results such as increased performance and person–environment fit at work.

In recent years additional models have been developed as an attempt to combine the 2001 job crafting model and the JD-R model. The Approach Avoidance Model by Bruning and Campion (2018) and the Behavioral-Cognitive Model by Zhang and Parker (2019) considered the varying perspectives of the first two models as well as the defining characteristics of job crafting. The goal of the recent models was an integrated approach to job crafting.

2001 Job Crafting Model

Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) defined job crafting as "the physical and cognitive changes individuals make in the task or relational boundaries of their work" (p. 179). The job crafting model highlights employees' motivation to job craft, employees' perceived opportunity to job craft, and individual outcomes of job crafting. The effects of job crafting, according Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001), are a shift in the employee's work identity and meaning of work.

Motivation for Job Crafting

The job crafting process begins when employees are motivated to do so, which can happen for a variety of reasons, mainly a need to assert control over their work, a need for human connection, or a need to create a positive self-image at work (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). If their needs for control, positive image, and connection are met in their current work situations, employees may not be motivated to

job craft. Other related motivations to job craft include a need to meaningfully interact with people who benefit from the work, a desire to fulfill a passion that is not being satisfied by the current job, or a need to cope with adversity at work (Berg et al., 2010; Berg et. al., 2008, 2010).

Motivation to job craft can spur from the loss of control or the questioning of one's identity during challenging times at work. In their study of teachers' responses to a new education policy which brought changes to the overall work environment, Walk and Handy (2018) found that the teachers facing this organizational change experienced a need to regain control over their job and make meaning of the changes at work, which is a motivational factor for job crafting. Wang, Demerouti, Le Blanc, and Lu (2018) conducted studies on employees' work attachment and focused on "tough times," which they identify as difficult situations that are usually demanding or unpleasant such as job insecurity and feelings of uncertainty about the future. During tough times at work employees tend to question the meaning of their work and their work identity as well as whether they want to stay in their current jobs or with the organization (Wang, Demerouti, et al., 2018). According to Wang, Demerouti, et al. (2018), job crafting is crucial in these difficult situations. Job crafting is an alternative to leaving the organization and helps the employee achieve more positive meaning from their work and work identity (Wang, Demerouti, et al., 2018).

Expanding on the research on why employees craft their jobs, Niessen et al. (2016) found that the need to maintain a positive self-image at work was the "main reason" employees engaged in job crafting (p. 1305). This drive for a positive self-image is a tenet of social identity theory (Tajfel, 1982). Employees need a relatively secure and

stable sense of who they are within a given situation to function effectively (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999). They seek to see themselves in a positive light, and this is largely grounded in their role within the organization and how that role is perceived by others (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999). When their jobs make it difficult for employees to create and sustain a positive sense of self, they are motivated to job craft in order to remedy the situation (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001).

Ashforth and Kreiner 's (1999) research on the experiences of employees such as garbage collectors, exterminators, maids, exotic dancers, etc., those whose jobs were thought of as "dirty work," provides an example of how employees whose jobs are stigmatized by society can maintain a positive self-image at work. Given the stigma of their jobs, Ashforth and Kreiner (1999) thought that those performing "dirty work" would have a difficult time constructing a positive self-image at work but their research found the opposite. The employees performing these jobs maintained high esteem and pride in their work (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999). The employees maintained a positive self-image through a process of reframing by describing their work with a positive value, recalibrating by adjusting the perceptions and making undesired aspects of the job seem smaller or less significant and vice versa, or refocusing by shifting attention from the stigmatized features of the job to the nonstigmatized features of the job (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999). Similar to hospital cleaners viewing their jobs as helping patients heal (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001), funeral directors can view their jobs as "helping relatives and friends of the deceased deal with grief" (Ashforth & Kreiner, 1999, p. 422). Ashforth & Kreiner (1999) explained that "a hopeful tomorrow may render a bleak today more tolerable" (p. 423).

In their study of antecedents of job crafting, Niessen et al. (2016) also found that the need for human connection did not predict an increase in job crafting and was found to be related to job crafting when employee self-efficacy was high (Niessen et al., 2016). Niessen et al. (2016) explained that two nontraditional processes might be stimulated when employees feel a lack of human connection at work. They may "feel sad, depressed and anxious, and show more avoidance motivation, which in turn might hinder the engagement in job crafting behaviors," or "the unsatisfied need is a signal that stimulates the desire for change and makes job crafting more likely" (Niessen at al., 2016, pp. 1306–1307). The need to belong is a fundamental human motivation (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). According to Baumeister and Leary (1995), "human beings have a pervasive drive to form and maintain at least a minimum quantity of lasting, positive, and significant interpersonal relationships" (p. 497). To satisfy this human drive, these connections must be "frequent, affectively pleasant interactions with a few other people" and "must take place in the context of a temporally stable and enduring framework of affective concern for each other's welfare" (Baumeister & Leary, p. 497). Another reason for the results between the need for human connection and job crafting, Niessen et al. (2016) explained, is that individuals might be satisfying that need in their private life and would, therefore, not be seeking it in their work life.

Perceived Opportunities for Job Crafting

Once motivated, employees are likely to job craft when they perceive that an opportunity to job craft exists, which typically means they have the freedom or autonomy to do so (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). According to Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001), employees' ability to determine what they do in their jobs and how they do it will

determine whether they will go through with job crafting behaviors. For example, if a job has a high degree of interdependence with processes that are interconnected with others at work, there is less opportunity to job craft (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001).

Employees can sometimes encounter challenges that limit their perceived opportunities to job craft (Berg et al., 2010). Employees have to adapt to others to overcome these challenges (Berg et al., 2010). Defining challenges as "perceived problems or constraints that limit opportunities to take action," Berg et al. (2010) explained that "job crafting may be a more continuous process involving adjustments and change, shaped in part by the perceived challenges that limit the opportunities employees see for job crafting" (p. 159). Berg et al. (2010) offered an example of an employee who wishes to job craft but "faces resistance from his supervisor, which motivates him to adapt his supervisor's expectations by winning her trust, thus enabling him to overcome the challenge and take on the extra task" (p. 159).

Berg et al. (2010) conducted interviews with 33 employees from two organizations—a for-profit manufacturing firm and a nonprofit political advocacy organization. The interviewees were a mix of higher rank and lower rank employees. Looking at how employees from different ranks perceive and adapt to challenges in job crafting, Berg et al. (2010) observed that employees in lower rank positions found it relatively easier to create more opportunities to job craft, while higher rank employees felt more constrained to create more opportunities to job craft. While the employees' ranks were not related to the type of job crafting efforts, the employees' high-ranking and low-ranking status were related to the challenges the employees encountered in job crafting and how they adapted to overcome the challenges (Berg et al., 2010). Lower-

ranking employees faced challenges imposed on them by others not granting them the autonomy needed to craft their jobs (Berg et al., 2010). Their adaptive strategies included winning others' support for their job crafting intentions (Berg et al., 2010). The higher ranked employees attributed their challenges to their expectations of how time at work should be spent (Berg et al., 2010). The higher-ranking employees were able to adapt to these challenges by adjusting their expectations and behaviors and focusing on making the most of even the slightest opportunity they perceived to job craft (Berg et al., 2010).

The level of interdependence of the jobs of high and low rank employees can also explain employees' adaptive behaviors to challenges in job crafting (Berg et al., 2010). According to Berg et al. 2010, when employees' job crafting relied on the support of others, high and low rank employees described different challenges to job crafting. Whereas higher-ranking employees did not want to "encroach on others' roles and responsibilities" and "were concerned about the possibility of 'stepping on others' toes," lower-rank employees felt powerless "to get others to enable their job crafting" (Berg et al., 2010, p. 169).

Work and Motivational Outcomes for Job Crafting

Employees' work orientation—whether they view their work as a job, career, or calling—will determine job crafting behaviors (Akkermans & Tims, 2017; Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). While there are no demographic or occupational differences in whether employees see their work in terms of a job (focused on financial rewards and necessity), a career (focused on advancement), or a calling (focused on enjoyment and fulfilling work), employees are likely to craft their jobs in ways that fit their work orientation (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). This means that the same jobs can be enacted very

differently. Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) explained that employees with job orientations are more likely to focus on tasks done for pay rather than on helping as many people as possible and those with career orientations are likely to craft their jobs so that they interact with and help those who are more powerful than them.

Employees who experience their work as a calling reported greater life, health, and job satisfaction than those who experience their work as a job or a career (Wrzesniewski et al., 1997). Studies have found that a sense of calling could be an outcome of employee job crafting (Esteves & Lopes, 2017). Berg et al. (2010) found that employees used job crafting techniques to pursue additional or unanswered callings. Employees were motivated to job craft because it "often brought about the kinds of enjoyable and meaningful experiences that they associate with pursuing their unanswered callings" (p. 978).

Similarly, individuals' work motivation—whether intrinsic and the work is done for its own sake or if extrinsic and the work is done to meet some external end—will also affect job crafting behaviors (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). Employees with extrinsic motivations for work engage in job crafting that limits the task and relational boundaries of the job while those with intrinsic motivation may seek to expand their jobs (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). Employees with intrinsic motivation engage in work because it is interesting, engaging and satisfying (Amabile, Hill, Hennessey, & Tighe, 1994). While employees who view their work as a job or career tend to view work as separate from the rest of their lives, employees who view their work as a calling tend to have an intrinsic work motivation and may craft their jobs by taking on additional tasks

related to their passion (Berg et al., 2010; Moon et al., 2018; Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001).

Effects of Job Crafting on the Job Crafter

Wrzesniewksi and Dutton (2001) captured a holistic view of how employees shape their lives and the meaning of their lives by changing their jobs and themselves within them. Work is more than a job; it concerns relationships with other people that "help to create and sustain not only different notions of what the work is but also who the person is who is doing the work" (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001, p. 195). By taking charge and crafting their jobs over time and with others, employees transform their work identity. Once job crafting happens, effects for employees include a change in the way they understand the purpose of their work and how it is achieved (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). Whether they believe their work contributes to making the world a better place or that it provides an opportunity to earn a living, job crafting allows employees to perform their jobs in their own ways (Wrzesniewski et al., 2013; Wrzesniewski et al., 1997). Their relationship with the work changes as they reframe the purpose of the job and experience the work differently (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). In response, employees cultivate a positive sense of meaning and identity in their work (Berg et al., 2013; Wrzesniewski, 2003; Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001), which can be used as feedback to continue job crafting.

Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model

Describing the Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) job crafting model as too general in definition and not focused on the actual behaviors of employees crafting their jobs, Tims and Bakker (2010) introduced a job crafting model that focuses on work

characteristics and individual differences of employees. Until then, the job crafting model had only been studied through qualitative research (Tims & Bakker, 2010). The Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model was meant to provide researchers with a quantitative instrument for job crafting that could be tailored to measure work characteristics and individual characteristics that facilitate the actual job crafting behaviors of employees (Slemp & Vella-Brodrick, 2013; Tims & Bakker, 2010; Tims, Bakker, & Derks, 2013).

Job Demands and Resources

Tims and Bakker (2010) frame job crafting in the JD-R model by dividing work conditions into job demands and job resources. Job demands represent "characteristics of the job that will potentially evoke strain" as they require "sustained physical or mental effort" (Tims & Bakker, 2010, p. 14). Job demands include challenging work tasks or clients and, depending on their motivation to job craft, employees can increase or decrease the levels of job demands (Tims & Bakker, 2010). Job demands can lead to burnout and other health problems if they exceed an employee's capacity (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007, 2017; Bakker, Demerouti, & Verbeke, 2004; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004).

Job resources represent physical, psychological, social, or organizational aspects of the job that can help employees in achieving work goals, reducing job demands, or stimulating personal growth and development (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007, 2017; Bakker et al., 2004; Petrou, Bakker, & Bezemer, 2019; Tims & Bakker, 2010). Job resources can be at the organizational level such as pay or career opportunities, at the interpersonal level such as supervisor support, at the work level such as having clarity about one's role, or at the task level such as skill variety or autonomy (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007, 2017;

Bakker et al., 2004; Cheng & Yi, 2018; Tims & Bakker, 2010). Job resources can be intrinsic in that they can fulfill a human need for individual growth and development or extrinsic in that they can be used solely to achieve work goals (Tims & Bakker, 2010).

According to the JD-R model, to craft their jobs, employees can: (1) increase the level of job resources available at work, (2) increase the level of job demands at work, or (3) decrease the level of job demands at work (Tims & Bakker, 2010). Increasing levels of job resources can help buffer the impact of job demands. Job crafting by increasing the level of challenging job demands allows employees to create more challenges at work when they feel their job is not offering them enough opportunities to use their skills (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007, 2017; Bakker et al., 2004; Petrou et al., 2019; Tims & Bakker, 2010). This could include volunteering for projects or taking over tasks from a supervisor. It is expected that employees only increase their level of job demands when they have enough job resources to handle them. On the other hand, when job demands are a hindrance and exceed employees' capabilities, employees job craft by reducing the level of job demands (Bakker et al., 2004; Esteves & Lopes, 2017; Tims & Bakker, 2010). Examples of hinderance from job demands include role ambiguity, concerns about job security, and role conflict.

Work and Individual Characteristics

Characteristics of work such as person–job fit, autonomy, and task independence, as well as employee characteristics such as a proactive personality, self-efficacy, and regulatory focus are antecedents for job crafting behaviors (Tims & Bakker, 2010). In terms of work characteristics that promote job crafting behaviors, when employees detect a misfit between their needs and desires and what the job is providing or between their

skills and what the job is demanding, these employees are likely to engage in job crafting so that the fit can be restored (Tims & Bakker, 2010). Employees are also more likely to job craft when they have autonomy at work (the freedom to schedule their work, prioritize and make decisions) or when they work independently without having to rely on colleagues for their job (Tims & Bakker, 2010).

Employee characteristics that play a role in job crafting include proactive personalities that allow employees to take initiative to improve current circumstances or create their own environment; self-efficacious employees who believe they have the ability to change or influence their work environment; and employees' regulatory focus, which determines whether they are promotion-focused and are concerned with advancement and growth or whether they are prevention-focused and more concerned with safety and responsibility (Bipp & Demerouti, 2015; Brenninkmeijer & Hekkert-Koning, 2015; Petrou & Demerouti, 2015; Tims & Bakker, 2010).

The JD-R job crafting model is similar to the Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) model in that they both refer to individual-level, self-initiated job crafting where employees adjust their jobs to meet their needs. With the Tims and Bakker (2010) JD-R model, employees job craft by changing their "levels of job demands and job resources in order to align them with their own abilities and preferences" (p.15). Adding or removing job demands and resources involves changes to tasks and relationships at work, a central aspect of Wrzesniewski and Dutton's (2001) job crafting model. Where the two models differ, however, is in the cognitive form of job crafting, which Tims and Bakker (2010) exclude from their model because they do not view changing the meaning of work as a crafting behavior. Tims and Bakker (2010) explained:

> We feel that cognitive change may be more like coping with the circumstances as they are and not about actively shaping the boundaries of one's work, which is the definition of job crafting as proposed by Wrzesniewski and Dutton. Our aim is to research the actual behaviour of employees in modifying their job design to enhance their own work motivation. The other two dimensions defined by the aforementioned authors (i.e.[,] changing the task and relational boundaries of one's work) are in line with the dimensions we proposed. (p. 16)

Antecedents and Motivation Job Crafting

The antecedents and motivations for job crafting are similar in the Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) job crafting model and the Tims and Bakker (2010) JD-R model. For both models, task independence and autonomy facilitate the job crafting process, which is initiated when employees are motivated to change aspects of their work to meet their needs. Tims and Bakker (2010) focused on person–-job fit as a motivation for job crafting. When employees feel that there isn't a fit between their knowledge, skills, and abilities or between their needs and desires and what the job is offering, this misfit leads to job crafting behavior (Tims & Bakker, 2010). For both models, job crafting can be an ongoing feedback loop where changes to the job lead to changes for the employee which could lead to more job crafting behavior and so on.

In the JD-R model, the role of the supervisor is also taken into consideration. According to Tims and Bakker (2010), not all employees are likely to engage in job crafting and a supervisor can help encourage the employee via tailored feedback on their work situation. The key to tailored feedback is that it is not a general approach; the

response is fitted to the individual and is, therefore, more likely to be remembered and considered (Tims & Bakker, 2010).

Outcomes for Job Crafting

In addition to job crafting outcomes such as enhanced meaning of work, the Tims and Bakker (2010) model focused on measuring the person–job fit and its effect on outcomes such as employee performance and well-being (Bakker et al., 2012; Tims et al., 2013; Tims, Bakker & Derks, 2015a, 2015b; Tims, Derks, Bakker, 2016), adaptivity (van den Heuvel, Demerouti, & Peeters, 2015) and career satisfaction (Dubbelt, Demerouti, & Rispens, 2019). These outcomes could also lead to positive outcomes for the organization such as organizational commitment and employee retention (Wang, Demerouti, et al., 2018). Studies have also focused on job crafting's role in organizational change and have found that job crafting can be a reaction to organizational change (Walk & Handy, 2018; Wang, Demerouti, et al., 2018; Wang, Wang, & Li, 2018) and that job crafting can lead to successful organizational change because of employee outcomes such as adaptivity and work commitment (Peeters, Arts, & Demerouti, 2016; Petrou et al., 2018).

Recent Job Crafting Models

Concerned with the diverging paths of the job crafting research, recent job crafting models (Bruning & Campion, 2018; Zhang & Parker, 2019) attempted to integrate the Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) job crafting model and the Tims and Bakker (2010) JD-R model. Defining job crafting more generally as "changes to a job that workers make with the intention of improving the job for themselves" (Bruning & Campion, 2018, p. 500), Bruning and Campion (2018) highlighted six defining characteristics of job crafting behaviors: (1) they are self-targeted and aimed at benefiting

the individual job crafter; (2) they are voluntary and intentional changes; (3) they are significant changes and usually represent a meaningful change in task and social activities or behavioral or cognitive processes; (4) they are permanent or semi-permanent changes, not one-time or temporary; (5) they occur at work; and (6) they occur within a job with a clear job description with specified tasks as opposed to self-created jobs or the self-employed. Bruning and Campion (2018) and Zhang and Parker (2019) highlighted an approach/avoidance perspective where job crafting can enrich and expand by focusing on improvement-based goals, or it can reduce or limit aspects of the job by focusing on job boundaries.

In their research on job crafting, Zhang and Parker (2019) focused on cognitive crafting, which has been questioned as a form of job crafting with development of the JD-R model (Niessen et al., 2016; Slemp & Vella-Brodrick, 2013; Tims & Bakker, 2010). Zhang and Parker (2019) maintained that employees altering how they perceive their jobs is indeed a form of job crafting and is an important way for individuals to influence their work meaning and identity. Zhang and Parker (2019) identified eight types of job crafting, dividing them into four types of behavioral job crafting and four types of cognitive crafting as well as different forms of approach versus avoidance related to resources and demands. The four types of behavioral job crafting include: (1) seeking positive, intrinsic aspects of work such as increasing job autonomy or development opportunities; (2) increasing challenging demands such as taking on extra tasks or addressing hindering demands such as improving the work processes to deal with a heavy workload; (3) stepping away from work that is low in positive resources such as avoiding a project that lacks autonomy; and (4) withdrawing from situations with unfavorable job

demands (Zhang & Parker, 2019). The four types of cognitive job crafting include (1) reframing one's job or role in such a way that highlights the positive aspects of work; (2) positively reappraising one's demands, for example, as opportunities to learn and develop; (3) cognitively stepping away from work that is low in positive resources; and (4) mentally diminishing or reframing demands to, for example, downplay the importance of some demanding aspects of a job (Zhang & Parker, 2019).

Cognitive Job Crafting

Cognitive job crafting is an important way in which employees shape their work experience. It allows employees to appreciate the effect of their work and recognize its value (Slemp & Vella-Brodrick, 2013; Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). In their study of how employees adapt to challenges via job crafting, Berg et al. (2010) highlighted the cognitive job crafting of a nonprofit coordinator reframing her perception of her job as meaningfully impacting others:

> One of my big motivators is being . . . at a job that is effecting positive change for women. And that is something that I'm constantly reminding myself when I'm doing something that I don't like. I've had a couple different kinds of rough transitions here from position to position. And so if I'm going through a two month stretch where I sort of actively dislike what I'm doing on a daily basis, then I would say I have to actively sort of get myself in a mindset where I could access this idea of what I'm doing here is I am working to promote the economic advancement of women. So it's just closer to the front of my mind all the time…(p.167)

By altering the way in which they see themselves at work and why their work matters, employees derive more meaning and purpose from their work (Slemp & Vella-Brodrick, 2013; Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001; Zhang & Parker, 2019).

Meaning-Making

Meaning-making is a cognitive process that captures an important part of how employees understand their experience at work and how they matter in the work they do (Wrzesniewski et al., 2003). Defined as "the ability to integrate challenges or ambiguous situations into a framework of personal meaning using conscious, values-based reflection" (van den Heuvel, Demerouti, Schreurs, Bakker, & Schaufeli, 2009, p. 510), meaning-making is a proactive process where employees choose to engage in reflection to find a deeper meaning of their work, what role it has in their lives, and ways in which changes at work are meaningful to them (Berg et al., 2013; Petrou et al., 2017; van den Heuvel et. al., 2009; van den Heuvel, Demerouti, Bakker, & Schaufeli, 2013; Wrzesniewski et al, 2003). Because of the proactive nature of job crafting, employees are more present and aware of changes in their environment. This is said to trigger a reflection process where employees make meaning of changes in light of their personal values and life goals (Petrou et al., 2017).

Meaning-making is said to stem from the sensemaking process (Pratt & Ashforth, 2003; van den Heuvel et al., 2009). Sensemaking is an ongoing immediate interpretive process that allows a person to label, categorize and understand the ongoing stream of events and experiences in order to take adequate actions (Wrzesniewski et al., 2003). Van den Heuvel et al. (2009) distinguished meaning-making from sensemaking, explaining that meaning-making is a more deliberate process to evaluate and reflect on the meaning

of work in light of values and life goals. Meaning-making is said to occur after sensemaking has taken place, answering a broader existential question about the purpose of one's experience (Pratt & Ashforth, 2003).

Meaning is derived from employees' beliefs, values and goals as well as the characteristics of the work (Wrzesniewski et al., 2003; Wrzesniewski, 2003). Employees are active construers of meaning (Wrzesniewski et al., 2003; van den Heuvel et al., 2009; van den Heuvel et al., 2013). Every employee is unique and has a personal understanding of how he or she works or feels and behaves at work (Wrzesniewski et al., 2003). The same work and context can be experienced differently across employees (Pratt & Ashforth, 2003; Wrzesniewski, 2003; Wrzesniewski et al., 2003). In complex work environments, when employees make meaning, they are able to make sense of the changes at work by linking them to their own personal goals and values (van den Heuvel et al., 2009; van den Heuvel et al., 2013).

Cognitive and Behavioral Job Crafting

According to Zhang and Parker (2019), it is through reframing how their work is perceived that employees can achieve fit at work, even without behavioral changes. This would make cognitive crafting more advantageous in jobs where there is little opportunity for behavioral crafting. Zhang and Parker (2019) also indicated that cognitive crafting and behavioral crafting are reciprocally related to each other in that individuals' perceptions of their jobs can shape behaviors and behavioral changes in a job can shape how individuals perceive their work.

Other studies such as Niessen et al.'s (2016) research on motivations for job crafting suggested that cognitive crafting could be the first phase of the job crafting

process. When employees frame their jobs cognitively, this then engages them in behaviors that change tasks and social relationships (Niessen et al., 2016). Slemp and Vella-Brodrick (2013) also referenced cognitive job crafting as fitting in a temporal sequence, noting the possibility that cognitive crafting could precede behavioral job crafting because it is quicker to implement and requires less effort than the behavioral crafting of changing tasks or relationships. Further research is needed on cognitive job crafting and where it fits within the job crafting process (Niessen et al., 2016; Slemp & Vella-Brodrick, 2013; Weseler & Niessen, 2016; Zhang & Parker, 2019).

Board Professionals

AGB (2015) described the board professional as a staff member who provides critical support, planning, and coordination of important board functions. Often called the board secretary, the role started out as a volunteer position held by a member of the board (Rubenstein & Riddell, 2014). It has since evolved into a paid position with most institutions of higher education having at least one staff member responsible for supporting the work of the governing board (Rubenstein & Riddell, 2014). Board professionals are typically responsible for tasks such as managing board and committee meetings; drafting, editing, and approving board and committee meeting minutes; coordinating board development; and managing the review and revisions of bylaws and other board documents (AGB, 2015). The board professional's work, according to AGB (2015), is "often unheralded and conducted behind the scenes, but it is critical to the success and performance of the board" (p. 1).

As the responsibilities of governing boards became more complex, the role of the board professional grew in size and complexity. In addition to administrative and

logistical tasks, board professionals were involved in more strategic efforts providing counsel to the president and board chair (AGB, 2015). The board professional has "evolved from being a secretary into functioning as a true partner to presidents and board chairs in pursuit of good governance" (Rubenstein & Riddell, 2014, p. 38).

While the role of the board professional has been recognized in higher education for over 45 years (Shaw, 2015), empirical research on this professional group is lacking. A search in the Business Source Ultimate database for the term "board professional" in full-text, scholarly peer-reviewed journals generated seven results that were either not relevant or had no references to board professionals. The same search in the more general ProQuest Central database yielded 86 results of which only one article referenced the board professional, a qualitative study on the learning experience of the board during a presidential search at a Canadian university (Baptisa, 2016). The same search but with the term "board secretary" instead of "board professional" yielded 260 results with the ProQuest Central database and seven results with Business Source Ultimate. The results were not relevant in that board professionals or secretaries were not the focus of the articles or were barely referenced.

Reed (2017) noted that with the dearth of academic research related to board professionals, "other sectors can be surveyed for knowledge and inspiration" that have similar complex dual reporting relationships to administrators and the board (p. 21). The role of the company secretary came very close to that of the board professional. Described as the "humble clerk," the role of the company secretary was a traditionally clerical and administrative function responsible for the administration of the board's work, including maintaining the board's calendar, agenda-setting, preparing board and

board committee papers, and taking minutes of the meetings (McNulty & Stewart, 2015). That role has shifted as company secretaries are increasingly involved in governance responsibilities and strategic tasks (Peij, Bezemer, & Maassen, 2015). The Institute of Chartered Secretaries and Administrators (ICSA) described the role of the company secretary as "acting as a vital bridge between the executive management and the board and facilitating the delivery of organizational objectives" (ICSA, 2014, p.7).

While the company secretary is an important role in the leadership and governance of many organizations, it has been largely ignored, resulting in a lack of research on this role (McNulty & Stewart, 2015; Kakabadse, Khan, & Kakabadse, 2016, 2017). A search in the Business Source Ultimate database for the term "company secretary" and full-text, scholarly peer-reviewed journals generated 20 results, which included a study by McNulty and Stewart (2015) on the role and potential of the company secretary. A citation search of the McNulty and Stewart (2015) study yielded other research on company secretaries, including Peij et al.'s (2015) study on role ambiguity and conflicts, and the Kakabadse et al. (2016 and 2017) research articles on the leadership role of the company secretary.

Findings from the studies on company secretaries and the literature on board professionals revealed the particularities of the position (mainly dual roles and reporting lines) and other informal aspects of the role such as managing relationships and maintaining the institution's integrity. Reed (2017) summarized the board professional role as follows:

> Simply put, the board professional is: The "glue" that connects the board, the president, the institution, and key stakeholders; a trusted counselor and confidant;

> a prognosticator who is capable of "seeing around corners," anticipating needs before they are felt and issues before they arise; and, ideally, a strategic partner and advisor to leadership who assists in furthering the institutional agenda and ensuring good governance. (p. 2)

Dual Roles and Reporting Lines

The role of the board professional varies depending on institutional type, size, and traditions, occupying a wide variety of positions, such as administrative assistant, executive assistant, vice president, general counsel, chief of staff, and secretary of the college (Reed, 2017; Schwartz, 2010). At smaller institutions, only one or two people support the board, while larger institutions have many board professionals serving in various positions and levels of responsibility (Schwartz, 2010). Larger institutions many times combine the board professional role with the chief of staff or a member of the senior leadership team to ensure that the president's and the board's priorities are aligned and moving in a coordinated manner (Rubenstein & Riddell, 2014). Other institutions combine the role of the board professional with the general counsel so that the role may also provide legal support for the board (Rubenstein & Riddell, 2014).

While position titles vary among institutions, the four primary categories of board professional titles include: "Secretary to the Board and Presidential Assistant," where the function serves the dual role of secretariat to the board and executive assistant to the president; "Secretary of the Board and Senior Administrator," where the role has the function of board secretariat but with a dual senior leadership role such as chief of staff or vice president; "Corporate Secretary," where the primary function is board secretariat with an added authority as an officer of the corporation sometimes serving as a member

of the president's cabinet; and "Assistant to the Board," responsible for assisting the board secretariat function as an associate or assistant to the board professional (Reed, 2017, p. 67). Along with the dual roles, many board professionals have dual reporting structures with some board professionals reporting to the board, some to the president, and some to both (Schwartz, 2010). The dual reporting structures facilitate timely communication between the leadership of the institution and the board (Rubenstein & Riddell, 2014, p. 37).

Not unlike the board professional role, company secretaries are also "double-hatting" by taking on additional roles (McNulty & Stewart, 2015). McNulty and Stewart (2015) described "double-hatting" as "the complexity of being part of the executive team in one capacity but being the servant to the board in the other capacity" (p. 532). They described company secretaries as "boundary spanners," connecting the executive and nonexecutive directors in ways that enable board effectiveness (McNulty & Stewart, 2015). In this role of dual capacity, it can be challenging to maintain independence and boundaries of responsibilities. As one company secretary described, "You're not a member of the executive team, you're not a member of the board, you're the interface between board and executive, you've got to have independence" (Kakabadse et al., 2017, p. 250).

Managing Relationships

One of the challenges of the dual roles and reporting structures of board professionals and company secretaries is negotiating the relationships and building bridges between the executive and the board (Kakabadse et al., 2017; McNulty & Stewart, 2015; Peij et al., 2015; Reed, 2017; Rubenstein & Riddell, 2014). Board

professionals and company secretaries are required to operate on the boundaries, remaining impartial, not becoming partisan in the politics that may exist, and holding the trust of both parties (Kakabadse et al., 2017; McNulty & Stewart, 2015; Peij et al., 2015; Reed, 2017; Rubenstein & Riddell, 2014). To build trust with both parties, board professionals and company secretaries must develop personal relationships, be able to exercise judgement, read people, understand where they are coming from, and speak their language (McNulty & Stewart, 2015; Reed, 2017).

Supporting the essential relationship between the board and the president is paramount to the board professional's role (Reed, 2017; Rubenstein & Riddell, 2014). Board professionals must ensure that the president and board chair are well-aligned on mission, goals, and priorities, and that their values are in the best interest of the institution (Reed, 2017; Rubenstein & Riddell, 2014). These dynamics need constant monitoring and understanding (Reed, 2017; Rubenstein & Riddell, 2014). The board/president relationship is organic and subject to change. Board professionals must be agile, well-organized, and prepared to deal with any unexpected changes. If the president and board find themselves at odds, the job "can be a private hell" (Reed, 2017, p. 34).

The role of the board professional has been likened to that of a consigliere, "the number two person in a crime family, the don's right hand" (Reed, 2017, p. 2). Board professionals are expected to resolve dilemmas, act as advisor and confidante, and maintain a high level of trust (Reed, 2017; Rubenstein & Riddell, 2014). They must be calm and neutral. They must know how to keep secrets and be "viewed as a trusted figure whose word is his or her bond" (Reed, 2017, p .2).

Because of the level of impartiality and confidentiality required, an unintended consequence of the board professional's role is that it can be solitary and lonely at times (Reed, 2017). The work of the board professional is often behind the scenes with little recognition and supervision (Reed, 2017). Board professionals are described as driven self-starters who are comfortable with a low profile (Reed, 2017). They lack big egos, are able to get along with everyone, and remain calm in the middle of crisis (Reed, 2017). The work is said to require a high level of emotional intelligence to manage multiple relationships (Reed, 2017). According to Cieslak and Mersereau (2008), qualities and characteristics of board professionals include: common sense, integrity and trust, mediator/facilitator/problem solver, emotional intelligence; "strong self-esteem but not a huge ego"; "comfortable sitting on the fence"; and "keeping cool under pressure" (p. 16).

Board Professionals and Presidential Transition

The selection of an institution's president is one of a governing board's most important responsibility and the board professional usually plays an essential role (Reed, 2017). Many board professionals will support a presidential transition at least once in their career. A successful transition process is key to establishing a strong presidency. Reed (2017) described the essential roles of the board professional during a presidential transition as: "in-house strategist and day-to-day expert; the 'glue' that connects the board, the search committee, the search firm, the institution, and candidates; planner, coordinator, record keeper, and logistics manager; salesperson for the institution; interpreter of varying perspectives; soul of discretion and keeper of confidentiality; counselor for multiple constituents" (p. 59).

A presidential transition is enormously satisfying for the board professional as it offers the board professional the opportunity to affect the history and future of the institution (Reed, 2017). Presidential transitions can be opportune moments for board professionals to expand their roles and move to higher level leadership roles. Reed (2017) encourages board professionals to "be prepared and embrace the opportunity" (p. 64).

A presidential transition, however, does come with complexities, challenges, and tensions. Reed (2017) describes the transition period:

> This may be the loneliest time of a board professional's tenure, perhaps feeling that you are in a "no man's land." Due to confidentiality, you may be distant from your cabinet peers and criticized by colleagues and the media; you often are still working as a trusted advisor to the outgoing president who is dealing with a variety of emotions, while you are working confidentially for the board on the search process. This is the reality of daily life, and it is not a time for the meek. (p. 60)

It is also a time of anxiety because the board professional's tenure is also questioned during a presidential transition (Reed, 2017). During this period, the board professional's advisory and counselor role will increase dramatically. The board professional's relationship with the new president might flourish and continue past the transition period or it may not and a change will be needed. Reed (2017) encourages board professionals to be the best possible stewards and do what is best for the institution but to also focus on their careers, next steps and future opportunities (Reed, 2017).

Presidential Transition in Higher Education

With a large cohort of college and university presidents expected to leave their positions, ensuring the success of their transitions is more important than ever (Keen, 2019). Unfortunately, these transitions are many times poorly managed and often accompanied by attrition of senior administrators (Gaval, 2009; Lohse, 2008; Overend, 2011). In addition, little is known about the impact and the challenges of the presidential leadership change on senior administrators (Overend, 2011). A deeper understanding of the senior administrators' experiences is important for the successful transition to new presidential leadership at the college and university level (Overend, 2011).

Most of the literature available on college and university presidencies is informed by memoirs of retired college presidents and studies of failed presidencies (Jackson, 2018). The literature on the presidential search and selection process is also mostly practitioner-based, offering general guidelines for facilitating the transition (Gaval, 2009; Jackson, 2018; Pemberton, 2016). More empirical research is needed on the presidential transition process in higher education (Jackson, 2018; Pemberton, 2016).

Building a new leadership team, for example, is an important part of the transition and is challenging to undertake but studies have mostly focused on the president rather than on the leadership team (Jackson, 2018). The senior administrators who work directly with the president are the least written about and often most misunderstood (Overend, 2011). Some recent studies have highlighted senior administrators and their experiences during presidential leadership change in higher education (Gaval, 2009; Jackson, 2018; Lohse, 2008; Overend, 2011; Pemberton, 2016; Quinn, 2007; Tichnenor, 2019).

A ProQuest database search for the term "presidential transition" anywhere in a full-text article from a peer-reviewed scholarly journal, filtered for "colleges and universities" and "higher education," yielded 20 results. Out of the 20 results, only one article was relevant, focusing on the derailment of presidencies. A backward and forward citation search of that article resulted in several studies from the past 15 years chosen based on their relevancy to presidential transitions at colleges and universities. The studies were all qualitative and included: research on the development of a top management team through a leadership transition in higher education (Jackson, 2018); a study analyzing the interim presidency period through the perspectives of key stakeholders (Tichnenor, 2019); a study to understand effective leadership and management strategies to help presidents serving in the role for the first time (Keen, 2019); a study focused on understanding multiple presidential transitions from the perspectives of key internal stakeholders (Quinn, 2007); a study examining the entry process for a new college president through the lenses of socialization and sensemaking (Lohse, 2008); a study on the experience of sensemaking for senior administrators in higher education during the first year of presidential leadership change (Overend, 2011); a study on the experience of first-time presidents forming their initial senior leadership teams (Gaval, 2009); a study on the sensemaking of new college presidents (Smerek, 2013); and a study on senior academic leaders' involvement in a transition process (Pemberton, 2016). The findings of these studies highlight various areas of the presidential transition process and are outlined as such below: presidential departure, search for a new president, placement of an interim president, and placement of new

president. The role of the senior administration and how it fits within the process is also featured.

Presidential Departure

In her research on the experience of first-time presidents forming their initial senior leadership teams, Gaval (2009) studied seven presidents who experienced planned transitions and five presidents who came to the presidency through unplanned circumstances. Gaval (2009) explained how the planned and unplanned departures of the presidents differed. A planned transition begins with the announcement of the former president's departure, which is typically eighteen months prior to the new president's arrival on campus (Gaval, 2009). A positive departure with a well-communicated search process and help from the outgoing president to prepare for the new president sets the stage for a successful transition in leadership (Gaval, 2009). When circumstances of the president's departure are sudden, time is of essence and addressing concerns, minimizing anxiety, and delaying personnel changes are key for the unplanned transition (Gaval, 2009). Creating an ad-hoc committee for communicating the transition and using consultants are beneficial strategies for an institution to successfully manage a planned or unplanned departure (Gaval, 2009).

Whether planned or unplanned, no process produces more stress on an institution than the exit of its president (Quinn, 2007). The manner in which an institution manages the departure can have a profound and long-term impact on its welfare (Quinn, 2007). In her study on multiple presidential transitions, Quinn (2007) focused on the presidential departure. According to Quinn (2007), when a president decides to leave, it is important for the president to know when the time is right and to have a strategy in place. Once the

decision has been made, a transition timeline should be developed as well as a plan for how the announcement will be handled (Quinn, 2007). The announcement should include reasons for the departure, timing of the transition, and a plan for continued leadership during the transition (Quinn, 2007). Senior administrators are charged with planning events for the exiting president to say farewell to constituents and vice versa (Quinn, 2007). It is important for the president and stakeholders to experience closure through these gatherings (Quinn, 2007).

Pemberton (2016) studied senior academic leaders' involvement in the presidential transition process. Participants in this study described ways the immediate past president helped or hindered the transition efforts. The past presidents that helped transition efforts provided space and support for senior administrators to plan and prepare for the newly selected president (Pemberton, 2016). Those that hindered the transition efforts attempted to influence the selection process or created an atmosphere that affected the work of the new president (Pemberton, 2016). According to Pemberton (2016), one participant reported that the sitting president hindered the transition process by creating negative feelings on campus, which impacted stakeholders when looking for a new leader.

Search for a New President

The typical time frame for the transition is about one year with approximately three months allocated to advertising the position, three to six months to screen and interview applicants and to make an appointment, and the remaining months to allow the new president sufficient time to arrive on campus (Quinn, 2007). All involved in the transition must recognize that the final result of this process is of the utmost importance

to the success of the institution. According to Quinn (2007), the institution will achieve the best results from the search process if the focus of the search is on promoting the institution and what it has to offer as much as it is about finding the most qualified candidate.

One of the most important steps in preparing for the presidential search is composing the search committee (Quinn, 2007). The search committee is charged with reviewing applicant materials to identify candidates who will advance to interview rounds (Quinn, 2007). The size and composition of the search committee varies and members can be appointed or elected (Quinn, 2007). Membership should be a diverse representation of the institution and can be based on rank, years of service, or positions held (Quinn, 2007). The Board of Trustees and the human resource department are generally responsible for the search committee membership and its charge (Quinn, 2007).

In his study on senior academic leaders' involvement in the presidential transition process, Pemberton (2016) described the details of preparing for a presidential search, from deciding whether to use a consultant to lead the process to putting together the search committee. According to Pemberton (2016), a search and selection process that includes many stakeholders can help a newly selected president develop relationships with those in the community. Seeking input from stakeholders can add to the legitimacy of a new president as his or her work could be aligned with the concerns of stakeholders (Pemberton, 2016). According to Pemberton (2016), when stakeholders felt their voices were heard during such an important process, they felt more engaged with the new administration. Pemberton's (2016) study found that conducting a presidential transition

process that does not seek out input from stakeholders could be a risk as the new president might not be able to connect with campus constituencies.

Senior academic leaders who took part in Pemberton's (2016) study described their experiences with open and closed searches. They concluded that an open search allows for a more transparent process and provides a foundation for the new president while a closed search might have the opposite effect (Pemberton, 2016). According to the participants, an open search is more successful because it allows for community input and a sense that the community is part of the process (Pemberton, 2016). Two participants connected the legitimacy of the selection process to the inclusion of the community (Pemberton, 2016). When they do not seek stakeholders' input, decision-makers are asking these constituents to put a great deal of trust in their selection. This can create tension and a power differential between those who have the authority to make decisions and those who do not (Pemberton, 2016). If a search is not inclusive or transparent, it does not mean that it will be unsuccessful; it just adds additional pressure on the search committee to make a positive selection or risk losing credibility (Pemberton, 2016).

Placement of an Interim President

Institutions employ an interim president for a variety of reasons, from the retirement of a longstanding president to a sudden illness or death of a president (Tichenor, 2019). Tichenor (2019) analyzed the interim presidency period through the perspective of key stakeholders and determined that employing an interim president can be critical to the success of the presidential transition. Noting a differentiation between the use of the term "interim" and "acting," Tichenor (2019) explained that both are temporary appointments an institution makes to lead the college or university through the

presidential search period. The interim president, who can also be known as an acting president, typically has a fixed term and reports directly to the board (Tichenor, 2019).

An interim president can be a contender or a noncontender for the president role (Tichenor, 2019). Contenders are often internal candidates being considered for the permanent role and the interim presidency serves as a trial run (Tichenor, 2019). Noncontenders can be internal or external and agree to not seek consideration for the presidential post. Whether the interim president is internal or external could affect the effectiveness of the interim period. According to Tichenor (2019), an interim president hired internally has institutional knowledge and can provide a sense of stability throughout the transition.

Tichenor (2019) focused on how the interim presidency affects senior leadership teams who are often asked to take on additional responsibilities related to operating the institution during the transition period. An interim president can either cause senior leadership team members to leave their posts or engage collaboratively with them on managing the institution throughout the process (Tichenor, 2019). According to Tichenor (2019), one of the greatest risks during this interim period is underestimating the importance of the senior leadership team as their knowledge and experience can be beneficial to interim presidents who lack the background on the operational issues of the president's office (Tichenor, 2019). Senior leaders who took part in Tichenor's (2019) study said they came to appreciate the interim president as an opportunity to be more closely involved in running the institution and that they wished they had taken a more open-minded approach to the interim process from the outset.

Placement of New President

Lohse (2008) studied the organizational entry process for a new college president. According to Lohse (2008) there are several considerations for the success of a new president. One consideration is a transition committee charged with introducing the new president to the institution and its constituents. Introducing the president and his or her family to the institution and the community is important for developing strong personal and working relationships. The social activities, according to Lohse (2008), should start when the president assumes office and continue for months into the presidency. The transition committee is also charged with preparing materials on the institution, including but not limited to governance documents, faculty handbooks, bylaws, and financial reports, as well as handling logistics for the new president such as acquiring an official vehicle and office space (Lohse, 2008).

In addition to the transition committee, Lohse (2008) recommended a set of written transition guidelines be established to steer the process. The guidelines, according to Lohse (2008), would include logistics such as the process for the former president vacating the office and turning over documents, meetings between the outgoing and incoming president, and the establishment of roles and responsibilities of both the outgoing and incoming president. The guidelines would be updated as dynamics of the process and the institution changed (Lohse, 2008). Along these lines, Lohse (2008) also recommended clear and timely communication with constituents to minimize any anxiety caused by the change in leadership. The communication should keep constituents informed about the status of the transition, priorities, and plans for the new president (Lohse, 2008).

For presidents from nontraditional backgrounds, Lohse (2008) recommended attention be paid to an academic orientation by way of ongoing meetings with the provost or vice president for academic affairs and academic deans. This orientation is important for presidents who lack an academic background so that they understand the nuances of academic issues at the institution (Lohse, 2008). This will prevent frustration from both the administration and the academic sides of the institution (Lohse, 2008).

Many of the presidents who will take office when the current presidents retire will be individuals who have never served in the role (Keen, 2019). Keen (2019) focused his study on effective leadership and management strategies from the perspectives of experienced college and university presidents. The findings are meant to help new university presidents, but particularly those who are new to a president role (Keen, 2019). According to Keen (2019), understanding what has worked for experienced leaders helps prevent first-time presidents from failing. The importance of building the right senior leadership team was one perspective experienced presidents shared (Keen, 2019).

Role of Senior Administrators

A strong senior leadership team is key for the success of a presidency and the institution (Jackson, 2018). According to Jackson (2018), developing a top management team can be challenging, especially for new presidents. Jackson's (2018) case study aimed at understanding how a new college president constructed and led her senior leadership team, which included the vice presidents that made up her cabinet. Jackson (2018) found that inexperienced or disingenuous team members were disruptive to the team, the president, and the institution by not providing honest or constructive feedback or by providing ill-informed guidance to the president. To avoid derailment of the

presidency, it is important to get the right people and the right roles in place (Jackson, 2018). Many times this means making changes to appointments as well as letting people go. Jackson's (2018) study found one approach typically underused in an academic environment is coaching. The coaching was available for the new president and had an impact on performance (Jackson, 2018). When a new president is overhauling the senior leadership team, coaching could be an avenue for the growth and development of the team members.

Keen's (2019) study focused on learning from experiences of prior presidents and found that having a strong administrative team is crucial to success. Presidents participating in Keen's (2019) study shared how senior members either helped or hindered them early in their presidencies. Trust between presidents and those in top administrative positions is key and without it, derailment could occur (Keen, 2019). One president said he wished he had found a way to "get rid of them earlier" when discussing senior leadership team members who were unhelpful to his presidency (Keen, 2019, p. 81).

Similar to Keen (2019) and Jackson's (2018) studies, Smerek (2013) studied sensemaking of new presidents and found that nearly every president who participated stressed how important building an administrative team was to their role. According to Smerek (2013), presidents rely on the thinking and feedback from their administrative teams and these presidents could not focus on important initiatives if they could not trust key individuals. The presidents who participated in Smerek's (2013) study expressed that unity between the president and the senior leadership team is needed to properly run the organization.

Gaval's (2009) study contributed to the research on the process of assembling an initial leadership team. For the study, senior leadership included the provost and the vice presidents for finance, student affairs, enrollment management, marketing, planning and advancement (Gaval, 2009). The purpose of Gaval's (2009) study was to understand how senior leadership teams evolve during a transition, and what strategies new presidents use for assessing current members and selecting new members. According to Gaval (2009), the formation of the senior leadership team is a time-consuming part of a new presidency. It takes on a high level of importance because the president will rely on these individuals to support and advance his or her agenda (Gaval, 2009).

Gaval's (2009) study focused on 12 presidential transitions where new presidents made changes to the senior team's composition. The study found three criteria for selecting senior team members and developing them as an effective team: chemistry, investment in the culture and values of the institution, and a shared understanding and perspective of institution-wide issues (Gaval, 2009). As part of the process, many new presidents engaged in candid conversations with team members about their future plans and this was extremely important to the selection of senior leadership (Gaval, 2009). The building out of the senior leadership team, according to Gaval (2009), is a delicate balance between bringing in new members with new ideas and perspectives and maintaining stability and respect for institutional history (Gaval, 2009)

Because change at the presidential level is often accompanied by attrition of senior administrators, Overend's (2011) study focused on presidential transition from the senior administrator's perspective. Senior administrators' communication with the president and with their colleagues was emphasized in the findings of the Overend (2011)

study. Senior administrators who participated in the study expressed how exclusive communication with their new presidents allowed them to learn more about who the new presidents were, their habits, what they liked or didn't like, and what was the best way to communicate with them (Overend, 2011). To develop strong relationships with new presidents, senior administrators described using discretion when interacting with other senior administrators and limiting discussion with them about the transition (Overend, 2011). Senior administrators also limited their processing of the presidential transition to one trusted individual, which was most often a spouse or a significant other (Overend, 2011).

According to Overend (2011), senior administrators oftentimes felt abandoned when they lacked contact with new presidents. This lack of contact then led to lack of clarity around expectations and roles (Overend, 2011). While stating that senior administrators do not have to take part in the search and selection process, Overend (2011) explained that communications such as forums, blogs, or daily emails should be established prior to the new presidents beginning their roles so that they can be aware of the senior administrators' and other stakeholders' anxieties with the transition.

Summary

This study expanded on the literature across job crafting, board professionals, and presidential transitions in higher education with the goal of understanding how board professionals experience job crafting during a presidential transition. The research on presidential transitions in higher education has been lacking, particularly in the area of how transitions impact senior leadership team members at colleges and universities (Jackson, 2018). The role of the senior leadership team members throughout the

transition process is key to the success of a presidency (Jackson, 2018; Keen, 2019; Overend, 2011).

Board professionals, oftentimes also members of the senior leadership team at a college or university, are key to the success of the presidency because of their close support role to the president (Reed, 2017). A presidential transition can bring about tension, anxiety, and challenges for these individuals (Reed, 2017). The role of the board professionals is often overlooked and there is a dearth of research on this important position in higher education (Reed, 2017).

Job crafting is said to help individuals manage complex work situations such as those brought on by presidential transitions (Berg, Dutton, & Wrzesniewski, 2008; Cameron & McNaughtan, 2014; Demerouti, 2014; Hakanen, Seppala, & Peeters, 2017; Kaltiainen, Lipponen, & Petrou, 2018; Kira, Balkin, & San, 2012; Petrou, Demerouti, & Schaufeli, 2015; Petrou et al., 2018; Zhang & Parker, 2019). With Tims and Bakker's (2010) Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model providing researchers with a quantitative instrument for measuring job crafting and with their rejection of cognitive job crafting as part of the JD-R model, research on job crafting has been primarily quantitative in nature and lacking in the cognitive area of the process. More qualitative research is needed on job crafting and where the cognitive piece fits within the process (Lazazzara, Tims, & de Gennaro, 2019; Zhang & Parker, 2019).

To add to the job crafting, board professional, and presidential transition literature, the study focused on the important role of board professionals and how they experience job crafting throughout a presidential transition at a college or university. The next chapter provides an overview of how the study was conducted and is followed by

data analysis chapters. Findings, conclusions, and recommendations for future research are outlined in the final chapter.

Chapter 3: Methodology

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce the research methodology for the study. This narrative study focused on board professionals who experienced a presidential transition in 2018 or 2019, within one to two years from the date of the start of the study. The research question guiding this study was: how do board professionals at colleges and universities describe and make meaning of their job crafting experiences during a presidential transition? In addition, this study focused on cognitive job crafting within the job crafting process. Board professionals were asked to describe how they perceived their jobs throughout the various stages of the transition experience, from the departure of the sitting president to the first one -to -two years of the new president's term. This chapter summarizes the study's narrative research approach, how participants were selected, how interviews were conducted and transcribed, and how data were analyzed and validated.

Narrative Approach

A narrative approach was chosen for the study because it highlights the meaning of personal experience. The fundamental aim of all narrative is to make sense of experience. Many researchers turn to narrative because "the stories reveal truths about human experience" (Riessman, 2008, p. 10). Through narrative interviews, which are more open-ended and take on a conversational tone that allows for meaningful collaboration and exchanging of detailed accounts (Riessman, 2008), researchers are able to learn how participants negotiate their identity, values, and behavior within their particular life context (Carless & Douglass, 2017; McAlpine, 2017). Rich insights into participants' lived experiences are developed through the narrative approach (Carless & Douglass, 2017; McAlpine, 2016).

In the narrative paradigm, reality is often created during the inquiry, especially as the participants describe their experiences to the researcher. This study took a social constructivist interpretative framework, assuming that knowledge is known through the subjective experience of the participants (Creswell, 2013). Through this lens, reality is shaped by how people perceive it. The participants understand themselves and their world through an interpretive process that is subjective and rooted in their culture (Spector-Mersel, 2010). The participants recounting moments of personal experience is a way through which meaning is created and communicated (Carless & Douglass, 2017; McAlpine, 2016).

Participants' narratives are rooted in their current situation so the past and the future are always told from the vantage point of the present (McAlpine, 2016; Spector-Mersel, 2010). According to Riessman (2008), the participants "look back on and recount lives that are located in particular times and places" and "in a dynamic way, narrative constitutes past experience at the same time as it provides ways for individuals to make sense of the past" (pp. 7–-8). Each account provides a way of integrating past experiences into meaningful learning (McAlpine, 2016). Through the construction and recounting of narratives, participants "form and re-form who they have been, are presently, and hope to become" (McAlpine, 2016, p. 33). Their narratives can continue to influence how they view themselves and make future decisions (McAlpine, 2016).

A narrative study is best for capturing the detailed stories or experiences of a small number of individuals and allows for a more open-ended interview technique so that participants can construct meaning of the experiences they are describing (Creswell, 2013). The open-ended interview approach allows participants the freedom to raise issues

that are meaningful to them (Carless & Douglass, 2017; McAlpine, 2016; Riessman, 2008). Narrative research requires an open, accepting, empathetic, and trusting relationship between researcher and participant (Carless & Douglass, 2017). Through getting to know the researcher, participants can feel safe to express emotions and vulnerabilities (Carless & Douglass, 2017). Trustworthiness is achieved, in part, by sharing the transcripts and the narratives with the participants so they can confirm whether accounts are accurate reflections of their experiences (Creswell, 2013).

Study Participants

Purposeful sampling was used to select participants, meaning that participants were chosen for the study based on whether "they can purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon in the study" (Creswell, 2013, p. 156). The sample for the study was board professionals at colleges and universities who underwent a presidential transition in 2018 or 2019, one to two years from the start of the study. The one- to two-year timeframe was selected because it allowed for participants to have experienced the transition period but was recent enough that the participants were able to recall the experiences in detail through the interview process.

As a director for consulting at the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (AGB), a membership association for colleges and universities, I was able to obtain a list of institutions that had undergone presidential transitions in 2018 and 2019. The information from the list of presidential transitions for 2018 and 2019 was also publicly available via higher education media. Although AGB was supportive of my doctoral studies as an employee, this study was not connected to my

work at the association. Institutions that were former or current AGB consulting clients were removed from the list.

The 2018 and 2019 presidential transition list obtained from AGB was comprehensive but not exhaustive. It did not represent all institutions with presidential transitions that occurred in 2018 and 2019, only those captured by AGB. After removing former and current AGB clients, there were 74 institutions with presidential transitions in 2018 and 2019. From the list, I created a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet as a database to track information on the institution (type and size), the transition process (when the outgoing president announced the departure, when the search began, and when the new president started), and the board professional(s) (contact information, title, years at the institution). This information was gathered from what was available on each of the institutions' websites, from AGB's membership database, and from Google search. Many of the board professionals' LinkedIn profiles appeared in the results from the Google search. The LinkedIn profiles were a good source for background information on the board professionals' work experience. I also found articles via Google search where board professionals were featured or where details of a presidential search were reported on.

From the list of 74 institutions, I eliminated institutions where the board professionals left their positions during or shortly after the presidential transition. I removed international institutions because many have different administrative and governing structures from universities and colleges in the United States. Similarly, I excluded institutionally-related foundations from the list because, while their governance structures are similar to those of universities and colleges, the administrative structures

are different. I decided to only focus on presidents placed in 2019 since some of those presidential transitions actually began in 2018 when the outgoing presidents announced their departures. After the elimination process, there were 39 institutions remaining. The board professionals from these institutions were selected for the study.

Upon approval from the George Washington University (GWU) Institutional Review Board (IRB), an invitation to participate in the study was sent to the 39 board professionals in the database. The invitation was sent via email from my @gwu.edu email account with information on me and on the study. Ethical considerations such as guaranteeing confidentiality and that the study was separate from AGB's work was included in the correspondence to the board professionals. All IRB regulations that pertained to the study were followed. The sample email invitation is included as Appendix A.

Invitations were sent out to the 39 board professionals on September 7, 2020. Three board professionals responded within the same day and a total of 15 board professionals responded within two weeks of the invitation send-out. I engaged in maximum variation sampling where some criteria that differentiates the participants is determined in advance and then participants who are quite different on that criteria are selected (Creswell, 2013). This approach helped me narrow down the participants who responded to the invitation while increasing the "likelihood that findings will reflect differences or different perspectives—an ideal for qualitative research" (Creswell, 2013, p. 157). The selected criteria were the type and size of institution the board professionals represented as well as their job ranks. The literature shows that the board professional's role varies according to the type and size of the institution. Job crafting approaches also

varied depending on the rank of the employee. To ensure maximum variation in participants, the list was narrowed down as they responded until representatives from each criterion (public, private, large, small institution and job title) were included in the final sample.

Narrative research involves a relatively small number of participants, typically anywhere from two to fifteen (Riessman & Quinney, 2005; Squire, 2013). The study aimed for a mid-range sample size of five to seven participants. Eight board professionals were ultimately chosen from those interested in participating in the study in order to maximize the variation of participants.

The eight board professionals chosen for the study had a range of titles across various ranks, including vice president, chief of staff, general counsel, board clerk, and executive assistant. Of the eight, four board professionals worked in public institutions, which included a community college and a large university system. The other four board professionals worked in private institutions, which included a small, religiously affiliated institution as well as a large research university. The participants varied in how long they had been in their positions and with their institutions. A couple of the board professionals were still new to their jobs when the outgoing presidents announced their departures while others had been in their roles for decades and were even alumni of the institution. The board professionals' experiences also varied in that some had gone through one or several presidential transitions before the transition in 2019 while for others it was their first experience with a presidential transition.

Data Collection

The data collection began with first-round interviews with the board professionals selected for the study. Pilot interviews were conducted prior to the study to ensure the reliability of the interview protocol. The data collected as part of the pilot interviews were not used as part of this study.

Pilot Interviews

Pilot interviews with two board professionals not related to the study were conducted prior to the start of the study. The goal of the pilot interviews was to test the interview protocol and learn whether the structure was appropriate for the study, as in which interview techniques supported the objectives of the study and which detracted from the objectives (Seidman, 1998). The data collected through the pilot interviews were not used for the study. After conducting the pilot interviews, I reflected on the experience and made a few small revisions to the interview protocol such as adding more background on the study and rearranging a few of the preliminary questions. These changes were included in the interview protocol that was submitted to and approved by the IRB.

Interviews for the Study

Interviews with the study participants were conducted from September through December 2020, during the COVID-19 pandemic. All interviews were conducted virtually to follow best practices for travel and in-person meetings during the pandemic. Board professionals were invited for a telephone or a Zoom video interview, depending on their preference. All the board professionals preferred interviews via Zoom video. The board professionals selected for the study received the interview protocol prior to the

interview. The protocol included background information on the study and interview process, risks and benefits associated with participating in the study, and questions to be asked during the interview.

The interview protocol served as a consent document and also included language such as assuring participants that their participation was voluntary, that they could stop the interview at any time, and that their participation in the study would not be associated with AGB. Participants were asked for their permission to record the interview. Once I received their permission, I pressed record on the Zoom platform and my cell phone was used as a back-up recording device. The participants were reminded at the beginning of each interview that the transcript would be available for their review. This information was also included in the interview protocol. The interview protocol is included as Appendix B.

Narrative interviews provide the opportunity for a meaningful collaboration between the researcher and participant with the goal of generating detailed accounts (Riessman, 2008). The interviews call for more open-ended questions to elicit stories and facilitate participants' constructing responses in ways they find meaningful (Riessman, 2008). As customary in the narrative approach, the interviews take on a more conversational tone to allow for an exchange of stories (Riessman, 2008). They require "longer turns at talk than are customary in ordinary conversations" with one story leading to another and the researcher negotiating "openings for extended turns and associative shifts in topics" (Riessman, 2008, p. 24). The questions asked during narrative interviews are less important than the researcher's "emotional attentiveness and engagement and degree of reciprocity in the conversation" (Riessman, 2008, p. 24).

To build relationships with the participants, I shared my background information prior to the first-round interviews. As part of the study, I prepared a subjectivity statement that includes information on my role with AGB, my understanding of the work of board professionals as part of my role, my recent experience with a presidential transition at AGB, and how these aspects of my life would likely shape the interpretation and approach of the study. The statement is included in Appendix C.

Four of the eight board professionals requested phone conversations prior to their interviews. During these conversations I shared the background information included in my subjectivity statement. For the four board professionals I did not have phone conversations with, I began each conversation with the background information from my subjectivity statement. By the time we began the interviews, I felt that the board professionals had a good understanding of my background and felt comfortable sharing their experiences. Throughout the interviews the board professionals acknowledged my background with phrases such as "as you know" and our conversations typically ended with the board professionals asking me questions about my studies and wishing me luck on the dissertation process.

Riessman (1993) recommended a less structured interview approach "in the interest of giving greater control to respondents" (p. 55). She advised that interview guides have five to seven questions about the topic "supplemented by probe questions in case the respondent has trouble getting started" (p. 55). This study followed Riessman's (1993) approach with a semi-structured interview guide that allowed for open-ended conversations. The interviews were flexible, allowing for the board professionals to lead the conversation, but each board professional was asked a set of similar questions to

allow comparisons across the board professionals' experiences. The interview questions were divided into two parts. The first part focused on the board professionals' backgrounds and work experiences to learn more about their values and what motivates them. The second part of the interview focused on their current roles and the presidential transitions. Questions for the second part of the interview were organized by the various stages of the presidential transition—the announcement of the transition, the search for the new president, the departure of the former president, and the arrival of the new president. The two parts of the interviews were meant to provide an overall picture of who the board professionals were, what motivated them, and how they perceived their roles through the presidential transitions.

Two interviews with six of the eight participants were conducted as part of the study. The first interviews were in-depth and lasted between 60 to 90 minutes. These interviews were recorded and the transcripts were shared with participants for review. The second interviews were shorter and served to follow up on particular points, interpretations, and to offer opportunities for the participants to reflect and provide additional insight. The second interviews were conducted within two weeks of the first interviews based on each participant's availability. The second interviews lasted between 20 to 60 minutes and were recorded when possible, depending on the board professional's schedule and preference. Two of the eight participants' schedules did not allow for a second interview. I determined that the experiences I had gathered from the first interviews with these two participants were important to the study and were enough so that second interviews with these two participants would not be required.

Data Analysis

Acknowledging that for narrative analysis, compared to other forms of qualitative analysis, there are no standard techniques or sets of procedures, Riessman (1993) outlined five levels of "representation of experience" to address the decisions researchers confront at numerous points in the narrative process (p. 8). The five levels are: attending to experience; telling about experience; transcribing experience; analyzing experience; and reading experience (Riessman, 1993).

At the first level of "attending to experience," the participants have the experience and in being present for the experience, they are actively constructing a reality in new ways by thinking (Riessman, 1993, p. 9). In telling about the experience, the participant represents the events in a somewhat ordered form in conversation (or interview) with the researcher (Riessman, 1993). As the participant tells and the researcher listens, a story is produced together. This story could take on a different form as the participant might change what is being told depending on who the listener is (Riessman, 1993). The researcher then transcribes the experience. According to Riessman (1993), this process is not impartial because by "displaying text in particular ways, we provide grounds for our arguments, just like a photographer guides the viewer's eye with lenses and by cropping images" (p. 13). The fourth level involves identifying similarities across the moments. Through this process, the researcher "sits with pages of tape-recorded stories, snips away at the flow of talk to make it fit between the covers of a book, and tries to create sense and dramatic tension" (Riessman, 1993, p. 13). The researcher makes decisions about form, ordering, and style of presentation. At the end, the researcher creates a metastory about what happened by "editing and reshaping what was told, and turning it into a

hybrid story" (Riessman, 1993, p. 13). According to Riessman (1993), "no matter how talented the original storyteller was, a life story told in conversation certainly does not come ready-made as a book, an article, or a dissertation. The stop-and-start style of oral stories of personal experience gets pasted together into something different" (p. 14). The narrative is then returned to the participants, "who may or may not recognize their experience in it or like how they are portrayed" (Riessman, 1993, p. 14). Every text is "open to several readings and to several constructions," and a work can provoke quite different readings in different contexts even for the same reader (Riessman, 1993, p. 14).

The data analysis for this study is guided by Riessman's (1993) five levels of representation and influenced by other narrative researchers' techniques such as restorying (Nasheeda, Abdullah, Krauss, & Ahmed, 2019; Ollerenshaw & Creswell, 2002) and ghostwriting (Byrne, 2017; Rhodes, 2000). The process involved transcribing the interviews and developing case narratives, followed by a thematic and structural analysis of the case narratives, and culminating in an analysis across all the case narratives.

The data analysis for each participant began immediately after their first interview. The process varied with each participant as some were interviewed in September 2020 while others were interviewed in December 2020. The interview transcription process involved reviewing, formatting, and cleaning up the transcripts for each of the participant's interviews. Developing a case narrative for each of the board professionals followed. The case narratives were then analyzed using a thematic and structural approach that focused on not only "what" the board professionals said but also "how" or what structural components they used when sharing their experience. The last

step in the narrative analysis process was a comparison across the case narratives, highlighting findings from the experiences of the eight board professionals who participated in the study.

Interview Transcriptions

The interview transcript is an integral part of the narrative data analysis. According to Riessman (2008), "transcriptions are by definition incomplete, partial, and selective—constructed by an investigator" (p. 50). In constructing the transcript, the researcher is not neutral. Transcription is a deeply interpretive process and researchers play a major role in "shaping the stories participants choose to tell" when constructing the data for analysis (Riessman, 2008, p. 28).

For the transcription process, I followed Riessman's (2008) approach of repeated listening coupled with methodic transcribing, which "often leads to insights that in turn shape how we choose to represent an interview narrative" (p. 60). I used the Zoom platform's recording and auto transcript features. The transcript output from Zoom was verbatim and included utterances. Breaks and pauses were not included in the Zoom transcripts and there were grammatical errors, words translated incorrectly, and misidentification of speakers at certain points. Each Zoom transcript required heavy editing. I went through each transcript, listening to the interview audio and correcting the transcript. When transcribing at this level, as Riessman (1993) explained, "interpretative categories emerge, ambiguities in language are heard on the tape, and the oral record—the way the story is told—provides clues about meaning" (p. 58).

Personal or identifying information was redacted from each transcript. I used a pseudonym for each of the board professionals in order to maintain privacy. Pseudonyms

were the only names used throughout the study. In instances where there was a chancellor instead of a president at an institution, the word "chancellor" was replaced with the word "president." Descriptions of institutions (public, private, community college, system, religiously affiliated) as well as specific circumstances of the presidential transitions were redacted.

I went through three rounds of listening to the interview audio while cleaning up the transcript for each participant. Riessman (2008) explained that transcribing talk into text is a representation that involves selection and reduction and requires going back after each draft to note features of the conversation that could be used for detailed analysis (p. 57). Riessman (1993) described her process:

> I spend considerable time scrutinizing the rough drafts of transcriptions, often across a number of interviews, before going to the next level. It is here that analytic induction is most useful. A focus for analysis often emerges, or becomes clearer, as I see what respondents say. Studies, like narrative accounts, are jointly produced; as investigators interact with subjects, analytic ideas change. As I scrutinize transcripts, feature of the discourse often "jump out," stimulated by prior theoretical interests and "fore-structures" of interpretation. (p. 57)

Through each round of transcript editing, I was able to delve deeper into each of the board professionals' experiences. I immersed myself in the data, becoming familiar with the transcripts and the stories. With each round of editing, certain points of the board professionals' stories stood out. For several board professionals the outgoing president had to step down because of illness, a couple of the board professionals were focusing on retirement, and a number of the board professionals had an interim or an acting president

during the search process while others did not go through a presidential search process. I took notes on these differences and on the chronological plots of the presidential transition that followed the departure of the outgoing president, the search for a new president, and the arrival of the selected president.

The corrected, redacted transcripts were sent to participants for review to ensure accuracy. All participants responded and approved the transcripts. Three of the participants wanted to confirm confidentiality throughout the process because they felt their institution could still be identified from the information in the transcript. I assured them that any identifiable data such as details of the former president's resignation or of the search processes would not be included in the study. I also reminded them that the transcripts would not be included in the dissertation, that they would have an opportunity to review their case narratives, and would, therefore, have the opportunity to review the information presented in the dissertation.

Six out of the eight participants had second-round interviews. Transcripts for second-round interviews were corrected, redacted, and analyzed with the first-round interviews. The transcripts for second-round interviews were not sent for participant review because the second interviews were mainly following up on information gathered in the first-round interviews. Once the participants reviewed and approved their first-round transcripts, the transcripts were uploaded to a project site on Atlas.ti, a qualitative data analysis software platform. Memos with notes from the interviews and the study process as well as redacted transcripts from second-round interviews were also uploaded to the project site.

Case Narratives

For narrative approaches, Riessman (1993) explained that in order to "respect respondents' ways of constructing meaning and analyze how it is accomplished," narratives "must be preserved, not fractured" (p. 4). Riessman (1993) described how she came across the narrative process in her data analysis:

> In structured interviews, women and men seized every opportunity in the conversation to tell about their experiences. Some developed long accounts of what had happened in their marriages to justify their divorces. I did not realize these were narratives until I struggled to code them. Applying traditional qualitative methods, I searched the texts for common thematic elements. But some individuals knitted together several themes into long accounts that had coherence and sequence, defying easy categorization. I found myself not wanting to fragment the long accounts into distinct thematic categories. There seemed to be a common structure beneath the talk about a variety of topics. (p. vi)

Like Riessman (1993), I first began my analysis of the transcripts with a traditional qualitative approach. Using Atlas.ti, I went through a line-by-line coding process with each of the board professionals' transcripts highlighting quotations from the texts and naming them with the codes "that seem to best describe the information" (Creswell, 2013, p. 185). For example, I highlighted the quote "for my particular situation in this transition, I made a commitment because I love the institution and I felt I owed it to the former president to see things through" and coded it "loyal" because the board professional was describing her loyalty to the president and to the institution. Had the board professional described loyalty to just the president or loyalty to just the institution,

the code would have differentiated “loyalty to the president” or “loyalty to the institution.” After a couple of rounds of highlighting and coding transcripts, I ended up with hundreds of codes for each participant. Like Riessman (1993), I found myself struggling with fragmented pieces and quotes. After considerable reflection, I decided to create a narrative from a lengthy account of each board professional’s experiences.

I followed Riessman’s (1993) five levels of representation combined with a version of Ollerenshaw and Creswell’s (2002) and Nasheeda et al.’s (2019) restorying technique to create the case narratives. The restorying technique begins with researchers familiarizing themselves with the transcripts so that they are able to identify the chronology of events in the narratives. Similar to my transcription process, the familiarization approach “includes reading the transcripts and listening to the audio recording of the interview several times to immerse oneself in the data” (Nasheeda et al., 2019, p. 2). A reflection period follows to recognize the “elements of the story including the events and epiphanies” and “develop a plot that provides contextual information about the individual’s social interactions and experiences” (Nasheeda et al., 2019, p. 3). The researcher then sequences the transcript into a series of chronological events, revealing “significant events, major turning points, and the voice of the storyteller” (Nasheeda et al., 2019, p. 3). The chronological ordering is used to reconstruct the story, as it allows the researcher to “identify the participant’s storytelling perspective on how things were, who was involved, and what were the high and low points for the participants” (Nasheeda et al., 2019, p. 6). Once the transcripts were restoried, participants were sent the new stories “to check on the story plot to determine whether

the story sequence accurately reflected the participant's voice" (Nasheeda et al., 2019, p.6).

Riessman (2008) followed a similar approach in which the researcher "works with a single interview at a time, isolating and ordering relevant episodes into a chronological biographical account" (p. 57). Each account is "cleaned up" so that the "messy" spoken language is easily readable (Riessman, 2008, p. 58). Little attention is paid to "how the story unfolds in a conversational exchange or the questioner's role in constituting it" so that "a biographical account emerges 'full bloom' from the 'self' of the narrator" (Riessman, 2008, p. 58). The data for each participant were retold in a case narrative as a condensed story form with a goal of preserving the participant's experiences as best as possible (Riessman, 2008).

The creation of a case narrative for each of the board professionals in this study meant restorying each transcript into a chronological condensed form with the goal of preserving the board professional's experience as best as possible (Riessman, 2008). I began by preparing each case narrative as a chronological account. From my rounds of transcription and then rounds of coding each transcript, I had some idea of recurring chronological themes for each of the board professionals: what was important to them, how they described themselves, life events, their education, prior work experiences, prior presidential transitions, the nature of their job, their current duties, their relationship with the outgoing president, their role during the search process, their relationship with the new president, and how their role changed throughout the transition. Using Atlas.ti, I went through each of the board professional transcripts highlighting the sections that corresponded with these themes. I paid attention to the overall plot of the narratives. For

example, the following excerpts are from Jessica's (pseudonym) transcript. Using Atlas.ti, I highlighted this text from Jessica's transcript as "nature of the job":

> I would just laugh and say, I can't tell you anything. You know, basically, I knew who was going to try to weasel something out of me. But I was fortunate that I had one friend who since retired, but she was the executive assistant to the EVP at the time, and we both were privy to the same information. At least I had one person I could talk to and that was really helpful because I don't have that anymore. She left the position. It was disbanded and I basically am a hermit. Now I don't talk to anybody because it's such a confidential job that you really…there's very little you can talk about with people. You can talk about the weather. That's about it. It's pretty lonely sometimes. Because it is very…you have to be careful. Anytime you open your mouth, you have to be careful because you don't want to…you don't want to misrepresent anything.
>
> Okay yeah and so I just can say to people, you know, I'm sorry, I can't share that information. You know, I just, I have taken to eating at my desk now. So I eat lunch at my desk. It's not an easy position. I'm in a department of one. I know in most colleges they have two or three people in the president's office. It is only me. And so I have no one to talk to. But that would be, actually that'll be one of my recommendations, is that there should be more than one person in there. There shouldn't be one gatekeeper for everything.

I copied and pasted the highlighted sections of each transcript from Atlas.ti into a separate word document so that I could see and edit all the sections individually. I did this for each transcript. The parts of the transcript that were left out were sections that

included confidential information such as details of the transition process that might give away the identity of the board professional or the institution. Many of the outgoing presidents left their positions due to illness. The sections of the transcripts with details of the illness were left out as much as possible. Other details that did not make the word documents were prior work experience that was not related to the current transition and that might give away the identity of the board professional. Work experiences that were related in any way to the narrative or to the transition were kept. In each of the Word documents, I shifted the excerpts from the transcripts to create a chronological order focusing on the details of each board professional's experience related to the presidential transition.

Using Jessica's example above, she was describing the confidential nature of the job as she was sharing her experiences with open presidential searches, where candidates are publicly known, and closed presidential searches, where information on the candidates remains confidential until a finalist is selected. Once in the Word document, I shifted the excerpts so that they followed a chronological account. I then cleaned up the language for utterances and any speech disturbances. For Jessica's narrative, I condensed the information by removing the "Okay yeah" and "you know" and by repositioning the first two sentences: "I would just laugh and say, I can't tell you anything. You know, basically, I knew who was going to try to weasel something out of me." The example below shows the edited excerpt as it appears in Jessica's case narrative:

> I was fortunate that I had one friend who has since retired. She was the executive assistant to the EVP at the time and because we both were privy to the same information, at least I had one person I could talk to. That was really helpful. I

don't have that anymore. She left the position. It was disbanded and I am basically a hermit. Now I don't talk to anybody because it's such a confidential job that there's very little you can talk about with people. You can talk about the weather. That's about it. It's pretty lonely sometimes. Anytime you open your mouth, you have to be careful because you don't want to misrepresent anything. So I just say to people, "I'm sorry. I can't share that information." I have taken to eating at my desk now. It's not an easy position. I'm in a department of one. I know in most colleges they have two or three people in the president's office. It's only me. And so I have no one to talk to. There should be more than one person in here. There shouldn't be one gatekeeper for everything.

Similar to Byrne (2017) and Rhodes' (2000) narrative techniques of restorying and writing stories in the first person, each case narrative was prepared as if told by the board professional. Byrne (2017) explained that her technique and Rhodes' (2000) ghostwriting technique are written as if told by the participant even though they as researchers had recreated the narratives from the interview transcripts. This was done, according to Byrne (2017), because they saw the story "as belonging to the participants" (p. 43). I followed their approach because it was consistent with my goal of staying as close as possible to the board professionals' experiences. Like Byrne (2017) and Rhodes' (2000), I recognize that even though I am using the board professionals' own words from their transcripts, the new stories have been created by me as I shifted pieces of the transcripts to create a chronological account of the story. I ultimately decided what was kept from the transcripts and shaped each story to represent how the board professionals made meaning of their experience. Throughout this process I kept my subjectivity

statement in mind by reviewing it frequently to ensure I was not selecting parts of the transcripts I felt were important to the board professionals' experiences based on my own experience with a presidential transition or my knowledge of the board professional's role based on years of working with them but instead on what they thought was important and how they made meaning of the experiences.

Because the board professionals' experiences are restoried, it is important to note that each board professional reviewed his or her case narrative and provided feedback to ensure it represented his or her experiences. The eight board professionals were sent their case narratives for review via email; all of them responded within two weeks. Four of the board professionals approved their case narratives as they were, while four made small edits to clean up the language more and removed anything they thought might be identifiable such as dates of an announcement or specifics about relationships with colleagues. To clarify certain parts of her narrative, one board professional added a detail about the outgoing president that had been redacted.

Thematic Analysis

Once created and approved, the case narratives were uploaded on to Atlas.ti and then I analyzed the content for themes of what the board professionals said in their narratives. Using Atlas.ti, I went through each case narrative line by line focused on what was being said, highlighting and coding what aspects of their experiences the board professionals were focusing on. The codes were descriptors of what was being said. Once completed, each case narrative had between 50 to 80 codes. The codes for each case narrative were then categorized into themes. There were about four to five themes for each case narrative that are included as part of the data analysis in Chapter 4. An example

of the coding process is featured below with an excerpt from Sarah's (pseudonym) case narrative. In the excerpt, Sarah described how her role and her relationship with the outgoing president changed throughout the transition.

> Consequently, when the search for a new president was completed and the university welcomed a new president, I had to relearn my old job, my original job, for the incoming president. I went from taking on the role of chief of staff for someone who was dynamic and independent and needed me more in a support role, to a situation in which I had to operate many more levers behind the scenes because my president wasn't able to do so, then back to a job with a new president who needed me in a more supportive role again.

The codes that emerged from this excerpt were "relearn job," "changing role with outgoing president," "relationship with new president." The themes that ultimately emerged from the coding process of Sarah's entire case narrative (not just the excerpt above) were: Meaningful Work: Making a Difference in Students' Lives; Prolonged Transition of the Former President; Managing the Interim Relationship with the Provost; Managing Job Uncertainty; Relearn her Old Job; and Developing a Relationship with the Incoming President.

Structural Analysis

Once I completed the thematic analysis, I began the structural analysis for each participant. Thematic analysis does not generally attend to language, form, or interaction, but structural analysis does (Riessman, 2008). Structural analysis helps identify how participants tell stories the way they do, how they give shape to events, and how they make a point. The structural analysis can generate insights and answer questions that are

missed when, as is the case with the thematic approach, the analysis is narrowly focused on the "what" is said (Reissman, 2008).

For the structural analysis, I went through each case narrative focusing on structural components, looking at how the board professionals' stories unfolded. I focused on components of a story. Riessman (2008) outlines the six components of a narrative that include the summary or "point of the story," orientation such as characters or situations, the complicating action or turning point of the story, the evaluation of what happened, the resolution or outcome, and a coda or "ending the story and bring action back to the present" (p. 84). I used these six components loosely because the presidential transitions follow similar story arcs of the president departs, there is a search for a new president, and the new president steps into office. I focused mainly on orientation points, complicating actions, and the resolution, which I saw as key to understanding what happened throughout the presidential transition.

Other structural components that emerged from the case narratives were anecdotes, metaphors, and repetition of ideas or phrases. According to Bernard, Wutich, and Ryan (2017) when analyzing data, repetitions, metaphors, and analogies are helpful for finding themes because "repetition is easy to find in a text" and participants "often represent their thoughts, behaviors, and experiences with metaphors and analogies" (pp. 105–106). Examples of these could be seen with Greg describing himself as a train conductor who is trying to keep the train on the tracks as it is flying down the tracks. He was emphasizing the hectic and important pace of his role. Similarly, Nicole described herself as a firefighter "putting out small fires here and there" to highlight the unpredictable, crisis-preventing nature of her role. Combined, these structural

components add a layer of analysis to each case narrative that highlight what the board professionals thought important to emphasize from their experience.

Cross-Case Analysis

Once the thematic and structural analyses of each case narrative were complete, an analysis across all of eight board professionals' experiences followed. I reviewed the hundreds of codes that emerged throughout each of the case narratives and found that the larger themes developed from the analysis were more helpful in analyzing across the board professionals' case narratives. I read through the case narratives and the thematic and structural analysis for each of the board professionals. I highlighted and took notes on sections that varied across the presidential experience of the president departing, an interim president being placed, a presidential search being conducted, and the new president arriving. To me this emphasized how differently each board professional experienced the seemingly similar experience of a presidential transition. I then highlighted and took notes on the similarities and differences in the themes that emerged for each board professional in their case narratives. Their motivation, work styles, and their relationships were all included in the themes across the board professionals' narratives.

Based on my highlights and notes, clear findings across the board professionals' experiences emerged. Key points for each of the board professional's experiences were included such as their relationships with the outgoing presidents, where they were in their careers when the transition started, what challenges they dealt with during the transition, and what motivated them throughout the transition. These key points and findings are elaborated on in the cross-case analysis in Chapter 5.

Validation

The validity of the researcher's analysis is important for narrative studies (Riessman, 2008). According to Riessman (2008), "narrative truths are always partial—committed and incomplete" so researchers have to make arguments "to persuade audiences about the trustworthiness of their data and interpretations" (p. 183). To assess the accuracy of the researcher's findings, Creswell (2013) recommends using multiple "validation strategies" (p. 250). For the study, I used validation techniques such as clarifying research bias, field notes, and participant feedback.

Clarifying Researcher Bias

In line with the close relationship between the researcher and participant that is a central aspect of the narrative methodology, it was important that I made known any biases or assumptions that might impact the study. I wrote a subjectivity statement to outline my past experiences and orientations that would likely shape the interpretation and approach of the study. The statement is included in Appendix C. While the statement was not shared with the board professionals the information included in the statement was conveyed to them in conversation at the outset of each interview. I had phone conversations with four of the board professionals prior to their interviews, sharing information about myself, my work experience, the study, and my interest in this topic. For those I did not speak with prior to the interview, I began each interview by providing a brief background about myself. Sharing my background information with each of the board professionals helped the interviews take on a more conversational tone. Throughout the interviews the board professionals acknowledged my background with

phrases such as “as you know” and our conversations typically ended with the board professionals asking me questions about my studies and wishing me luck in the process.

The information in the subjectivity statement was also helpful as I conducted the data analysis. Knowing both my thoughts on presidential transitions based on the recent presidential transition I went through at AGB and my knowledge of the board professional’s role obtained through years of working with them helped me make decisions about how to represent the board professionals’ experience. I was aware of my thoughts and questioned whether each decision represented what I thought was important or what the board professional wanted to share.

Field Logs

Narrative researchers are encouraged to maintain a log of the process throughout the study to encourage methodological awareness. For academic audiences, this level of detail on how a study was conducted and on the process that led to certain conclusions versus others is expected (Riessman, 2008). For this study, detailed notes were captured throughout as field logs. Notes were logged after each step of the study capturing my experience. Details of the transcription and data analysis process were also captured in the logs to document the process. Field logs were uploaded to the Atlas.ti project site. These notes were then used to provide details on sections of this methodology chapter. According to Riessman (2008), this process “fosters ongoing reflexivity—critical self-awareness about how the research was done and the impact of critical decisions made along the way” (p. 190). Another advantage of maintaining a log is that it leaves an audit trail, which was not only useful for jogging my memory of how decisions were made but

encourages truthfulness and strengthens the persuasiveness and validity of the study (Riessman, 2008).

Participant Feedback

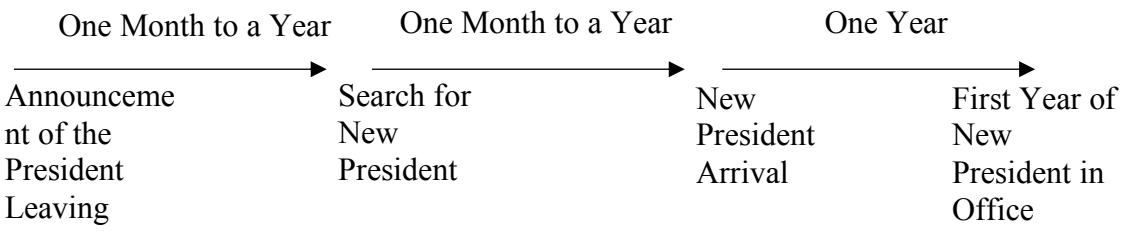
For the study, rich, detailed experiences were gathered from board professionals and retold in their own words as case narratives. To ensure that the case narratives were providing an accurate account reflective of their experiences, it was important to share the case narratives with the board professionals for their review and feedback. This practice helped strengthen the validity of the story being told in the case narrative.

Chapter 4: Case Narratives and Thematic and Structural Analysis

Eight board professionals who went through a presidential transition were interviewed for this study. From the interviews a case narrative was created for each of the board professionals, restorying their transcripts into a chronological condensed form with the goal of preserving their experiences. Each case narrative is different as some board professionals shared more than others and chose to focus more on some aspects of the transition versus others. There are recurring themes throughout the accounts, including: what was important to them, how they described themselves, life events, their education, prior work experiences, prior presidential transitions, the nature of their job, their current duties, their relationship with the outgoing president, their role during the search process, their relationship with the new president, and how their role changed throughout the transition. Since the study aims to understand how board professionals describe and make meaning of their job crafting experiences during a presidential transition, the chronology of the accounts follows the timeline for a typical presidential transition, defined by Gaval (2009) and Overend (2011) as beginning with departure of the current president (which typically starts with the announcement), followed by the search and selection process of the new president, and continuing through the first one to

Figure 2

Presidential Transition Timeline



two years of the new president's term. Figure 2 illustrates a presidential transition timeline as defined in this study.

Each case narrative was analyzed for themes of what was said as well as a structural analysis of how the board professionals told their stories. The case narratives were coded, and from those codes, themes emerged highlighting the aspects each of the board professionals chose to share from their experience throughout the transition. The structural analysis focused on how each of the board professionals' stories unfolded, emphasizing orientation components such as characters or situations included as part of the stories, complicating actions or turning points of the stories, and resolutions or outcomes of the stories. The structural analysis for each of the board professionals includes how their stories unfold and a timeline of how their stories fit within the presidential transition. Other structural components such as anecdotes, metaphors, and repetition of ideas or phrases the board professionals used throughout their accounts were also highlighted as part of the structural analysis. Combined, the thematic and structural analysis of each case narrative highlight what the board professionals thought important to emphasize from their experience. This chapter provides the case narrative for each of the board professionals, followed by their thematic and structural analysis.

Sarah: Case Narrative

Having meaningful work; it's really important to me. For me, it means that the work I'm doing makes a difference in our students' lives. I am a first-generation college student. That is a really big part of my identity and my work in higher education. And so I think of myself as an advocate for students.

I'm one generation away from being essentially a child of sharecropping tobacco farmers. My dad was the oldest of ten kids. They and his entire extended family still live around what are the remnants of the old family tobacco farm. He was the only one that ever left his home state and he teased me often about moving back. He went into the military and that was a life changing experience for him. I'm the only one on either side of my family, extended out many generations, that got a graduate degree at all, much less a PhD. And my generation was the first to even get baccalaureate degrees. My brother was first and then that was never in the cards for most of the people in my family. So I take that very seriously. It's a duty and responsibility for me.

I started thinking more about what I wanted to give back professionally, to have a career that was a little more satisfying to me personally. As a first-generation college student, I was looking around at the university I was working at and it was very affluent. I had this moment where I said, "Is that really what I signed up for professionally? To work at a university that never said the word student one time?" Public universities gave me a chance to have a better professional life and I wanted to work at a university that had more ideas than money rather than the other way around. As much as I really liked the people, and they did great work, and it's a great university, it was just not feeding my soul. I wanted to help students who were like me, whose parents never went to college, who didn't really know what they were doing. And so I packed up my family and we moved halfway across the country to the rural mountains.

I'm currently with an institution that serves a very poor area of the country. And many of our students are first generation. They're from relatively low socioeconomic backgrounds. We hear all the time from our students: ""you took a chance on me." We're

not open access but we're more open than other institutions. And what feeds my soul is that these students then come back and say, "because of my education, I was able to get a good job. And then my siblings did. And then my children are able to get good jobs and now my parents don't live in poverty anymore because I had a good job." We like to call it, "we're in the business of changing lives" and that is what we do. We take our mission seriously.

So I want to do work on behalf of our students. Even if it's work that is not in the classroom. If I can turn my work back to make the student experience better for our students, then that's what I'm going to do. I've had some real opportunities to do that in my role. When I'm making sure that our relationship with our governing board is functioning appropriately and that those folks are happy, when I can free up time for my president to be dedicated to the goals and aspirations of the institution, I know that makes a difference in the lives of students and that translates back into creating a university in which they can thrive. That's what gets me out of bed in the morning.

So what I do now, the nature of my job, is I spend a lot of my time making sure that the president's agenda is being carried out. I serve as her primary aide and counsel. We spend a lot of time talking through the initiatives and projects that she wants to get done. And then I work with the cabinet to make sure that things are moving along and that sort of thing. I write a lot of speeches and remarks and work with her scheduler to make sure that she's spending her time doing the things that are more important. And I also spend a lot of time just making sure that her interest and priorities are front and center.

I would describe myself as really loyal. I think that helps in a role like chief of staff. That loyalty, however, it's not just blind loyalty. It's not loyalty to a person, although there is an aspect to my job where that's included, but it is a loyalty to the mission of the institution and to a leader that's also committed to that. I enjoy helping my president make things happen for our students.

So one of the things that is difficult about the chief of staff role anywhere is probably that they're the person that spends the most time with the president. And with me, that's certainly true. And it's also proximity—my office is literally right next door. I'm three feet from the president's office. Part of my job is to know almost everything that the president knows and so it's this oddly professionally intimate relationship.

The last presidential transition, which is the one I've experienced being in the chief of staff role and in the board professional role, was probably emotionally and professionally the most complex and difficult one for me because the president was the one that hired me as his chief of staff. I had a very close relationship with him and he was incredibly well loved on campus. I can't overstate that enough. I've worked for a lot of different presidents and for most of them, people are high on them in the beginning and then that kind of erodes over time. This president was beloved, more so the day that he had to step down than the day that he arrived. To make matters worse, he was diagnosed with [a severe illness] and so the transition was very prolonged and quite difficult because it affected his speech and cognition. He was very interested in staying on as long as he could. He loved the university and the university loved him back. And so everyone was very much on board with him staying as long as he could. So we had almost two years where he stayed on as president even after his diagnosis.

He was a particularly gregarious and outgoing person. He was also a very intense person. And his diagnosis was really hard because my job was so wrapped up with his. My job in the transition actually changed tremendously because I moved from being just a background person to be much more up front and physical. Not just metaphorically speaking on behalf of the president, but in many situations speaking physically for him because I was the one that spent so much time with him, more than any other person and I could help when speech became difficult for him. And his provost, while he had a good relationship with him, wasn't spending as much time with the president. The president and provost respected each other but each did his own work.

For me in the chief of staff role, it was odd because I became the translator for the president, if that makes sense. I would have to go with him everywhere because if he was appearing someplace and he couldn't find the words, I was literally filling it in for him. It created an even more intense dependence that he had on me which in turn affected my job tremendously.

The president had been a very independent minded president. He didn't need a lot of care and feeding like some other presidents. He liked to write a lot of his own remarks and speeches, for example. Other presidents I've worked with, they would say that's the role of the chief of staff or an executive communications professional.

So it happened over a period of time. He just wasn't capable of telling me what he wanted to have in a speech. He couldn't translate what he wanted to say into a physical speech anymore. And so I took on more and more over time. And I think I learned to perfect his voice in ways I hadn't before. I think any chief of staff would probably tell you this, one of the best things that we can do is be a good mimic. It's not about me, it's

not about what I think, it's not about what I would say in this situation, it's about what the president would say. And so I think a good chief of staff needs to be a good mimic because you have to be a reflection of the person that you're in service to. This become especially acute during the transition.

So my role was complicated because at the end of the day I had such an active role with the president. When the provost stepped into the acting president role, keep in mind, we still had a president, he was just sick. The president was still living in the president's residence on campus. And so as the chief of staff to the president, I still had a huge role with the president, even when he was on medical leave. For many people, I was his person. And that was really hard for the acting president. There were times where the provost and I would have to negotiate things that were a little bit of a departure from the direction that the president wanted the institution to be heading in. And I'm not going to say it was all sunshine and rainbows because it was not. There were times when we had serious disagreements.

I managed as well as I could, sometimes well and other times not always well. I think even though the provost and I had mutual respect for each other, it didn't help our relationship that I was pulled in two different directions. We respected each other and tried to work around it, but that's what it was, it was workarounds for the most part. I was still trying to carry on, at least for the short term, and keep the president's office moving. And in my mind, it was always about preparing for the next president.

And, through all this, I was still in contact with the president and his wife. I'd talk to them multiple times a week. I went and visited with them regularly. On a daily basis, I just concentrated primarily on the things that fell in my other role as chief external affairs

officer. The part of confidante and counselor and advisor with the provost as acting president, that was not something he desired from me. And so I did less of that for him and more of the part of my job that falls into marketing, communications, and external affairs. My role became much more bifurcated in that interim period.

Consequently, when the search for a new president was completed and the university welcomed a new president, I had to relearn my old job, my original job, for the incoming president. I went from taking on the role of chief of staff for someone who was dynamic and independent and needed me more in a support role, to a situation in which I had to operate many more levers behind the scenes because my president wasn't able to do so, then back to a job with a new president who needed me in a more supportive role again.

With the transition to a new president, I had to pull back and say it's not my role anymore to play president, or to be that person who is more out front in supporting the president. I had to really step back behind the curtain a little bit, in a way that was appropriate. An example of that was when we were going through the transition I spoke with the board of trustees' chair probably four or five times a week on substantive matters. When our new president arrived, I had to take a very deliberate step back because she needed to establish her own relationship with the board of trustees' chair. She didn't need me doing that, she needed to establish that relationship. So there are times now where I go a couple of weeks without speaking to the board chair and that's appropriate. I had to be very intentional about those kinds of situations.

On the other hand, as I think about my next career steps, I know now that I can step outside from behind that curtain and, if I needed to, run a university. Because I've

done it, for all intents and purposes. And so I look around the landscape of higher education and it gives me a little bit of confidence that if I ever decide I want to pursue a presidency, I know that I can do that.

With a transition, I, like many people, understand that the senior leadership move around frequently. My philosophy is “we’re all interim.” So I have my resignation letter at all times in my desk drawer ready to go because I know I serve at the pleasure of the president. For my particular situation in this transition, however, I had made a commitment because I love the institution and I felt I owed it to the former president to see things through. The former president was a person who had been my mentor, not just my boss. My time with him was truly a master class in leadership. I felt my last gift to him was to make sure that the institution was in good hands and that the handoff was smooth and then I would be ready to go on to my next adventure. And so when the new president was named, I had that mindset. I was very upfront with her and said, “If you want me to get you off to a good start, then I will. If you want to make a change immediately, that's fine too.” And so she did ask me, she said, “I really want you to stay on and get through this transition.” And I said that I would.

It’s freeing in some respects, the mindset of we’re all interim. First of all, it bakes in a sense of urgency into everything that you do. Because if you really want to make progress then you know your time is always limited and it's not good enough to say, “yeah, I'll get around to that.” It keeps you on your toes. Also it keeps your perspective in place that it's not personal. I mean, every president deserves their own team and that’s not my fault, your fault, nobody’s fault. I don't think it’s good when someone comes to think of themselves as indispensable and that the enterprise can’t go on without them. That's

not to say that someone shouldn't give due diligence to their job. I just think it's best if someone assumes that if they are not here, then someone else will come in and do the job. The new person will be a different chief of staff, but they'll do a good job and it'll be fine. And so I think it's freeing and liberating in a way to not have to be so dependent. If I lose my job, it's not the end of my life. I'd go on to do something else. And while I'm here, I'm going to be a good steward of the time I have and try to do what's best for the people of this institution.

After a few months with the new president, it has been working really well and she has asked me to stay on. It's been different, but it's a good kind of different. And so I'm just delighted. The new president is a fantastic person and if I can be helpful to her with my institutional background here, I'll continue to do that. I have noticed over her first year, in the beginning, she was pretty reliant on me because I knew the university and I knew the people here. But she is becoming more independent over time. And I think that's a really cool thing. And I've enjoyed watching as she finds her own feet here.

I think, for me, with the arrival of the new president, one of the things that shifted is the former president was very independent, especially in the early years before he got sick. But with the new president's arrival, it's been interesting for me because I'm writing more speeches, I'm directing some of her initiatives and projects, things that the previous president would have liked to do those things for himself. So I'm getting to exercise a different skill set and that's been really cool too. I think that may be the best part of all.

Sarah: Thematic Analysis

Meaningful Work: Making a Difference in Students' Lives

As a first-generation college student, Sarah reflected on how her education has provided her "a chance to have a better professional life." Meaningful work is important to her and, for her, that means being an advocate for students who are like her, "whose parents never went to college, who didn't really know what they were doing." This is what led her to move her family across the country to her current institution, which serves students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds and is more open access than other institutions.

She said what "feeds her soul" and what gets her "out of bed in the morning" is doing work on behalf of the students, "even if it's work that is not in the classroom." When she ensures that the president is successful and that governing board is functioning appropriately, Sarah explained, "it makes a difference in the lives of students and that translates back into creating a university in which they can thrive."

Prolonged Transition of the Former President

Sarah described the presidential transition as emotionally and professionally complex and difficult because she had such a close relationship with the president who was stepping down. He was the one who hired her as chief of staff. He was a long-serving president and was beloved by the institution. He was stepping down because he was diagnosed with cancer; however, he wanted to stay on board as long as possible, meaning a prolonged two-year period where he worked from the president's residence while the provost stepped in as acting president.

Throughout the transition, Sarah's role shifted "from being just a background person to be much more up front and physical." She had a close relationship with the president by nature of her role but that relationship grew closer through the transition. She was in contact with him and visited the president's residence regularly and "took on more and more" over time. She became his translator. When his speech became difficult for him, Sarah would physically speak for him. She said she "learned to perfect his voice."

Sarah described the prolonged transition as "quite difficult." She said her job was so wrapped up with his that "it created an even more intense dependence" which affected her job "tremendously." She would go with him everywhere. She said she had to "play" president and "operate many more levers behind the scenes."

Managing the Interim Relationship with the Provost

Sarah's hands-on relationship with the outgoing president complicated her relationship with the provost as acting president. Sarah said there were times when she and the provost had to negotiate things that were a departure from the direction the president believed the institution should be heading in. Sarah described it as far from "sunshine and rainbows."

Sarah managed her relationship with the provost during the transition by shifting her role of confidant and counselor to a day-to-day focus on the external affairs area of her role, keeping marketing and communications going. Sarah viewed this interim presidency as short-term and said she was focused on keeping the president's office moving. In her mind, she explained, she was always "preparing for the next president."

Managing Job Uncertainty

As with any transition, Sarah said she understood that there was a possibility of her being asked to step down from her role. To manage uncertainty, Sarah had a philosophy of "we're all interim." She elaborated, "I have my resignation letter at all times in my desk drawer ready to go." This mindset of "we're all interim" is an extension of her commitment to the institution. "I love the institution," she said. Sarah viewed her role as making sure there was a smooth transition in the president's office and that "the institution was in good hands." This reframing of her role allowed her to focus on being a "good steward" with the time she had and "try to do what's best for the people of the institution."

Relearn her Old Job

With the new president's arrival, Sarah explained that she had to take deliberate steps back and "relearn" her old job, which was more of a support role. She said that it was not her role to "play" president anymore. For example, Sarah reported to the board throughout her transition. As her role became more active, she would speak with the board chair four or five times a week on substantive matters. Once the new president arrived, however, Sarah took a step back to allow for the board chair and the president to establish a relationship. Sarah's relationship with the board chair shifted to where they would go "a couple of weeks without speaking." Sarah clarified that this shift was "appropriate."

Shifting back to her old job meant not only allowing the space for the president to build a relationship with the board, but also having a conversation with the president about whether she wanted Sarah to remain in the chief of staff role. Once that was

established, Sarah focused on helping the president by providing the background and institutional knowledge from her many years at the university.

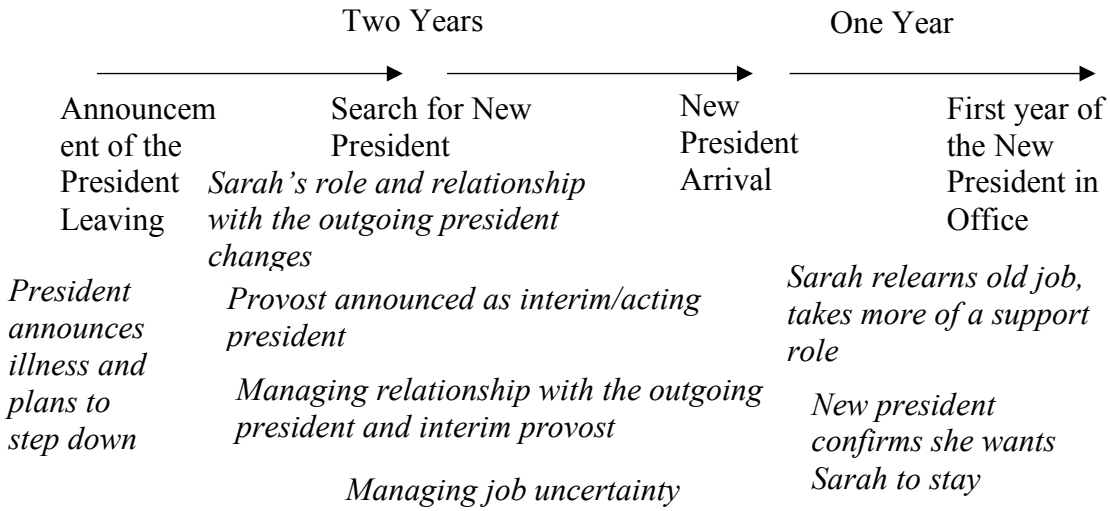
Developing a Relationship with the Incoming President

Sarah described herself as "really loyal." She clarified that it was not blind loyalty, it was not loyalty to a person. It was "loyalty to the mission of the institution and to a leader that's also committed to that." In her case it was the president and the mission of changing students' lives.

Sarah said she was dedicated to the current president's initiatives and projects. She said she was writing a lot of the president's speeches and remarks. She said this allowed her to "exercise a different skill set," which she described as "really cool."

Figure 3

Sarah's Presidential Transition Timeline



Sarah: Structural Analysis

Figure 3 highlights structural components such as orientation points, complicating actions, and resolutions from Sarah's narrative and how they unfolded during a presidential transition. Sarah's narrative began with a long-term, beloved president

stepping down due to illness (orientation). The provost was asked to step in as interim and then acting president (orientation). The complicating action occurred when the president's departure was extended, complicating Sarah's role and her relationship with the outgoing president and the provost. Sarah managed, changing the nature of her relationships with the outgoing president and provost. A second complicating action was job uncertainty during the transition. Sarah managed this by reframing how she sees her role, linking it to a broader purpose. The complicating action was resolved with the new president taking office. Sarah built her relationship with the new president.

Other structural components of Sarah's narrative were her use of theatrical metaphors such as "playing" president, "behind the scenes," "it's not my role to play," "step back behind the curtain," and "step outside from behind the curtain," as well as her anecdote describing her family of sharecropping tobacco farmers. The metaphors emphasized how her role shifted from background support person to much more front and center. The anecdote emphasized how important being a first-generation college student is to her identity. It also served as background for her search for meaningful work with students, especially first-generation students.

Throughout Sarah's narrative, the complicating actions highlighted a story where the pressure of the transition developed, mainly with her relationships with the outgoing president and the provost as well as the shifts in her role. Sarah's repetitive use of theatrical metaphors emphasized the changing nature of her role and the anecdote provided background for how she managed her role throughout the transition, by linking it to a larger purpose of meaningful work with first-generation students.

Jessica: Case Narrative

I'd only visited the college once—when my oldest daughter was looking at colleges. I guess it was because it is only 30 minutes away from our home. I took her on a college interview and fell in love with the place. I couldn't believe I'd never been here before because it was kind of like in our backyard. We had a wonderful young lady who was our tour guide and one thing that impressed me was she said, "The students here are so respectful." And then I started looking and everybody was holding doors open for each other and it just seemed like a nice community.

That's kind of what drew me back. When I decided to make a career change, I said, "I think I want to work in the community that I live in." So I started looking and came across a position as a librarian at the college and I applied. I didn't get the job but I really liked it so I kept looking—back then you looked in the paper, and I saw a job posted and I applied for it. I interviewed and got that position. It's not the position I have now. I started in a different position. That's how I ended up here.

I've gone through two transitions. I'm on president three right now. I'll call them president number one, number two, and number three. So the first one I really didn't know what I was getting into but I figured I can learn anything so I'll be fine. Then he decided he was going to retire. He gave a year's notice. He told me before he sent it out to the community. It was a shock. I didn't know he was going to retire. I'm a loyal person. I remember telling somebody on campus, "I feel like I'm going through a divorce."

He had been president for 24 years. By the time he left I had worked with him for seven years. He taught me everything I know. When you work one-on-one with

somebody for seven years and you really have good trust and a good relationship, at first, I thought, “Oh gosh am I going to be disloyal to number one if I’m loyal to number two?” But then once the new president came on board, we figured out our relationship. He had only been a president for three years so he really was new at it. I did feel that I could help him a lot, not just to navigate the college, people, and the trustees, but taking all my institutional knowledge and helping him. So that was a different relationship. I felt more of a teacher to him whereas with the first one I was more of a confidant and he was teaching me.

I was devastated with the first transition but I knew change was inevitable. I worked with the search team and did a lot of the coordinating and the scheduling. The finalists came to campus and met with different constituencies, the trustees, faculty, staff, and students. My job in that transition was basically coordinating everything—getting hotels, meals, meeting rooms, taking those individuals around campus, getting them where they needed to be, introducing them to people. That was an open search.

The second president, when we started out we had a great relationship. I thought he was going to be here for longer than he was. I thought that it was going to be a really great relationship and about two years in you could feel it just wasn't working well. It was tough. He followed a president who had been there for more than two decades and who was beloved. They always say that when you follow the footsteps of somebody who is beloved, it's a hard thing to do.

President number two, when he announced that he was leaving, he pretty much faded out. I knew for a year that he was asked to leave. I knew that he mentally had already left the building. That last year he really didn’t come into the office. He just rode

off into the sunset. And so that just made me more committed to seeing the job through. I just felt like, “Okay, I know where we are. I know what we’re doing. I know how this is going to play out.” I had to kind of keep up this illusion. I can’t say I ran the college but I ran the office. All the vice presidents came to me. All of the trustees came to me. I did what I had to do.

I felt like I was taking one for the team. I felt like I have to be here. It’s my job. You live in a fishbowl anyway because everybody goes by and everybody looks and everyone comes in and talks to you. I just felt it was up to me to make things comfortable for everybody and to keep things going as if there was nothing going on. So just keep doing what you always do, keep talking to the people that you always talk to, and just cover up for him—the fact that he wasn’t there. I closed his office door so no one would know if he was in or not. Just trying to make everybody less worried that there was no one at the helm. If I’m here guys, we're fine.

I didn't mind. I love the office. I felt betrayed that the president didn’t do what I felt he should do for the community. So I figured that I would go as a stand-in and at least if I were there, people would say, “Oh the president’s office is noticing that we have an event and they are attending.” And I think it meant a lot to people who were feeling perhaps ignored by the administration at that time. And I think that just by showing up, literally just by showing up, you showed that you valued what their job was and their work.

I would attend everything that I could. I made sure that I was there. Just so the face of the office was there and that they would feel the support of the office. So I did feel a responsibility to anybody who had a program or had something that they wanted

you there. Like the art gallery would have different shows and they had an opening reception, I would always go just to represent the office so that they knew that they were being valued and appreciated. And I think it meant a lot. A little bit of goodwill will go a long way with people. Everybody wants to feel valued. And they will. They need it. They need a little pat on the back sometimes.

I took that on myself. Nobody asked me to do it. It just seemed like the right thing to do. I felt okay with what I was doing. I did not feel okay with what the president was doing but it's not my job. My job is to take care of the office, make sure everything moves smoothly and everything that passes through the desk gets signed and gets back. I was very frustrated at the time but I couldn't show it. It was uncomfortable. The whole last year for me, it was just like one big stomach ache. It was just not a good year. I was looking forward to transition to a new person.

The second search was a closed search and that was so confidential. I didn't have the interaction with the finalists that I had with the open search. I was kind of shoved out and pushed aside and I understand that it was because of confidentiality. With an open search you've got the people on campus and you take them around and you're more involved. You get a better read, a better feel for the candidates because you have more interaction. With the closed search I wasn't even allowed to meet with them, which I wasn't happy about because I wanted to meet them. However, I did arrange their meetings with the search committee so I did get to see each of them. But I was kind of told by the committee chairperson, "Don't talk to them, don't talk to them."

It was unbelievable. The faculty were furious because they wanted to meet the person. And I had a pretty similar job as far as being in contact with the individuals,

getting them physically here, getting hotels, meals, meeting rooms, committees for them to meet with. And people were just trying to pump information out of me. And, as you know, in this position confidentiality is everything because if you don't have that, you don't have a job. So people did not like the closed search and everybody wanted to have an in, "Who is it? Is it male? Is it a woman?" I would just laugh and say, "I can't tell you anything." I knew who was going to try to weasel something out of me.

The transition was almost the easy part. The role is the hard part because you are a heartbeat away from everything so you know what's going on, whether it's financial or enrollment. People want to know if they can find something out. They want to know what's happening financially, "Are they going to add new majors? Are they going to take my discipline away?" People just want to know whatever they're worried about and anybody who is in my position has a pretty good idea of what's going on.

I was fortunate that I had one friend who has since retired. She was the executive assistant to the EVP at the time and because we both were privy to the same information, at least I had one person I could talk to. That was really helpful. I don't have that anymore. She left the position. It was disbanded and I am basically a hermit. Now I don't talk to anybody because it's such a confidential job that there's very little you can talk about with people. You can talk about the weather. That's about it. It's pretty lonely sometimes. Anytime you open your mouth, you have to be careful because you don't want to misrepresent anything. So I just say to people, "I'm sorry. I can't share that information." I have taken to eating at my desk now. It's not an easy position. I'm in a department of one. I know in most colleges they have two or three people in the

president's office. It's only me. And so I have no one to talk to. There should be more than one person in here. There shouldn't be one gatekeeper for everything.

The third president, when he was interviewing I was picking up people's coffee cups and going in to this little kitchen area and washing them. And he was sitting in a room next to it but the door was open between us. He had no idea who I was and he said, "Thank you for doing that." I said, "You're welcome." In short, it was just a brief he said something to me, I said something back. It showed me a little bit of his character and I said, "Oh, that would be a nice person." At least he says thank you like president number one. Every single day when I left, president number one always said, "Thank you, thank you, thank you for what you do. Thank you for being here." Every single day. We're still friends. He is the nicest person. And president number three is similar.

I think it's important to appreciate people and what they do on a day-to-day basis, even though it may not appear to have great value. We're here to make you look good, to keep things running smoothly. I think you like to be thanked for any effort you put forward and I think kindness goes a long way. It makes you want to come back the next day and be a part of that team, that you are appreciated. And I think that's just human nature.

In this role you're kind of like the glue, you're the go to person. Everybody goes to you. The chair of the board goes to you, the chairs of the committees come to you, faculty. I mean, you're the liaison. You're the gatekeeper. You're the everything and it's a huge responsibility. Basically, you are kind of a constant. And that's a nice feeling. It's a really important position.

I feel very valuable to the Board of Trustees. I've gained more autonomy and respect from the administration and trustees because I have a track record. People know they can trust me to be confidential and to get things done. I've become more of a campus leader and representative of the office. I am by nature a problem solver and the success of the college is important to me. That's basically it in a nutshell.

With the trust and the length of time that I've been here, I'm not just an executive assistant. And I'm not a vice president but president number two treated me like a vice president. He asked my opinion in every single thing. He valued my opinion. And I think that autonomy gave me a little bit more confidence. The VPs come, they run stuff by me and ask, "What do you think?" It's not my job to do that but I feel valued. It's more than just an executive assistant position. You really are an assistant to the president. I'm not the chief of staff but the chief of staff came to me with questions. I'd give him answers and then he'd go and say or do whatever he had to do but I just found that they all came to me. And so I thought, "Okay, this is nice." I felt part of the team. I was a member of the team. I didn't have the title but I felt valued and that's part of that satisfaction that you get from a job is when you feel that you've done a good job, done a good day's work and that people appreciate it.

And honestly, as an aside, I was planning on retiring and I decided not to because it just didn't seem fair to have a new person in my chair and a new person in the president's chair at the same time. I mean the blind leading the blind. I just didn't think that was a fair thing to do. So I stayed. I just felt this loyalty to the college.

President three had not been a president before. There's a lot to learn. There's a curve. It's helpful for him to know what's been done before. He made some changes and did some things that I thought were very good.

People would come to me and ask me questions, they would feel me out, "How's the new guy? How's it working? What's his work style? What is he thinking about? Is he going to change things?" So people that felt comfortable talking with me would reach out and try to get as much information as they could. Transitions are tough for people. And I think it makes some people feel uneasy or insecure. I don't think anyone was thinking, well some people may have been thinking, that maybe their position would change or be eliminated. So a lot of people had a lot of unease. And I think that's typical in any transition. People want to know how they fit in and will they fit in. I think a lot of it was just about his personality and his work style and maybe his philosophy, which I was learning about too at the same time.

I promised him that I would get him through his first year. So I'm just a resource. Like any of us when we get a new job, it takes you a year, a cycle, to know what you're doing. By the time you get to the second year, you are kind of on your own. If there was a second person in the office that would have had the continuity in the institutional knowledge, I would have probably left earlier. But I just had this responsible feeling.

And a lot of my friends have recently retired. We're getting down there in numbers. I will miss the physical place. I work in a building that was built in the 1800s. It's a beautiful place. Where else can you work where you can go to church, go to an art show, go to a music event on campus at lunch, there's so many things that you can do. It's not just like driving in, going in a building, punching a clock and then leaving. It's

part of your life. It becomes part of you. And that's what I love about being here. It's a fun job. I've loved it.

Jessica: Thematic Analysis

Long-time Connection to the Institution

Jessica went through two transitions at the college—the first was for a beloved, long-serving president and the second, the most recent one, was for a short-term president who was only in office for a couple of years. She named them "President One" and "President Two." She is now helping with the onboarding of the third president, "President Three," at the college as she prepares for retirement. She said when she retires she will miss the physical place. It was the campus and the respectful nature of the students that initially drew Jessica to work there. The campus and its people are why she said she loves her job. "It's part of your life," she explained. "It becomes part of you."

Running the Presidential Office during the Transition

Jessica described the first year of the presidential transition she just went through as "one big stomach ache." According to Jessica, once President Two knew he was leaving, "he just rode off into the sunset." It made her committed to finish the job for him. As part of the transition, Jessica became the face of the president's office. She would close the president's office door so that one would know he wasn't in and then would "keep things going as if there was nothing going on." She worked to make things comfortable for everyone interacting with the office. She made sure everything was running smoothly. All the vice presidents and the trustees would go see her and she would make sure everything that passed through the president's desk was signed and returned. "I can't say I ran the college," Jessica explained. "But I ran the office."

Jessica recognized that no one asked her to do this. She took it on herself. Although she "felt betrayed" by the president and like she "was taking one for the team," Jessica said she didn't mind because she loved the office and felt it was her job to take care of it. And because of this, she would attend every event she could so that the campus community could see the face of the office was there and would feel supported. "It meant a lot to people who were perhaps feeling ignored by the administration at the time," she explained. By showing up, she said she showed them that the office of the president valued them, their job, and their work.

Maintaining Confidentiality During the Search Process

The search for President Three was a closed process, meaning it was confidential to all but the search committee. This confidential process complicated Jessica's relationship with colleagues who believed that because Jessica was managing logistics such as hotels, meals, and meeting rooms for the candidates, she would have information on them. Jessica said she was "shoved out and pushed aside" by the search committee during the process. She was arranging meetings for the candidates but the chairperson of the committee told her "don't talk to them."

Many of Jessica's colleagues who wanted to meet the candidates in person would try to "pump information" out of her. Confidentiality, according to Jessica, was everything, "if you don't have that, you don't have a job." She said she already knew who was going to try to "weasel" something out of her and she would just laugh and say to them, "I can't tell you anything."

Because her role was so confidential just by the nature of working directly with the president, Jessica said she had to "watch her mouth" because she didn't want to

"misrepresent anything." She said she was "basically a hermit" and had taken to eating lunch alone at her desk. She explained that it was not easy because she was "pretty lonely sometimes" as it was only her in the president's office and she had no one else she could talk to.

Feeling Appreciated and Valued

One of the candidates Jessica did interact with during the presidential search was the incoming president, President Three. Although she did not know that he would become president at the time and he did not know what her role was, Jessica described an interaction with him where he showed appreciation to her. She said it reminded her of the first president she worked with at the college who would say "thank you" to her every day. To Jessica, it was important to appreciate people and what they do. "We're here to make you look good," explained Jessica. Being thanked for the effort you put forward, that kindness "goes a long way," Jessica added. For Jessica, it was why she came back to work each day, being part of the team and feeling appreciated.

Jessica described her role as the "glue." As the liaison, she said, "everybody goes to you. The chair of the board goes to you, the chair of the committee has to come to you." Having this "huge responsibility" and being that "constant" for everyone, Jessica said, "it's a nice feeling." It was an important position for her. She said she felt very valuable to the Board of Trustees, she gained autonomy and respect because she had a track record and "people know they can trust me to be confidential and get things done." To her, the job was more "than just an executive assistant." She said she was treated like a vice president. Her opinion was valued. She felt part of the team. "I felt valued and

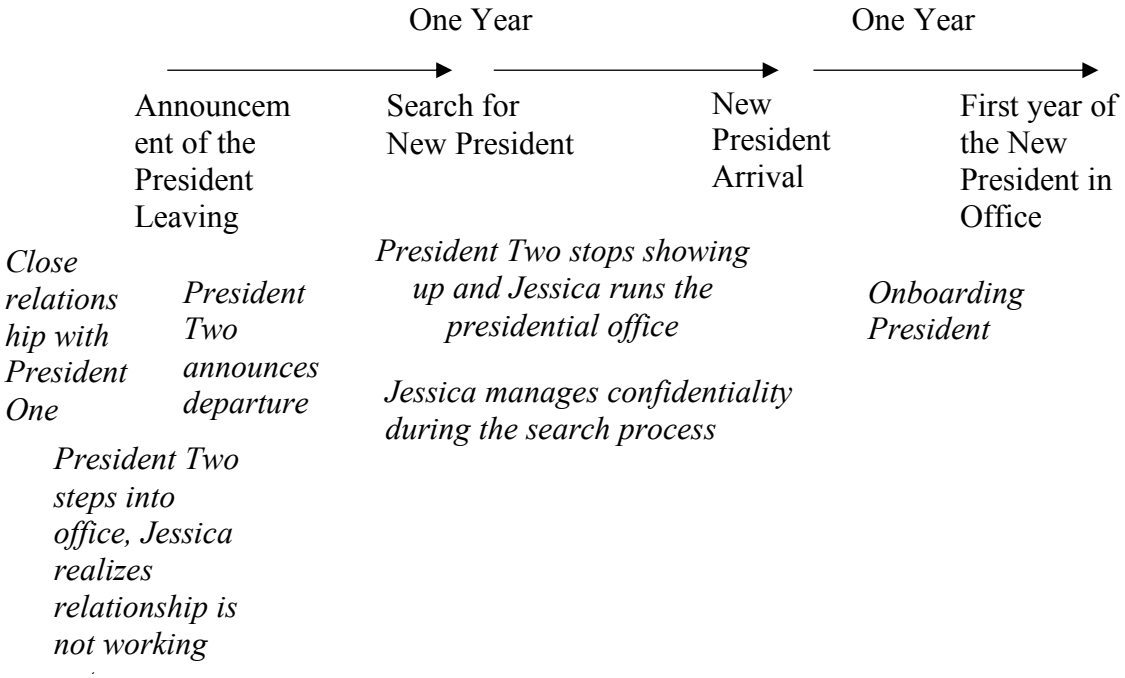
that's part of that satisfaction that you get from a job, when you feel that you've done a good job, done a good day's work and that people appreciate it," Jessica explained.

When President Three stepped into office, Jessica already knew that she was going to retire. However, she did not think it was fair to have a new person in the president's chair and a new person in her chair. President Three was also a first-time president and there would be a learning curve. Jessica delayed her retirement to help with the transition because she felt loyalty to the college. "I promised him that I would get him through his first year," she said. She served as a resource for him, providing institutional knowledge about what had been done before.

Jessica: Structural Analysis

Figure 4

Jessica's Presidential Transition Timeline



The structure of Jessica's narrative followed the typical presidential transition experience of the former president stepping down, a search process, and a new president steps in. However, as can be seen in Figure 4, orientation points for Jessica's story began with her close relationship with "President One," the president prior to the most recent outgoing president, "President Two." Jessica had a very close relationship with President One and that close relationship played a role throughout her experience with President Two's transition. Another point of orientation prior to President Two's announcement that he was stepping down was Jessica's acknowledgement that the relationship with President Two was not working out. The complicating action in Jessica's story began with President Two announcing his departure and not showing up to the office while still in his role. Jessica had to run the office. A second complicating action was her relationship with colleagues shifting through the confidential search process for President Three. For Jessica, she managed this by watching what she said around her colleagues who wanted to "weasel" information out of her. The new president, President Three, stepping into office resolved the complicating action in the narrative. Jessica focused her attention on providing what President Three needed in his first year so that she could retire.

Jessica described herself as "glue" and a "constant" when narrating the importance of her role. Another structural element of Jessica's narrative was her repetition of the phrases "feeling valued" or "appreciated" as well as an anecdote about an initial meeting she had with President Three while he was just a candidate. She was washing cups and he came over and thanked her for doing that. This anecdote emphasized the importance Jessica placed on showing/receiving appreciation. Feeling

valued or appreciated came up when she described her relationship with President One and again during the complicating action in her story when she narrated how she attended events on behalf of the outgoing president to show the campus community that they were valued by the office of the president. Jessica mentioned it again when she described feeling valued and appreciated by the board and her colleagues. Jessica's emphasis on how she felt valued and appreciated, as well as the importance she placed on her role, is how she managed throughout the transition.

Sam: Case Narrative

There's always transitions, but I would say that the presidential transition I went through was the most significant. This is probably the first time that I actually had to think about what on earth just happened in the last two years. It's one thing in a healthy organization—not that our institution wasn't healthy—but we had financial challenges and some other crisis that happened in that period of two years. The former president had health issues that caused him to work remotely, and then we had some financial issues that arose relatively close to that announcement.

I think when you go through what we went through, the idea of having a new president, a new start, a new everything is probably attractive. Between the announcement of the president leaving and the new president coming in, I would say pretty much the entire institution was just ready for a new leader. And so there was a lot of energy, hope, and optimism for that. And I think I was part of that. I thought it would be a breath of fresh air for the institution. Of course, there were some that wished the president would have been a different choice, but I would say for the large part, there was

a lot of energy and excitement, not only for the new president but almost to kind of just close on that chapter. We wanted to look forward.

I still have a deep affection for the former president and one of my reflections on the ending of that is that it was so unfortunate. Essentially there was a year where there was supposed to be a grand finale celebration and send-off of a long serving president who did amazing things at the university. Health and other issues caused that year to be not what any of us would have hoped for. It was difficult, challenging, all those things. I said to people, "Had the president retired six months earlier, he would have retired a rock star." And frankly I think he still is a rock star in the sense of what he was able to lead and change in the institution's growth and its mission. His impact was phenomenal. It's just timing is everything.

I think as chief of staff, or whatever you're called when you have that kind of special relationship with somebody, you're constantly saying to yourself, "Okay, how do I honor this person? How do I do the right thing?" I took the position of doing what's right for the institution, honoring the outgoing president and doing all I could to make sure the incoming president transition went well.

Through all the stages I was very intentional and reached out to the former president. As his role changed, so did my interactions with him. I wouldn't necessarily call him about work issues. I don't think it was anything more elaborate than sending texts, making a phone call, and visiting occasionally in between treatments. I would just call him to stay connected because my role in that transition was making sure we ended well with the outgoing president and we started well with a new president. That's part of that transition role. I had the privilege to be the thread between those two individuals.

The other piece I did, which was important for the institution's relationship with the outgoing president and vice versa, was making sure I kept my finger on the farewell event and the outgoing festivities because that would have been easy in our circumstance not to prioritize and frankly not do. But I felt, and so did a number of other people, that it was really important. Part of my role was to make sure that happened. And we did that as well as we could. Ending endings and starting beginnings are really important and I wanted to make sure we ended that time well.

It wasn't a crisis for me to move from one president to another president because my role needs to transcend that. In this transition, just because the past president said he was retiring, it didn't mean that my role was less important or I was less needed. I was probably needed more. The importance that I saw in my role was probably elevated in this transition. At that point, I just thought, "Okay, there's lots to do. What's the most important?" Every day it was like, "Okay, what's the most important thing to do today?" I think the biggest challenge I had, especially in the chief of staff role, was just keeping track of everything. I mean there's just such a high volume of things that needed to get done.

I think a good chief of staff, a good number two, isn't about their own promotion or their own publicity. It's about how do you make the presidents be as effective and do as well as they can. That's why I'm as committed to the mission as I am to the person and that has probably helped me in transitioning from one president to the other.

I'm definitely a mission-minded individual. I'm attracted to things that hopefully benefit society, how are we impacting and meeting people's needs, or investing in people to make, hopefully, a positive difference. I work at the university because we're centered

around developing our people, our product. People are our mission. The mission, or how I understand that mission, and the impact of it certainly motivates me in terms of where I go or stay. It's what keeps me through the challenging times.

The most popular questions I got in the period of transition, in the year between the announcing of the retirement and the announcement of the new president, were, "Hey, how are you? How are you doing? How are you feeling?" And that was code for "Hey do you feel like you still have a job?" And sometimes I would just call it out, "I don't know if I'm going to have a job with the new president but for now I'm just going to make sure this presidency ends as well as it can."

You joke with people who were nervous about the transition, "If anyone should be most nervous it's me because I'm going to be closest to this new president and I'm either going to sink or swim." I never knew that my role would be guaranteed past "x." I think that last year I did have a contract. I had a one-year contract that I knew was ending and so you are never guaranteed anything beyond the year.

Honestly, I wasn't that nervous about it. I met him early on, well before his announcement. I just felt good about him. I felt like I could work with this guy. And his success will be the institution's success. And if I end up leaving, so be it.

Pretty early on, the incoming president said to me, "I've heard really good things from the board about you. So I see essentially no reason why this isn't going to work out." And that was good for me to hear. I received positive affirmation from him early on, and I think we just clicked. We work well together. I was able to pivot from the working style of the former president to the new president. They were very different and I was able to do that. I suspect he saw I was able to do that. I think he probably saw I had

deep relationships in the last administration. I was about his success. I got the sense that he felt like I was going to be valuable for the transition. I have the depth of relationships in the institution and the credibility in the institution, and a proven success record of delivering on stuff.

And even if the new president had come in and said, "Hey, thanks so much for all you've done but you know I'm bringing my own person in." Yes, that would have been disappointing but I would have also said, "Fine, I get that happens." I would have left the university or left that role if I had somewhere else to go, confident that I had done what I needed to do to ensure that change. I see the roles that I've had. I'm not owed them. The institution doesn't owe me a job. And there are times when the institution might say, "Don't take it personally but we don't need you or we can't afford you or we were thinking of doing it differently." I mean, I think that's the prerogative of the institution you work with. And my perspective is I just do the best I can with where I am. At least I could leave with my head held high. That's important to me.

What would cause me to think about going somewhere else? It would be if I had lost the confidence in the president. I'm not somebody that's going to hang around if I know I've lost the confidence of the person I report to. You're not going to have to tell me to leave, trust me. I'm pretty emotionally intelligent. I will know when it comes to a point where I need to say, "Okay, I need to move on."

The nature of the chief of staff role, from my experience, is definitely shaped by the president. The former president was very much involved. I would see him every day. We'd be on the phone, email. It was very involved. I really felt like I was part of helping him implement his agenda. I would say I was involved in 65 to 70 percent of what was

going on. There were always these pieces that I wasn't privy to. When the new president came in and sort of affirmed me staying in the role of chief of staff and actually added the title senior advisor, he elevated the role. I would say it went from being 65 to 70 percent involved to 100 percent. So with the new president, day one he said to me, "This kind of role, for me, is you are involved in everything and know everything. There is nothing that I'm doing that you don't know." I think I've been involved in pretty much everything—his thinking, his processing. The former president had been at the institution for more than 40 years and so you go from somebody who essentially was the institution to a new president. He was familiar but really had to get to know the institution. So this chief of staff role, it shifted in those two experiences.

For a new president transition, he needs to know everything, unvarnished, from a perspective that is honest with integrity. He needed to know the lay of the land. My experience of the process of a new president coming on board, is that there is a period where you reflect on the former president and there are people that say things or there's materials that you come to read that might not reflect as well on the outgoing administration as you would want. I always saw my role as I had to be careful to make sure that the president had the full picture but done in a very careful way so not to malign or to disparage the former president who served so faithfully. We needed to honor that person but also make sure nothing was kept from the new president so that he could do the best that he could do. Because you come into a new institution, there's a lot of data, you're hearing lots of things from various constituents and I owed it to him to be open, honest, and forthright with what I knew. There were probably perspectives that he got that may have been different. This is why I value the integrity of the new president, he

still is very careful never to infer that the former president either made a poor decision or whatever it might be. I was fortunate to work with a new president that had no interest in tearing down the old administration in order to build his own.

I found my involvement these last two years very personally and professionally rewarding. Was it perfect? Could it have been better? Absolutely. But I did feel like I played a meaningful positive role in a successful transition of a president. I feel like I helped the former presidency as well as we could have done in the drama, emotion, and the challenge of how it ended. And I feel like I contributed to the new president getting a good foothold to be effective.

I feel inherently responsible to deliver on what I do. Around those two years the institution was facing a crisis, and I had a responsibility to make sure that we got through that as well as we could with what I can influence and knowing that it's not the whole piece. It's the piece of the pie that I get to deliver on. These were the cards that were dealt. I had to do that in the best way that was ethical, and responsible for the institution, which I love. With all of its faults, failures and missteps—as any organization—I love what the institution does. I love the mission of the institution. And so part of my responsibility, whether I have the job for six months, a year, five years is to do the best for that mission. The day I don't want to do that is the day I shouldn't have the role.

Sam: Thematic Analysis

Focusing on the Mission

Sam described himself as a mission-minded individual. He believed in positively impacting people's lives. He said he worked at the university because it is centered around the development of people. It was his commitment to the university and its

mission, he explained, that sustained him through the difficult, challenging presidential transition.

His role as chief of staff was elevated in the transition, not just with a promotion to senior advisor from the new president but in his responsibility to the institution. He explained that he viewed his role as transcending the "crisis" of moving from one president to another. It was focused on the success of the institution and its mission. He said his responsibility was to do the best for the mission and the day that he does not want to do that "is the day I shouldn't have the role."

Transitioning out the Former President During Crisis

After four decades at the institution, the president suffered from health issues and had to step down from his position. It was during this leave that financial issues emerged at the institution. The search for a new president also began during that time. Sam described it as a two-year crisis.

With the institution's focus turning to the crisis at hand and to a presidential search, Sam admitted that it was easy to not prioritize making sure things ended well with the outgoing president. Sam recognized that the timing and the circumstances of the president's departure were unfortunate. What was supposed to be a celebration for a long-serving president who Sam described as a "rock star" was overshadowed by the president's health and the institution's financial issues. As the chief of staff, Sam said his role was to ensure that they ended the outgoing president's tenure well. He focused on how to honor the outgoing president. He prioritized farewell events and outgoing festivities.

Sam had a “deep affection” for the outgoing president and was very intentional about reaching out to him while he was on medical leave. As the outgoing president’s role changed, so did Sam’s interactions with him. Sam said he wouldn’t “necessarily call him about work issues.” He would call to stay connected, sending texts and visiting occasionally between treatments.

Managing Job Uncertainty

Sam said he had a year left on his contract throughout the transition. His job was not guaranteed past that year. Sam did not know if he would have a job after the new president stepped in. He recognized that just because the president was retiring, it didn’t mean that his role was less important. He said there was a high volume of things that needed to be done. For Sam, his role was not about his promotion or publicity or even staying on past the year, it was all about “honoring the outgoing president” and doing all he could to make sure the incoming president’s transition went well.

Sam recognized that the institution did not owe him a job, and that, while disappointing, he would understand if the incoming president decided to bring his own team and would not need him. His perspective was to do the best he could with where he was. Sam felt “inherently responsible” to deliver on what he did and "to make sure that the institution got through as well as it could.”

Transitioning the New President while Honoring the Former President

Just as important as it was for Sam to end things well with the former president, it was equally as important for him to ensure the successful transition of the new president. Sam saw the new president’s success as the institution’s success. Even though Sam’s job was not guaranteed, he said he wasn’t nervous. He received positive affirmation from the

incoming president early on. Sam felt he and the incoming president had clicked. The incoming president had heard good things about him and even elevated his role to senior advisor. Sam focused on pivoting from "the working style of a former president to the new president." Whereas Sam was involved with the former president 70 percent of the time, the new president expected Sam to be 100 percent involved in everything he was doing. Sam said he felt he was valuable to the new president's transition because of his "depth of relationships" and "proven success record of delivering on stuff."

Part of building his relationship with the new president was making sure that the new president knew everything "unvarnished" and from an "honest" perspective. Sam recognized that there were people and materials that "might not reflect as well on the outgoing administration." Sam saw his role as "making sure that the president had the full picture but done in a very careful way so not to malign or to disparage the former president who served so faithfully." He said he "owed it to him to be open, honest, and forthright" with what he knew. Sam said he valued the integrity of the new president who had "no interest in tearing down the old administration in order to build his own."

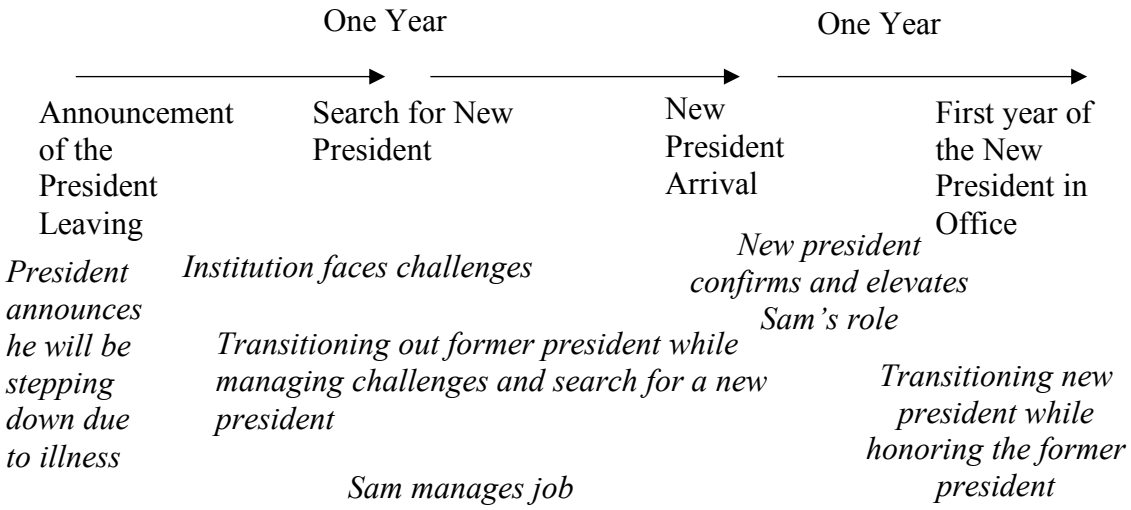
Sam: Structural Analysis

As seen in Figure 5, the structure of Sam's narrative began with a health crisis that led a former president to step down (orientation). The complicating action was that the institution went into financial crisis while the outgoing president was on medical leave and during the search for a new president. That was where most of the narrative took place as Sam's role was to make sure that the transition went well for both the outgoing president and the incoming president, all while not knowing if he would be

continuing in his current role (complicating action). The story was resolved with the incoming president affirming Sam's role and even elevating it to a more senior position.

Figure 5

Sam's Presidential Transition Timeline



The complicating action from Sam's narrative to make sure the transition went well for both the outgoing and the incoming president was further highlighted with his use of the "thread" metaphor to describe his role during the transition. He said he saw himself as the "thread" between the two presidents. This was emphasized with his repeated use of the phrases making sure to "end things well" and have a "successful transition." This pointed to how Sam saw his role as key to the successful transition from one president to the other, saying that he felt he "played a meaningful positive role in a successful transition of a president."

Sam's use of descriptors for repetitive concepts throughout the narrative helped convey his experience. Much of the story was dedicated to that time of "crisis" and the need to do well by the former president because his departure was so "unfortunate."

When the story shifted to the new president, there was an energy of "hope" and "optimism." Sam described the welcoming of a new president as a "breath of fresh air for the institution."

One structural component that stood out in the narrative was that there were a couple of times where Sam asked himself questions and then answered them. The first was when describing the uncertainty of the job throughout the transition. He asked himself, "What would cause me to think about going somewhere else?" His thoughts were on what if he left rather than what if the institution were to ask him to leave. He answered his own question saying that if he lost confidence in the president, that would cause him to leave the institution. He thought very highly of the former president and, once he got to know the new president, he thought highly of him as well saying he "values the integrity of the new president." The second time Sam asked himself questions was when he was reflecting on the overall transition and his role throughout it. He asked, "Was it perfect? Could it have been better?" He answered, "absolutely." Although he felt it could have gone better, it could be seen as he described the "unfortunate" departure of the former president, he was still proud of how he handled the transition.

Marie: Case Narrative

I've worked with some great board clerks that I directly reported to and one in particular kept mentoring me to aspire for the clerk role. I think it was because of his encouragement that I thought, "Okay, I could do that." It gave me the confidence to be able to pursue it. So when the recent clerk retired three years ago, I was the successful candidate and moved into the role.

I have only been in this role three years but I've been with the university for more than 20 years and in the board office for 19. I think this is my sixth president that I have worked with in the board office. This is my second one as a clerk. My clerk interaction with the president is very different than when I was the support staff. The clerk role has much more interaction with the president than the support staff.

My role changed pretty substantially in the transition. With the former president, he was so used to me being the support staff that he never really saw me as the clerk. So I was not invited to some of the discussions or sitting at the table that I am now. And that impeded my ability to help both groups, the board and the president.

When this president came on board, on his first day he's going around to everybody's office and introducing himself and getting to know people. The board office wasn't his priority because he knew that the board office just operates on its own and keeps going. So he didn't take the time to understand my role until a little bit into his tenure. Once he did and he understood how I can provide him guidance and help make him successful, I started to be included in more strategic discussions and meetings.

One of my primary goals is to make sure that our current president and our board leadership are successful. I play the liaison role between the board leadership—our chair and vice chair—and the president. And those groups talk often but sometimes they aren't on the same page. So it's sort of my role to see if I can get both groups to open up enough to see each other's sides and come to some type of resolution or compromise in order to move forward.

I'm finding I'm involved in these situations more and more. I think it's because both sides see the effectiveness of having somebody sort of navigate the waters. One

example would be encouraging the chair of the board and the president to foster their relationship. They have to be a partnership. The board is the president's boss, per se, but they also have to work and collaborate together. I provide the president opportunities for that collaboration. The other piece of it is providing the incoming president background information on all of the board members. What is their background? What do they bring to the table? What could he benefit by reaching out to specific people because they have the expertise in certain areas? So using the people around him for his benefit.

You're trying to gain the best result for the students and sometimes people have different opinions on how to get to that point. I don't think there's any disagreement on "we're all here for the students." It's how are we going to get there. If two groups aren't coming together on a decision, they could sit in numerous meetings and still be in the same spot. You've got to sometimes move that needle a bit so that's why I do it, to move the needle so that we can advance forward. If these two groups are constantly talking at different sides, you're not getting anywhere.

We want everybody to succeed so we do whatever it's going to take to make that happen. And sometimes you have to work the ropes and what I mean by that is if the president is totally on the opposite angle of the board, you might be able to have a meeting with his chief of staff and say, "Okay, we understand that there are some disagreements but how can we, the two of us [myself and the chief of staff], work together to help everybody come to some compromise?" So sometimes it's working with other staff members who can influence the president.

I find that with this particular president my role is actually defined more but it's broader. Reinforcing what I could bring to the table was a big part of it. He had no idea. It

was up to me to take that lead and explain what role I do play and how I could be of more benefit by the unique position I hold. Providing him background information, historical information, was very important. Making sure he understood my role with the board, how I try to help the board, and how I could be beneficial to the leadership as well. That took some time for him to understand.

One big change is the president and his leadership team and the board chair and vice chair had what they called strategic issues meetings leading up to every board meeting. And they would discuss the agenda topics that needed to be addressed in executive session at the board meeting and then any other big initiatives that were ongoing or going to be started. They are two-hour meetings. I had asked the previous president when I came into the role if it would be beneficial for me to be included in those. More than once I raised that issue and was not included. However, I raised it with this president, the new president, and he was surprised that I wasn't included. If it's beneficial to have somebody at the table for a particular meeting because they add value, then that's what you do. I don't care what position they're in. If they add value, have them there. Being considerate and sincere to everybody, regardless of who they are, is important.

I don't hesitate to raise issues of concern. Before I was never encouraged to do that. I don't think they really wanted to know what the pitfalls were because it would be one more thing they had to deal with. That's not his approach. He feels the more information he has the better. He can process it and act on it and improve whatever needs to be improved. He is very transparent and is always sharing. He'll stop by my office several times and ask, "Okay, what's on the chair's mind today?" Or "How are you

doing? Is everything okay?" We didn't have that before. That's what I feel is kind of exciting. I feel like I'm a part of the bigger process because I'm included.

The president sends out a message to the board members every Sunday to let them know what went on throughout the week, just giving them a glimpse of what he's been working on, what he's projected to work on in the next week. I was never included on those but I would get calls from the trustees, "Tell me a little bit more about what that's all about." And I wouldn't know. So again, I would say, "It would be beneficial for me to be copied on this. I will keep it confidential. It's just so no one's blindsided." So I'm now included but not only that, they're posted to the website for everybody to see. So it's part of that transparency that he believes in.

It's a delight to work for him. He brings a high level of energy. He's definitely a people person. Our previous president was not necessarily a people person. He was an extreme introvert. Going from an extreme introvert to an extrovert is what we needed so we all embrace that. I think he has empowered every single employee to be proud of what we're doing, to be student-centric. We're improving the students' lives but we're also improving the state. The university is an economic engine for the entire state and the services we provide impact everybody in the state. And he's really driven that home. So a lot of people didn't think of it from that perspective before. He's very inclusive. He's very open. He's extremely transparent. And the transparency has been another item that is very different than we're used to. It has assisted with our relationships with donors, the general public, the faculty, because he shares information. I think that's probably one of the most significant transformational changes.

Change motivates me. You have to embrace change, make the best of it. I think there's a lot of positive things that come out of change if it's handled appropriately. It can be disastrous too but if you approach it appropriately and put the right safeguards in place, it can be a great motivator. I don't necessarily like chaos but I embrace change. You have to be flexible, nimble. You can't be rigid. You have to expect the unexpected and be open to getting a phone call at eight o'clock on a Tuesday night because there's a board member that has a concern. You have to keep that perspective. You have to embrace that type of change and make it work because failure is not an option. We are all here to serve the students and we have to do that in whatever capacity our jobs dictate.

Working with great people motivates me. I feed off of their experience and expertise, their guidance, motivation, and mentorship. Our office staff is a very small group of people and we're a tight knit group. A lot of these folks I've worked with for my entire career here. And as people have retired we've had to make adjustments because each person that comes on brings a different dynamic to the team.

And there's a lot of people I still keep in contact with that have retired because I like to tap into that knowledge. You always learn something when you become close friends with people. You take away a lot from that relationship. So if one person retires, we'll miss that relationship and what they bring to the bigger picture. I found that the people here that I work with on a daily basis, they are sort of my family too.

People may be having a harder time with the transition. There is a certain level of anxiety for everybody regardless of what role they play. Sometimes folks just need assurance that it's going to be okay, that we're all going to work through the transition.

We're all going to work through the change and we'll be here to help each other out. Sometimes that's enough. Sometimes people need a little bit more than that.

Everybody deals with it differently and you have to be aware of that. So if somebody's not adapting as quickly as you anticipate, you should be sensitive to that and give them more tools in order to help them so that they're comfortable. I think that's the big piece, just be more aware. I've offered, "I'll help you with whatever challenge comes up." If it's a totally different style of leadership, we can sit down and talk about how you can modify your work environment.

I consider myself a mentor. Not only to my assistant, but some of the other assistants. I think if you sat in that role and moved on, it's easier to be a mentor because you understand the struggles they're going through. I think if you have a little bit more patience, you can provide some really useful things for their toolbox.

I see myself sort of as a short-termer in this. I'm hoping to retire within four years. So I have to set a succession plan up for the board and for the board office. I'm currently working with my board professional because she has an interest in moving up to the clerk role. So I'm trying to provide her with the tools in order to be successful if she chooses to go that route. I'm including her in more strategic meetings so she understands more of my role and how my role differs from hers so there won't be as much of a shock or learning curve.

Marie: Thematic Analysis

Motivation throughout the Transition

Marie said she is motivated by people and change. She was with the university for more than 20 years. Nineteen of those years have been in the board office where she's

worked with a tight-knit group of people that she considers family. She said she feeds off their "experience and expertise" and is motivated by their "guidance" and "mentorship." Marie said the recent presidential transition was harder on some than on others because "everybody deals with it differently." She considered change a "great motivator." Her perspective was that they are all there "to serve the students" and they "have to do it in whatever capacity our jobs dictate." When it comes to change, Marie said they have to embrace it because "failure is not an option." For Marie, that meant promoting her role with the new president so that she could be included in conversations that would allow her to help the board and the president succeed. It also meant being there for her colleagues and mentoring them through the transition.

Helping the Board and New President Succeed

Marie said her position changed substantially throughout the transition. With the former president, she went from a support role to a board clerk role. The board clerk role has much more interaction with the president. According to Marie, the former president was so used to her being the support staff that he never saw her as a board clerk. As a result, Marie was not included in strategic meetings or board correspondence that were key for the board clerk role. Marie said it impeded her ability to do her job well.

With the new president, Marie shifted the relationship. She developed her relationship with the new president so that her role was defined more. Marie made sure he understood her role and how she could provide guidance to him and the board. "Reinforcing what I could bring to the table was a big part of it," she explained. Marie was the liaison between the president and the board leadership. Her job was to make sure that the president and the board were on the same page and coming together on decisions.

Marie mentioned several times how her role was "beneficial." She provided the new president background on her role, how she worked with the board, and how she could be of benefit by the "unique" position she held. As a result, Marie was included in strategic discussions and correspondence. She mentioned several times how welcome the new president's transparency and inclusivity was to her role.

Marie noted that she found herself more involved in situations where she was helping the board and the president "open up enough to see each other's sides" in order to reach some sort of compromise. "I think it's because both sides see the effectiveness of having somebody sort of navigate the waters," she explained. She recognized that they were all working toward the best result for the students but may have different opinions on how to get there. Marie's role was to "move the needle" so that they could advance forward.

Helping Colleagues through the Transition

Through the transition, Marie said she became aware of how her colleagues were dealing with the changes. There was a "certain level of anxiety for everybody regardless what role they play." Marie said it was important for her to be sensitive and help her colleagues adapt. "Sometimes folks just need assurance that it's going to be ok," she said. For those in the assistant positions, Marie considered herself a mentor because she had been in that role and understood their struggles. Being in that role, she had more patience and could provide "some really useful things for their toolbox."

With the new president in office, Marie was thinking about her goals. She said she planned to retire within the next four years. Just as she was mentored into the position, Marie was encouraging her support staff to take on the board clerk role. Marie was

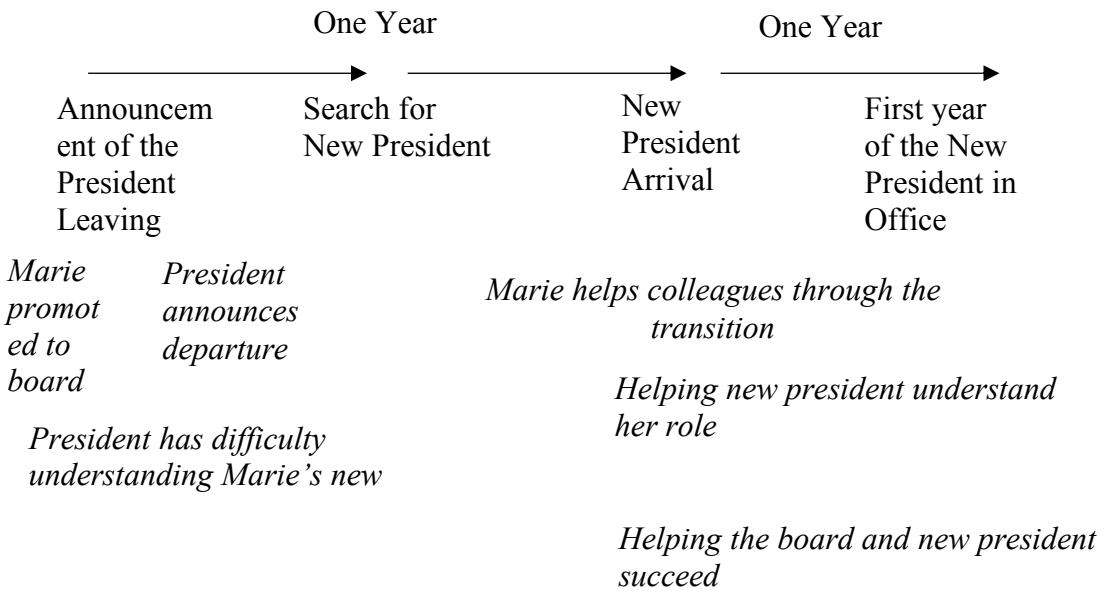
working closely with her, including her in strategic meetings so that she understood the role "if she chooses to go that route.

Marie: Structural Analysis

As can be seen in Figure 6, components of a typical transition were covered in Marie's narrative: the former president leaving, the search for a new president, and the new president stepping in. The complicating action, however, was set early on, even before the former president announced his departure. Marie was promoted to the board clerk role the year the president announced his departure (orientation). The complicating action was the former president not recognizing Marie as a board clerk and not including her in critical areas of her work. Marie's frustration showed up with her continuous comparison of the former president to new president. The resolution to the story was the new president's arrival and Marie crafting her relationship with him so that he understood her role.

Figure 6

Marie's Presidential Transition Timeline



Marie's frustration with not being included could be seen structurally throughout the narrative as she highlighted how important she saw her role as being. She used the metaphor "moving the needle" to emphasize the importance of her role in moving the work of the board and the president forward. There were several phrases Marie repeated throughout her narrative: beneficial, transparency, and inclusivity. Transparency and inclusivity were descriptors for the new president who, unlike the prior president, included Marie in strategic meetings and was open with her and the staff about his work and what was happening at the institution. Marie made it clear throughout the narrative how important it was for her to be included and in the know in order to do her job well. She used the term beneficial several times to explain how she could be of "benefit" or how "beneficial" it would be to her role, emphasizing her need to be included in order to be of value.

Greg: Case Narrative

I donate money to the college every year—even when I was in law school and didn't have any money. I love telling alums and students, particularly students about to graduate, "I'm very proud of the fact that I've been out of school for over 30 years and every year I've contributed something to the institution. I believe in the institution. It transformed me. It can transform you. You need to be supportive of your alma mater. You think you spent a lot of money on your education and your parents helped, but if alums had not supported the institution, your cost to attend would have been 10 to 20 percent higher." You put it in terms like that and students get it. They figure they already spent enough and don't need to spend any more. They need to be thinking about the next

generation. Their kids may be coming here and they're going to help make it more affordable for those kids to come.

My dad actually went here so it's where I went to college. I don't know that I would say I selected it on purpose, but I thought, "Well, if it's good enough for my dad and he's been successful, it's good enough for me." So it's where I went to school and I'm glad I did. My sister also went here. It's kind of a family affair. My dad was a school superintendent. When I was growing up he was very involved. Whether it was being in the local Lions Club and those kinds of things, he was very active in the community. I had a grandfather that was the president of his rescue squad. So I grew up with a service-oriented mindset. And that was just expected of us growing up in a small town like I did—that those of us that have been the beneficiary of these gifts that helped build our community, that it's our job to give back. I was brought up that way so I'm very active in my community today.

Nobody gets where they are totally on their own. Everybody helped me—my parents helped me, people gave me jobs in the summer. None of us got to where we are all by ourselves. I write references today for students. People did that for me so that's what I do. And that's part of your responsibility—to pay it back. I've been a firm believer in that and try to do that. I do all sorts of things to help build the community, which is certainly something I learned at this institution. It's where I graduated from and, ultimately, after going off to grad school and practicing law for about 20 years, came back to my alma mater to help here. That's kind of it in a nutshell.

After I majored in political science and history, my mom asked me, "What are you going to do with that? Are you going to teach? Are you going to go to law school?

What are you going to do?" And I really hadn't thought that far ahead. And so I said, "Well, I guess I'm going to go to law school." I was very fortunate that they helped out so I could afford to do that. And so I went to law school.

I started out in a large firm—strangely enough because of college connections. Two of the three named partners at that firm were alums. So I had that connection. I worked for the firm for two summers and then they hired me. When I went back for my last semester at law school, I knew I had a job with this firm.

I stayed at the firm for three years and just talking to a friend one day I said, "You know the firm, when I worked there a couple of summers they had eight attorneys and it's grown to 17 and it really has a different feel than it had when I started." I said, "I don't really like working for a large firm. It feels like it is all about billable hours and not helping people. I don't really like that rat race kind of thing." He said, "You ought to go work somewhere else." And I jokingly told him, "Why don't you make me an offer." And he did. I gave my notice and a month later I was in a different firm, a small firm with four of us and three of the four of us were alums. So there's always that continuing connection that kept drawing me to the college and to people that were associated with the college. I practiced at that firm for 16 years until I ended up here and that was 12 years ago. I don't regret for a minute making that move.

There are a lot of challenges in higher education right now. I feel like I'm really contributing to the college where I got my start. It's a nice feeling to be working at your alma mater and feeling like you are part of the team that's moving things forward. It's been an exciting ride. I didn't dislike what I did for the first 20 years, but I thought

realistically I was going to be working for another 20 years. I'd rather be doing something that I really like to do and be excited to get up and go to work.

We wear many hats here. I do everything from the legal counsel for the college to basically directing the operations in the president's office. I'm the board liaison and the facilities department actually reports to me. I think that's probably because I have an eye for detail. I'm the implementation guy that helps make the strategy work and function. I report directly to the president and I work with the Board of Trustees, I do almost all of the scheduling for the trustee meetings. I coordinate all of the board meetings. I coordinate the work with all of the vice presidents. I'm trying to juggle all that, keep facilities going, and trying to answer legal questions. Fortunately, we don't have a lot of legal issues.

I'm pretty detail-oriented. That is probably a positive thing for the position that I am in. You know you need somebody that is handling all of the details. I am almost like a conductor of the train. I'm trying to keep the train that's going down the tracks very quickly, trying to keep it on the tracks, and making sure that we're doing the things we need to do to be successful and keep the institution moving forward.

All the presidents I've worked for, I've worked for three now, they're all very different. I like to tell people they each have different strengths. So the first president I worked for was very meticulous about the grounds looking a certain way. She brought a lot of order. I guess previous presidents had not been as hands-on as she had been. You know that old saying, "You never get a second chance to make a good first impression," well she very much believed in that. And I believe in that. It's true. One of the best-selling points that we have is the appearance of our campus. It looks like what you would

envision a college should look like. People within seconds of driving into your campus are going to know whether it is a place that's friendly and welcoming and looks like a place you'd like to spend the next four years. And if it's not, you're not going to get them and you're probably not going to be in business. So I kind of became the president's enforcer in those matters.

If I had worked for the president that, for example, that I have now, he is much more decentralized and that is not his thing. He absolutely thinks that's important but that's not where he's going to spend his time and concentration on. So I'm the guy that does that. The second president I worked for said, "You're doing this all the time so the facilities director is now going to report to you because we want them to know how things should look and how things should work."

We all have different gifts and different talents and so we try to plug them in where we can do the most good. And so that's kind of what I've done. During the presidential transition, I have a lot of institutional memory and so I worked with the advancement office to get the president out to meet all the key donors in the first few weeks. I was able to tell the president a little bit of the history, the pitfalls and traps, "This person that you're going to see, you need to know that…and here is the connection to this…and this is the family…and this one's politically connected to this…" I will write a number of speeches for the president when he goes out and speaks to people. A new president just doesn't have the time or the depth of history. He's only been here now a little over a year and then a couple of years prior to that as provost. I really have the institutional knowledge that the president doesn't have and so I can pepper that stuff into a speech. I write the commencement script. Because the alumni director went to college

with me, if we've got a special kid whose parents went here and the grandparents went here, I know to call attention to that in the program. And so it looks very natural that the president ought to know those things but the president in reality doesn't have time to know all of those details. And so I pepper the speech with that information that really connects the president, makes the president better able to go out and make a good impression for the institution.

I'm very much an institutionalist. I would say that if the president is doing a good job, the institution is going to look good. And so that's what my main job is—to make the president look good, make the cabinet function, make sure the trustees are functioning, and that the college is running on all cylinders. That frees up the president so he's not dealing with the day-to-day management details of the institution. He can think big picture about trends in higher education and working with a new program that they're trying to conceive of and those kinds of things. I don't have a lot of time to think about those kinds of things because I'm doing the nitty gritty day-to-day, in the trenches kind of stuff just to make the place look good. I'm like the conductor trying to keep the train on the tracks as it's flying down the tracks. Somebody's got to be looking out for it to make sure the train doesn't overheat or we don't fall off the rails. I'm trying to do the business side that I have to do and the president just doesn't have time for that.

As you can imagine, at least initially, the transition to a new president can be a very frustrating time. You are used to the way one person likes things and you got used to doing things a certain way. And here comes somebody else and you don't really know what their style is, how they like things, or what they want you to focus on. There was a time when the new president came in that I didn't know if facilities was going to be

reporting to me anymore. The current president had been the provost while the outgoing president was starting the transition out the door. The trustees hired the provost with the idea that if he works well he could transition into the presidency and that's what ended up happening. They didn't conduct a search. They knew the president was going to retire. So they brought in a provost with the idea that this could be the new president if things work out well and he made a big splash. The trustees liked him and the faculty liked him so they just quietly announced it.

Even though I knew the provost through our work together on the Executive Council and I had worked closely with him, it's still different when I have to work with him once or twice a week versus when he's moved into the office suite. Now I see him every day and I am trying to figure out what he wants me to be doing. So I finally just said to the president, "Look, I'm going to keep doing what I've been doing until you tell me not to. So if you don't like what I'm doing, or the way I've learned to do this, you need to tell me." And so I think we kind of reached an understanding, "You have veto power that if you don't like something you'll tell me." But with a new president I always want to share more information on what I'm doing. I try to always keep the president informed, "Here's what I'm hearing. Here's what I'm doing, what I'm working on. Tell me if you don't want me to be doing that or doing this. Here's what I think needs to be done." And if it is something significant, I want the president to know about it in case he or she gets asked about it on campus or in the community. I don't want him or her to be caught without the information they need to be able to respond when asked questions.

I've been pretty lucky that everybody has given me a wide latitude to do what I think needs to be done. I think they trust me because I'm an alum of the institution and

exercise good judgment. I'm invested. I could go back to practicing law any time. That wouldn't be my preference, but I'm kind of always of the view that, "If you like what I'm doing, keep me. If you don't, hey, I'll go back to doing what I was doing and I'll be fine." So for the most part they let me kind of have a wide berth and I do what I think needs to be done to benefit the institution.

Greg: Thematic Analysis

Commitment to the Institution

Greg described himself as an "institutionalist." His attachment and commitment to the institution was present throughout the narrative. He viewed his job as making sure "the college is running on all cylinders" whether it's by answering legal issues, supporting the president, or making sure that the cabinet and the Board of Trustees are functioning. He said he also makes sure the college is making a good visual impression, managing the facilities so that its campus remains the college's best-selling point and is welcoming to all students.

Greg explained that attending the college is "kind of a family thing." Both his father and his sister graduated from the college. Greg said the college transformed him. As a result, Greg donated money every year even when he "was in law school and didn't have any money." He encouraged alumni and students to think about the next generation and do the same. For Greg, he viewed his job working at the college as an "exciting ride." He said he liked what he did and felt "excited to get up and go to work." He explained that he liked being part of the team that was moving the college forward and that "it's a nice feeling" to contribute to the college where he got his start.

Paying it Forward to the Community, the Institution, and the Students

Giving back, whether to the community, the institution, or students, was important to Greg. He attributed his service-oriented mindset to his father and grandfather who were always very active and involved in the community. He also gave credit to the institution, which taught him the importance of building the community. Greg said he was involved with the community because he felt it was his job to give back. He explained, "that's part of your responsibility—to pay it back."

Greg believed "nobody gets where they are totally on their own." He gave credit to his parents saying he was "fortunate" to have their help. He also credited fellow alumni for connecting him with jobs at their law firms. Greg said he wrote references for students because "people did that for me so that's what I do." Working at the institution, he said he used his gifts and talents where he "can do the most good."

Supporting the New President

Greg's role was expansive and he explained that everyone wears "many hats" at the institution. Doing everything from answering legal issues to working with the cabinet and the Board of Trustees to keeping the facilities going, Greg said his detail-oriented nature was a "positive thing" because "you need somebody that is handling all of the details." His main job, he said, was to make the president look good. Both his attention to detail and his institutional history came in handy, as shown by his account of how he "peppers" details of who people are or background information in speeches and important meetings for the new president who lacks that historical knowledge.

Greg said he did this not just to help the president look good, but also to make sure that the president's time was spent on the big picture. Greg described himself as the

"enforcer," the "implementation guy" that "helps make the strategy work and function." Greg's job, he explained, was doing the "nitty gritty day-to-day, in the trenches kind of stuff to make the place look good" and keep the institution moving forward.

Uncertainty with the Transition

Because his role was tied to the president's, Greg said not knowing the president's style, "how they like things, or what they want you to focus on" was frustrating once the new president arrived. Greg explained that when the new president came in, he "didn't know if facilities was going to be reporting to me anymore." Greg decided to have a conversation with the new president and asked him to let him know when he didn't like something or if he wanted him to do something different. Greg said his approach was sharing more. He said he tried to keep the president as informed as possible on what he was hearing or working on, especially if it was something significant.

Greg recognized that he was trusted because he was an alumnus and he was so invested in the institution. Prior presidents have trusted him to "exercise good judgement." However, he said he would understand if the new president did not like what he was doing and did not want to "keep" him. He said if this was the case, then he would go back to practicing law. Greg elaborated that his preference would be to keep doing what "needs to be done to benefit the institution."

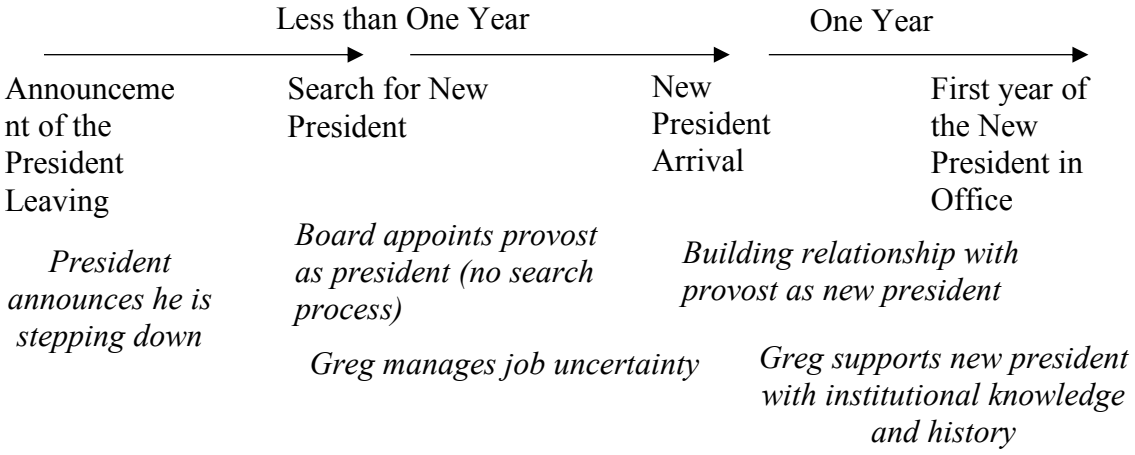
Greg: Structural Analysis

Greg's narrative extended back to when his father attended the institution, which led him to go there. Going to law school was a break from the institution but he remained connected until he decided to return. This background was important to Greg's experience throughout the presidential transition because, after being at the college

through two other presidencies, Greg was now working with a new president and the transition was more about how Greg's institutional history was helpful to the new president, who was new to the institution and didn't have that knowledge. As can be seen in Figure 7, the presidential transition began with the president stepping down (orientation). The complicating action began when the board forwent a presidential search and appointed the provost as the new president. This brought some uncertainty to

Figure 7

Greg's Presidential Transition Timeline



Greg's position as he tried to figure out whether the new president would want to "keep" him. The resolution in Greg's narrative was when he had a conversation with the new president, building that relationship and assuring his role at the institution. He also built the relationship with the new president supporting him with his institutional knowledge.

While the focus of the study was the presidential transition, Greg's narrative was heavily focused on his connection to the institution, which was important to how he viewed his role at the institution today. Greg used short anecdotes to emphasize certain points of the narrative such as when his mother asked him what he would do with his undergraduate degree or when he confided to a friend that he wanted a new job at a

smaller law firm. Greg also closed some of the stories throughout the narrative with a statement such as "That's it in a nutshell" or "I don't regret for a minute making that move." These statements highlighted an important part of the narrative where he decided to go back to the college after practicing law for 20 years. Another closing statement he used was "Fortunately, we don't have a lot of legal issues" when he described all the roles he played at the college, signifying that legal issues were the part of his job he had to worry about least.

Keeping the college going was a theme throughout Greg's narrative and he used the metaphor of being a train conductor several times to emphasize his role. He said he viewed his job as keeping "the train on the tracks as it's flying down the tracks," "making sure the train doesn't overheat" or "fall off the rails." This description highlighted not just the chaotic nature of the job but also the importance he placed on the job and making the institution look good.

Carmen: Case Narrative

I am a very people-oriented person so relationships are really important to me. My dad owned his own pharmacy and when you're an independent pharmacy in the face of all the bigger chains around you, the customer service piece is what sets you apart. I started working for my dad when I was eight years old, putting the Sunday newspapers together. Then I elevated to working the cash register. It's the relationships you built that were important to my dad's business. His pharmacy was in the middle of five adult communities, so his customers were older people. If you were nice to them, they were nice to you, so I had many adopted grandparents. I think for me, it put me on this path of wanting to help people.

Being able to help people and serve people is always motivating to me. No matter what level I work at, it's all about the customer service experience that you're giving to people. Making every interaction a positive customer service experience is really important to me.

Here, I'm a resource for people. My office is right next to the president's. I am a liaison for the president and do things on his behalf. I communicate on his behalf and am the filter to him so that people don't go directly. I manage the governance structure. I manage the Board of Trustees and all the pieces that go with that—the meetings, the governance documents, all the committees, scheduling, thinking through the agenda with the president, and managing communications with the board chair. I work with different offices on campus to push the president's agenda forward. I do all of it.

I was hired under one president and it was a brand-new position. Through the interview experience, I learned more about this community. It was very people-oriented and also relationship-oriented. And so it made me feel good about the decision to move into this new role. It was an important role that I hadn't really ever aspired to but seemed like a natural next step for me to grow and learn. It was a stretch from what I was doing but used a lot of the same experiences, tools, resources, and knowledge that I had been really working on. My goals were definitely to grow my experience in different ways. Working with the Board of Trustees, I had worked on governance for nine years, but this would be in a different, elevated way.

The president who hired me was ill that year. He was a very private person and it took him a while to let me in, especially because his health was failing. I wasn't included in some conversations or interactions. He kept me at a distance because he didn't know

me yet. And then about halfway through the year, he started including me, sharing information with me, or calling me to tell me things.

The person who took over as interim president, I had a great relationship with her. She was chair of my search committee so she actually helped hire me. She was there to bring the college forward and keep it going. And she was the right president at the right time. I don't think this institution could have handled going from a president who was here for many years straight to a new president. I think the community needed that year to get to a place where they could then accept somebody new to the institution. And she was the right interim president for that time.

She trusted me. She knew I could do things that the president might not have let me do otherwise. She knew I was capable of it. And so I was able to do new and different things when she took over as president.

The former president was the face of this institution. He was that guy who is in 30 different places at the same time. We needed to show the community, the external community, that there were other faces here that they can recognize. And so that's when I started serving on different groups and organizations. I was one of those people who could bring a new face to the college, to these community members. We needed to establish those relationships apart from our president. So it was important to send other people out into the community.

I ended up serving on the local Rotary. The former president was a huge supporter of the Rotary. We were still looking to have a presence there and I ended up being the person selected to do that. The Rotary people, they're all in town, and so it was a great place for me to establish friendships. That helped me get linked to the community. And

so I have this relationship with people in the city that if they need to access the college in some way or need to bring something to the college, I'm a resource for those people. I can direct them where they need to go. At least they have one entry point by coming to me. It also just promotes good town relations. They know that we're trying to do good things here at this college and we want to be partners with the city. So I serve on a couple different boards. I'm kind of bridging these areas.

I staffed the presidential search. It was a closed search. This community is used to having a search committee for every position on campus, but they hadn't had to search for a president in many years, so they didn't know what it was to have a closed presidential search. You need to maintain the anonymity of the candidates because if they don't get the job, they have to go back to their role at another institution. So that was a really hard thing for this community to go through, to not know who the next president could be.

I had the opportunity to interact with all the candidates because I was at every search committee meeting. I was at every interview taking notes. When we had the final two candidates come for on-site secret meetings, I was able to spend time with each of them. And when the now president was in my car, I knew it. We had already kind of made a connection and that laid the groundwork for a positive professional relationship.

So the confidentiality around that search process was extremely important. And I'm in an office with people who are not privy to the same information that I am. And so it caused a little bit of tension in the office. I was not allowed to share anything. It was super stressful but I wouldn't be doing my job properly if I divulge any information. I was managing the dynamics of that.

In my profession I've had a lot of interaction with confidential information. And the thing is, you just can't share it, you can't. The process has integrity. There's a way of communicating information or a level of detail without revealing the actual information. And so managing that dynamic is something I've been doing a long time and I'm still here because I have that level of trust.

My role was reporting to the board chair about this. She charged me with managing this search and the chair of the search committee was a member of the Board of Trustees. I knew that I was doing what I needed to be doing as uncomfortable as it was since I needed to maintain the confidentiality of the process. I knew that I was doing the job I needed to do and I was doing it the right way, even if it made other people unhappy. And that uncomfortableness was only temporary.

So for me, being flexible and adaptable in addition to having that people experience, has served me well because I'm still here and able to be a bridge. The senior leadership team, they can come to me. I'm at a point where people know they can come to me and I can give them feedback. I can filter things.

I tell people having been the chief of staff in this environment for the first two years prepared me to be the chief of staff our current president needed. I needed to go through the experiences of learning the people and going through the leadership changes that we went through to be able to serve him now. Forming relationships and learning as much as I can, it's just who I am. I always take the time to learn as much as I can and to be as valuable as I can to the next person who will be on board. Having these relationships out in the community, I can leverage that to serve the new president. I can help connect him to the local community. I have all these relationships internally, I can

help connect him to people internally. So laying the foundation for those relationships was an experience that I needed to have in those first few years so that I could be valuable to a new president. It might have been hard or difficult at different points in those two years, but if I hadn't had that experience, I would not be as well placed as I was when he started and our relationship has only grown.

He operates under a very different management style where he empowers the people underneath him to make decisions. He's all about putting the right people in the right jobs. He talks a lot about that in terms of professional and personal development. This is the first time I really feel like I'm being mentored and managed. It's not micromanaging—it's the professional development piece. Looking at my professional development, last year was about participating in different national organizations and learning more about the higher education landscape in general. I appreciate what higher education does for people and the education we provide to students because it's about the experience that they have. So working at an institution that strategically and thoughtfully thinks about the student experience and how you can do your best for the students, that's where I want to be. I loved where I went to college. I loved being a student. I want other people to have that kind of experience.

Carmen: Thematic Analysis

Relationships are Important

Throughout her narrative, Carmen conveyed how important relationships are to her. Early childhood experiences of working in her father's pharmacy set her on a "path of wanting to help people." She explained that helping people and serving people were always motivating for her and that "making every interaction a customer service

experience" was really important. She described the college's focus on the student experience much like a customer service experience—"I loved where I went to college. I loved being a student. I want other people to have that kind of experience." This orientation to people and relationships was what drew her to the college three years ago and it was very important to how she viewed her role throughout the transition.

Building Internal and External Relationships

Carmen said she saw her role as a resource to both the internal and external college community. She said "forming relationships…it's just who I am." This framing of her role connected to how she built internal and external relationships throughout the presidential transition. The former president was deeply involved with the external community. When he stepped down, Carmen joined the local Rotary to maintain a presence there. She also began serving other community organization boards. She established relationships within these organizations to promote good relations between the college and the community. She described her role as "a resource for those people…I can direct them where they need to go."

Trust was a major part of building relationships. When it came time to search for a new president, the chair of the board asked Carmen to staff the process. It was a confidential search process and Carmen described the uncomfortable tension that emerged with colleagues as "super stressful" because she was not able to share information. Carmen said she viewed her role as "reporting to the board chair" and she wouldn't be doing her job properly if she divulged information, "even if it made other people unhappy." She said the "process has integrity" and she said she felt she was still there because she had that level of trust with the board throughout the transition.

Once the new president arrived, Carmen said she leveraged the internal and external relationships she had made to serve him. “Laying the foundation for those relationships was an experience that I needed to have in those first few years so that I could be valuable to a new president,” she explained. Because she was “well-placed” when he started, their relationship “has only grown.”

Professional Development

For Carmen “learning as much as I can” was also, as she described, “just who I am.” She said she “always takes time to learn as much as I can” to be of value. When she took this position, she described it as a “a next step,” a “stretch” to what she had previously been doing, an opportunity to “grow my experience,” and to work in an “elevated way.” She said she valued how the new president empowered the people underneath him. Throughout the presidential transition, Carmen took on participating in different national organizations and learning more about the higher education landscape as professional development.

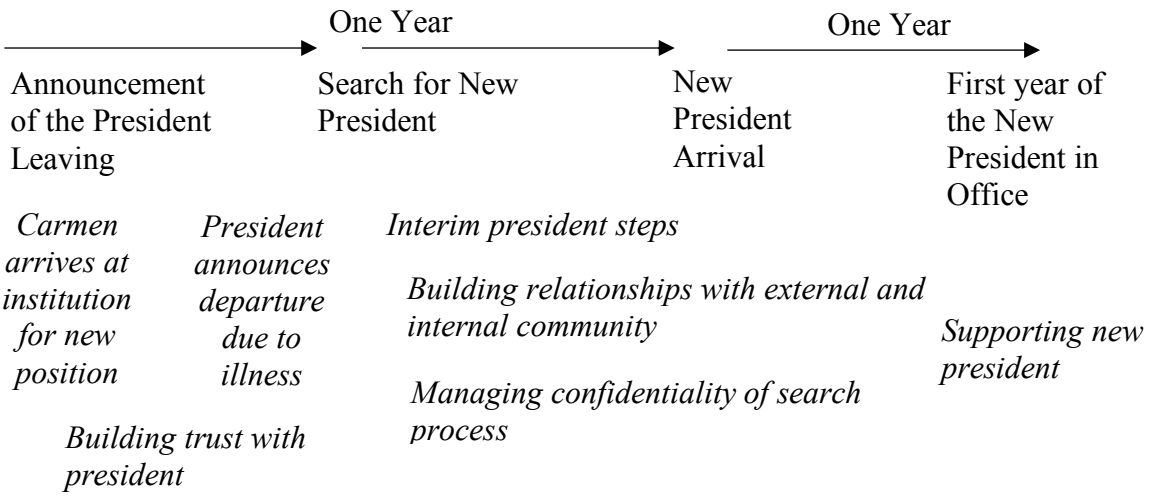
Carmen: Structural Analysis

Figure 8 depicts the plotline of Carmen’s story, which followed a presidential transition timeline of a president stepping down, a search for a new president, and the new president stepping into office. Carmen’s narrative was different in that it began when she stepped into her role (orientation), a year before the president announced his departure. Complicating actions throughout the narrative occurred with the former president becoming ill and having to step down, his not trusting Carmen, her having to rebuild all the connections the former president had built throughout decades in office, and the tension that developed throughout the confidential search process. The story was

resolved with the new president stepping in and Carmen using all the connections she made to support him.

Figure 8

Carmen's Presidential Transition Timeline



Throughout her narrative, Carmen reinforced the importance she placed on not only building and maintaining relationships, but on the customer service nature of these relationships. It was where she served and provided value. This was emphasized in her anecdote of childhood memories helping older customers at her father's pharmacy. She connected that to why relationships are important—"if you were nice to them, they were nice to you." This experience put her on a "path of wanting to help people." Even the reason why she built those relationships was in service to her father. "It's the relationships you built that were important to my dad's business," she explained.

Throughout her narrative, Carmen also uses the metaphor of a "bridge" to describe her role. She said she saw herself as a "bridge" between the leadership team and the president's office. Along those same lines, she saw herself as a "bridge" with the new president, connecting him to the local community and to her internal relationships. She also saw herself as a "bridge" between the external community and the college; she said

she could provide “access” if they needed to “bring” something to the college and could “direct them where they need to go.” She referred to herself as an “entry point.” The bridge metaphor reinforced the theme of Carmen serving and being of value in her relationships.

Charlotte: Case Narrative

I loved going to school. I had a lot of good teachers coming up through high school. When I was in high school I was going through the program to transfer to a four-year school and become a teacher. There was a situation in one of my classes with a teacher and a student. The student was awful to the teacher and she sent him out of class. It wasn’t minutes until he was back in class and nothing had really changed. And I decided then that teaching wasn’t for me because if he had done to me what he did to her, one of us would have left. And since he came back, I would have been the one to go. I just didn’t want to deal with that. So I changed over to business. I made the right decision when I switched over. I came here to the college and took the one-year stenography course.

Then I went to work at the hospital as a file clerk. I was really disappointed doing that job. I worked there a year and then I went to work for a lawyer and I worked for him for a year. He became a judge and another lawyer in the building needed someone. I worked there for about a year. An opening came up here at the college and it was for a switchboard operator. I interviewed for it. The gentleman that was hiring told me that he didn't think I would be happy, that I would be bored working on the switchboard, and that I was overqualified. He said I didn't get the job. So when the next opening came up, it

was his assistant that was leaving to have her baby and she didn't come back. So I got the job. And I've been here since the 1970s. I've been in this position for nine years.

I do enjoy this work. And by working at a school, I get to work with students in addition to doing this type of work. It's just in a different capacity. I serve as a receptionist. I attend meetings and take minutes. Gosh, well in fact we're getting ready for a board meeting now so I help pull the agenda and the materials together to send that to the board and then I'll take those minutes. And sometimes I assist other people if they're in a bind, especially if it involves students. With the former president, anything that anybody needed, he volunteered me, which was okay because I like to know how everything operates. It helps your training and your ability to assist other people with questions that they may have.

I've had quite a few bosses at the college and lots of different roles. I've been through two transitions. The gentleman that hired me as president's assistant, he hired me in May and submitted his resignation to the board in October. I was so upset. He had been president for more than 20 years and his secretary, she didn't want to go through the transition process so she retired. And I interviewed and got her job. One day he came out of his office and handed me a letter to type. I started typing it and I realized I was typing his resignation. It was a shock to me. I mean I knew he wouldn't be there long, but I thought he would have been there longer. He had grandchildren that he wanted to spend time with and I understood that. And so they hired a new president. He was here for five years and then he retired and our president now, she's been here a little over a year. So we're still in the transition process.

With every new president, you learn to do things differently. Each individual has their own way of doing things. It's just being flexible to make those changes. The big change with the former president was keeping an online calendar. I had not done that before. He wanted everything on it so I had to learn how to use that system. I'm comfortable with it now, but for those first couple years it was a little nerve-wracking because I was always afraid to make a mistake. Sometimes, if you're not careful, you'll end up putting it on the wrong day. Little things like that. But if it causes him to miss a meeting, it's not a little thing anymore.

The former president, he pretty much stayed to himself and I kept up with his calendar. I made sure he was where he was supposed to be when he was supposed to be there but he wasn't a person that talked about family or shared a lot about his family. So, other than that, basically, it was just doing the job.

One afternoon he came out of his office, he had been on the phone, he sat down in the chair across from my desk and he said, "I've been made an offer I can't refuse." And I said, "Really?" And they had offered him retirement. I was surprised but a little bit relieved. It was a difficult time for me.

We had an interim president for six months. The interim president had been retired and they contacted her to see if she would serve as an interim. She was easy to talk to and she understood the position. She understood what was required and what was needed to do the job that I was in. It was just a relaxed atmosphere. It wasn't that high-pressure situation that I had with the former president.

This transition has been a lot easier than the other one, partly because I had already been through it. It had been a short period of time between the two, like five

years, and my boss now, she's very flexible. If something comes up like a conflict, sometimes I get a little uptight about it, but she says, "I'll just reschedule it." So that's what I do. It depends on who we reschedule.

To me, my job is to support my supervisor in any way I can, to make the transition as easy as possible, and loyalty—I think that's important when you work for somebody. So yeah, just to make the transition as easy on everyone because it's really hard or maybe even harder on the new person than it is for the people that are already here.

The new president has been at several institutions and they have different ways of doing things. I still use a Rolodex and that kind of freaked her out the first time I was looking for a phone number. It was a number that more than likely would not be on the Internet. And she said, "What is that? They don't use those anymore." And I also keep a paper calendar. The president before this one, he wanted to do away with it and I guess that was a battle he chose not to pursue because if the computer goes down, you're lost. You don't know where you're supposed to be or any of that. And the paper calendar, to me, it's a backup and I can look at it if I don't have my computer around. If they need to know where they need to be, I can look on the paper calendar and tell. It's just something I've always done and it's a comfort to me because I know that whether I have a computer or not, I can tell them where they need to be and what time they need to be there. So those are just things that I do well, things that help me do my job.

The other day we were trying to figure out somewhere to eat and I pulled out a phone book. There happened to be a page in the phone book that listed food. It wasn't

necessarily restaurants, but it listed foods and we did find a place to eat based on that page in the phone book. The president said, “I can’t believe there are some things there.”

One big change for all of us is shared services. We had a person that did our travel and we had a person that did our purchasing. Now we have to do that ourselves because some of those jobs went away. I don’t have to do a lot of purchasing and it makes it hard for me because I use it so little. That’s been difficult. It took me a little while to get used to doing the travel but that’s kind of worked its way out. And I’m more comfortable with that, but that purchasing, well, I use it sparingly. But I have lots and lots of notes and if I can’t figure it out that way, I’ll call somebody to ask for assistance.

With our new president she took time to feel everybody out and to see how we do things, to see what’s working, what’s not working. She didn’t just come in and start making changes, which always seems to make people uncomfortable. We talk about how to get things done and between the two of us we can work something out or pull somebody in that might have the expertise to do it in a way that I can’t because technology is not my expertise. I'm trying to make it my friend.

We talk a lot. We talk about family a lot too. She’s more of a friend than the former president and we talk about a lot of things. It’s helpful to know, in any situation with a person that you spend so much time with, where they came from, just enough to know about their family. And you can tell a lot about a person listening to them talk about their family and their past experiences growing up. We’ve talked about that.

I think she’s done a wonderful job since she's been here and she's very student-oriented. When the students come here, I stop and work with them until I reach a point that I can’t help them anymore. If the president is here, she’ll talk to them. And if not, I’ll

make an appointment for them to come back. But I'll stop everything I'm doing because without them we wouldn't be here. People will remember you by the way that you treat them. And we want them to come back. Sometimes it takes a lot of courage for these students to even set foot on campus and if they are not greeted in a certain way or made to feel comfortable, they could leave and never come back. So that's important.

Most of the time if they make it to this office, it's not a good thing. By the time they get here, it's a problem that no one else has been able to solve. So this is the last stop. But we work with them and try to accommodate them the best we can. It depends on the situation. Once they get here, it's good if we can help them. Sometimes we don't tell them what they want to hear but for the most part I think we do a good job of helping them out of whatever situation they are in, or at least try to give them some direction. When you feel like you do something to help somebody like that, it's rewarding. It makes you feel good that you were able to better someone else's life. It goes back to me wanting to be a teacher. I get to work with and know some of the students.

I'm enjoying what I do. Even though you may be doing the same thing every day, it's a different situation. So it's not monotonous. And I like the people that I work with very much. And that's another reason that I keep working. It's because of the people.

We've got various offices and most of them are the other administrative assistants and we have to get information from each other. Sometimes it's IT personnel. I get teased a lot about that but if you don't know, you've got to ask. Back to the student needs, a lot of times if I don't know the answer and it deals with a certain area, I'll call the administrative assistant and they can answer the question that student has.

I've just always enjoyed the warmth of the people. They're accommodating. We treat each other like we're friends. We're all here basically for the same reason. Normally, they're very accommodating. They don't shrug it off or put it aside. They'll take care of it fairly quickly because they know you have somebody standing there waiting for an answer. They're just good people. They care about the college like I do because a lot of them have been here a long time. I think that gives you a family atmosphere.

My situation is, if my husband had not died, I would probably be retired by now. But after he passed, I'm just not active in the community. I do things with my family and I just enjoy working. So that's why I'm still here. I guess just the fact that I enjoy my job. I don't mind getting up and coming to work. It's a relaxed atmosphere for me. It's just being around people instead of being at home sitting in front of the TV by myself. You can only watch but so much TV.

In 40-plus years you see a lot, and you do see a lot of changes. Mainly really other than people coming and going, the technology has been the biggest change. I always tease the president, I tell her, "I know where the dead bodies are. Be nice."

Charlotte: Thematic Analysis

Working with Students

Getting to work with students was what drew Charlotte to work at the college. She shared her story of wanting to become a teacher but changing her mind and switching to a business program instead. She said she enjoyed her work, even if it was in a different capacity than teaching. Through the office of the president, she was able to help students as best she could. According to Charlotte, students who ended up in the

president's office were the ones that needed help the most. She explained, "by the time they get here, it's a problem that no one else has been able to solve." She said, "when you feel like you do something to help somebody like that, it's rewarding. It makes you feel good that you were able to better someone else's life." This shaped how Charlotte interacted with the students: stopping everything she was doing to help them and making sure they got an appointment with the president. It also shaped her relationship with the new president who, as Charlotte described, was also "very student-oriented," and her relationship with colleagues who she called on to help the students when she was unable to.

Adapting to Technology

Charlotte had been with the college for more than 40 years and she said "mainly, really other than people coming and going, the technology has been the biggest change." Charlotte had been through a couple of presidential transitions. "With every new president, you learn to do things differently," she said. With both transitions, Charlotte said she struggled with the technology. She described learning the former president's online calendar system as "nerve-wracking." With the new president, the biggest change was a switch to shared services for travel and purchasing. Charlotte said she used the travel often so that "worked its way out." However, she said she rarely used the purchasing service and found it difficult to work with. She said she had "lots and lots of notes" but still couldn't figure it out. "I'm trying to make technology my friend," Charlotte joked. She said she frequently reached out to colleagues for help and was teased about the frequency with which she reached out to IT.

Supporting the President

Charlotte described the most recent presidential transition as "a lot easier" because she had "been through it" already. She saw her job as supporting her supervisor—the president—in any way she could and "to make the transition as easy as possible." She said she believed loyalty was "important when you work for somebody." Because Charlotte was challenged by technology, one of the ways she supported the president during the transition was by continuing to do, as she described, "the things that I do well, things that help me do my job." Charlotte explained that the new president had been at several institutions where they "have different ways of doing things." As part of the transition, Charlotte said she and the new president talked about "how to get things done" and this included acquainting the new president with her practices of using a Rolodex, a paper calendar, and a phone book.

Relationships with Colleagues

Her relationships at the college and its "family atmosphere" were other reasons why Charlotte said she enjoyed her work. Given the loss of her husband, Charlotte said being around the people at the college was why she was still there. She described her colleagues as "good people" who cared about the college like she did because many of them had also been there "a really long time." Her valuing the deep connections shaped her relationship with the new president. She said she and the new president "talk a lot" and compared to the former president, the new president was "more of a friend" than he was because he mostly kept to himself and did not share anything about his family. Charlotte explained that it was helpful to know where the president was coming from

because “you can tell a lot about a person listening to them talk about their family and their past experiences growing up.”

Charlotte: Structural Analysis

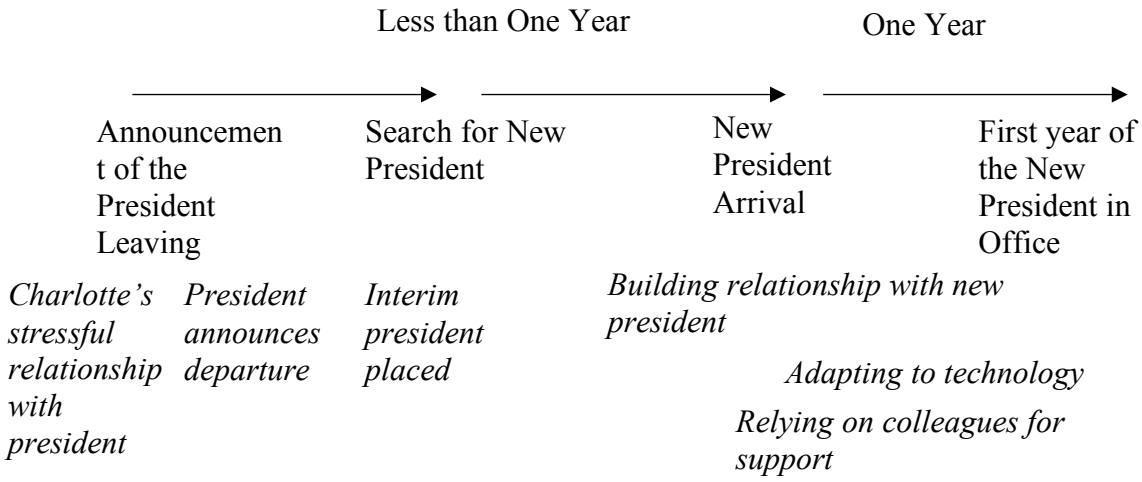
Charlotte’s narrative followed a typical presidential transition with a departing president, the placement of an interim president while the institution went through a presidential search, and the arrival of a new president. However, Charlotte’s complicating action began with the former president before he announced his decision to step down (orientation). Although Charlotte did not share much about the former president other than that he kept to himself, there were instances where she described working with him as nerve-wracking and stressful. This led her to compare the new president with the former president throughout her narrative. Once the new president arrived (orientation), Charlotte’s focus turned to building that relationship and managing the new technology that came with that transition (complicating action). The resolution of the complicating action was Charlotte leaning on colleagues who she considered family for help not just with adapting to the new technology but with students’ needs, which had always been a priority for Charlotte and seemed to be for the new president as well. Figure 9 shows how Charlotte’s narrative unfolds.

Charlotte shared an anecdote about when she was in high school. She aspired to be a teacher and she witnessed a negative interaction between a teacher and a student that changed her career course. She decided to go into business instead. Charlotte used the anecdote to highlight why she enjoyed working at the college and working with students. While this anecdote was not directly related to the presidential transition, throughout the narrative Charlotte referenced her interest in students. When she described how she

helped the students in the president's office she explained "it goes back to me wanting to be a teacher." She recalled the students again when describing her colleagues and she shifted the conversation "back to student needs." She viewed her role of supporting the president as a link to her working with students.

Figure 9

Charlotte's Presidential Transition Timeline



Nicole: Case Narrative

My first job out of college was a really low-level job. I was an editorial assistant. I really loved the people there. They were curious to a fault. Journalists are great that way. I was there for about five years and then I left to see whether I wanted to be a reporter when I grew up. I decided I did not. I didn't like asking the hard questions of people in painful circumstances or even sort of uncomfortable questions. I was not happy doing that. So I decided I wanted to go to the other side, so to speak, which was more communicating on behalf of people. Serendipity led me to become a director of communications and I did government work for a number of years. I was a bit soured by

it and I said, “What field do I want to go into next?” And I thought long and hard about it—it was higher education. It was absolutely higher education. Director of Communications for a provost was my first job in higher education. I’ve worked for five provosts since then and four presidents and now here two.

I am the daughter of a lifelong public school teacher, sister of a private school teacher, and cousin of a million different teachers. Education runs pretty deep in my family DNA. I think academic institutions are just really great places to work. Just in general the people tend to be really interesting, much depends on the setting, but mostly down to earth and collegial. There's not a lot of people climbing over one another in this environment, which I really like. I don’t think I would do well in the corporate world. I was interested in being in an educational setting where people were actively learning and listening, but also with institutions that did that particularly well in a broader way, for the broader world. I think it was the idea of wanting to be in an environment where people were like-mindedly curious and driven. Each of the institutions I’ve worked for has very much had the common denominator of doing work for the public good or the common good. They’re each known for that.

I worked for the former president in two different settings. She left our prior institution to come here. She tried to recruit me here when she came. I stayed through several more presidential transitions at the prior institution. I wasn’t ready to leave the area. My parents were very senior at the time and I had young kids. She tried to recruit me out here for the VP for Communications role and I didn’t want to do that anymore. Fast forward to when she finally decided she really wanted a robust chief of staff, she and I began talking and it was exciting the thought of working with her again. It was exciting

and nerve-wracking, the thought of moving across the country, but my family was open to it. So here we are.

That was a little over two years ago. My primary goal is to support the work of the president and therefore, the institution. It is to help advance the strategic direction of the institution. It's a little bit cliché but I think that's my primary goal. I have a consultant and advisor role and it's not confined to the president. That's where the majority of my attention goes but it's also to other senior leaders. I help them produce and then run the cabinet meetings as well as our cabinet retreats. I am the secretary to the board here as well. So we've got that double role thing going on. I spend a lot of my time either writing or editing or managing the enormous amount of communications we send out on behalf of the president. That's become a big part of this job. I would say at least 50% of my time is spent doing that.

I really love working under pressure. And that's been true since I was a little cub reporter way back when. I think about my jobs and they've all had that in common. They've all been ones that put me in a position where I'm asked to think really quickly on my feet, knit things together—a lot of times brand new information and either effectively problem solve, whether it's in the form of writing or whether it's in the form of just snuffing out a fire here or there. So I think that's one thing that I enjoy and I'm invigorated by in my job.

No two days are the same. I am a firefighter by nature and I enjoy that. There's always plenty to do. I like my colleagues a lot. I really like the people that I work with. I like that I'm always learning something new. It may not be a traditional style educational experience but darn we're learning stuff all the time here.

I had been here less than a year when the former president was diagnosed with an illness and had to step down from the job because it was a pressure cooker and it was worsening her condition. She confided in me first. She was a very experienced president. This was her third institution where she'd been at the top. So she knew very well what the right next steps were. The right next step was to talk to the board chair. That goes without saying. The next step after that was the provost and so on and so on down the line. So she and I talked through all of the conversations that she was going to be having. And there were not many. We had a pretty tight group that knew initially. There were other board members that had to know. There were one or two other senior leaders that had to know but it was a very tight-knit group that worked on the rollout so to speak.

I was writing. I was developing the communications lines. The board chair was thinking about how best to communicate to the board and then the day of the announcement it was a shock to most of the cabinet. She had a bunch of meetings on that day, and then as those meetings were occurring, we were putting out messages for the broader community.

There was enormous confidentiality. I mean, there was no opportunity for there to be any leaks in this one. Of all of the transitions I've been through that's been true, but none was more important than this one because of the reason as much as anything. Confidentiality was a cornerstone and without it we would not have succeeded. We had a very successful announcement ultimately.

People were being so terribly supportive and I think she understood that people needed a better understanding of something so sudden. She was much beloved here and they were loving the direction that the institution was heading in. So to have that all end

without a really keen understanding of why that would happen would have been very unsatisfying for people. It would have been unsettling for them. They cared about her as a person.

In those initial two months, it was very vague. It was health reasons. I actually was encouraging her right from the beginning to be more transparent about it. I only had the courage to suggest that because of how well I knew her and I assumed that she would ultimately want to be someone who could inspire others by how she managed through this. Ultimately, she got there on her own. I think the kinds of reactions she was getting from people all helped inform her decision to be honest about it.

It was an extremely difficult and challenging time. Not only had I worked for her in two different settings, but she was very much a mentor to me and a friend. It was different, certainly without a doubt, there was the personal element to it. The person that I cared so much for and made a really enormous life change for was in peril. It was really different than anything I'd experienced before in any of the other transitions. In fact, none of the other transitions came about as a result of a health issue. Those were all just kind of natural leadership evolutions. So that's what sticks out about it.

I will say, I feel like I was here right on time. If you think about all that experience I had dealing with presidential transition, I was able to put it all to use. And we had to use it. We had to do it fast and we had to do it right. It was invaluable to have gone through all of the experiences that I had gone through. I really had to sort of shut off the personal and the emotional stuff to get through that time. And I did so successfully to help the board chair, to help the incoming president, and to help my colleagues—most of whom had not gone through quite so many transitions and certainly not one that was this

abrupt or for this reason. So it was a really challenging time. I think I did the best work that I've ever done in transition. That's probably because I was emotionally as well as professionally invested.

I think I just stayed on task. I stayed like a laser focused on the next thing that needed to be done. And that's actually pretty consistent throughout my career. That's kind of what I do, no matter what the circumstances. I don't know that I had a particular coping mechanism and I will tell you that there were moments where I was not myself and it was because I hadn't actually synthesized what was occurring. I was just doing, doing, doing, doing. And I remember thinking to myself and sharing with others, "I probably should let myself feel this a little bit more." It bunches up and catches you by surprise. I eventually moved through that but it was like a delayed reaction.

We didn't have a search. The board decided to hire or appoint the new president. That was the first time in my experience that had ever happened. The provost and I had started at the same time, which was kind of fun. We entered at exactly the same moment but I had not worked with him all that closely, other than the fact that, of course, we were both on the cabinet. We didn't have a lot of intersecting projects so the cultivation and the development of that relationship happened really after he was appointed.

He's doing great and I'm very much enjoying my work in a whole different way than I did with the former president, both equally fulfilling just different styles. She was an extremely experienced president by the time I got here and she had been here already five years. By then, she had been either a provost or a president for 20-some years—so a long time in the top role. And so she brought all that in everything from how you approach philanthropy to how you make sure you've spoken to all the right people in all

the right sequence and so on and so forth. She could do this job in her sleep. Whereas my new boss is learning. The first year is tough, especially if you're coming from the provost position. I think that's really challenging. It's a natural transition in a way, but it's also really challenging because you've spent X number of years focusing on a constituency within the larger role. And you get to this job and, man, you have to be looking at this from every angle and it takes a while to get there.

Having been through some of these experiences numerous times, I think that helps you. You are eager to put out the fires when they flame up as they do. I had nine transitions. I found it profoundly gratifying to be able to flex so much and adapt and think through and listen and observe as to what each of those leaders' needs have been. And they've all been different, naturally. They're all different people. I find that really interesting. I don't always find it comfortable. I think about those personalities and individuals across the map. Not all of them have been great but most of them have been. So I've been lucky. I've been really lucky that through all of that change there was only really one time that I found the person rather toxic. So that's pretty good. What I think, and hope, is that every single experience has allowed me to deepen my ability to advise and counsel the next person. Even though the people are different, the institutions are pretty steady. And so the more you know about them, the better off you're going to be. The deeper immersed you are and the more you grasp the culture you're in and habits and the patterns and the stumbling blocks, the better. But also the roles that these people play. They are so demanding and they're unending, really. And so to be able to support and figure out the best way to help has been great for me. That's what I've learned.

It does not matter who is in the role. I think this job requires the same thing, which is you are looking out for the person who's in the top job. And the reason you're doing that is not to satisfy an ego, it's on behalf of the institution because no position matters more in terms of the reputation of the institution.

Nicole: Thematic Analysis

Thriving in Environment of Growth and Learning

With a family full of teachers, Nicole said education ran pretty deep in her family DNA. When it was time for her to figure out what field she wanted to go into, she said she knew it was higher education. She said, "academic institutions are just really great places to work." She attributed this mostly to the kind of people who work there, which she described as "down to earth and collegial" and always "actively learning and listening." She explained that she wanted to be in an environment where people were "like-mindedly curious and driven." And at her current institution, Nicole said she loved her job because she was "always learning something new."

As part of the learning environment of the institution, Nicole explained that she regularly sought out jobs where she was put in a position to "think really quickly on my feet, knit things together." She said a lot of times she had to problem solve and put out "a fire here or there." She said she loved working under pressure and was invigorated by work environments like that. In her current role she liked that "no two days are the same" and that there was plenty to do. Nicole explained that it "might not be the traditional style educational experience" but she was "learning stuff all the time."

Managing a Personal Relationship with the Outgoing President

Nicole described the presidential transition as an "extremely difficult and challenging time" not just because of the transition but because of the nature of it and her close relationship with the outgoing president. Nicole had been recruited to work at the institution by the outgoing president, who she had worked with at a prior institution. The outgoing president had tried to recruit Nicole years before but the position would have meant moving across the country for the role and Nicole was not ready for that. When the outgoing president approached her three years ago, Nicole was excited at the opportunity to work with her again and moved her family to take the chief of staff role.

Less than a year after Nicole started the new position, the outgoing president was diagnosed with an illness and had to step down. Nicole said the president confided in her first. Nicole explained that the outgoing president was a mentor and a friend and it was especially difficult because "the person I cared so much for and made a really enormous life change for was in peril." Although Nicole had been through presidential transitions before, she said those were all "natural leadership evolutions" but this one came as a result of a health issue and it was "different than anything I'd experienced before."

For Nicole, she said the personal element meant that she "had to sort of shut off the personal and emotional stuff to get through that time." She said she remained "laser focused on the next thing that needed to be done." Nicole explained that it was a coping mechanism for her. She described the experience as "There were moments where I was not myself and it was because I hadn't actually synthesized what was occurring. I was just doing, doing, doing, doing." She said she eventually moved through it but there was a delayed reaction. "It bunches up and catches you by surprise," she explained.

Announcement of the Presidential Transition

Nicole had gone through several transitions before. She said her prior experiences came in handy, especially since many of her colleagues had not gone "through quite so many transitions and certainly not one that was this abrupt or for this reason." Because of the nature of the departure, Nicole explained that confidentiality was key to the success of the president's announcement to step down. She ran through the need-to-know tight-knit group, which included board members and senior leaders who would also be involved with the announcement to the broader community. Once the announcement was made to the tight-knit group, Nicole described how she was "putting out messages for the broader community." She said they ultimately had a very successful announcement, where people were in shock and "terribly supportive."

Because of all her experience dealing with presidential transition, Nicole said she felt she "was here right on time." Her experience was put to use right away because as Nicole explained, "we had to do it fast and we had to do it right." Nicole said she did her best work for this transition because she was professionally and personally motivated.

"Experienced" versus "New" President

The board decided not to go through a presidential search and instead appointed the provost as president. Nicole described how she and the provost, now president, had arrived at the institution at the same time, "which was kind of fun." Nicole was very much enjoying working with the new president in this new capacity but acknowledged it was very different from working with the former president who was a "very experienced president."

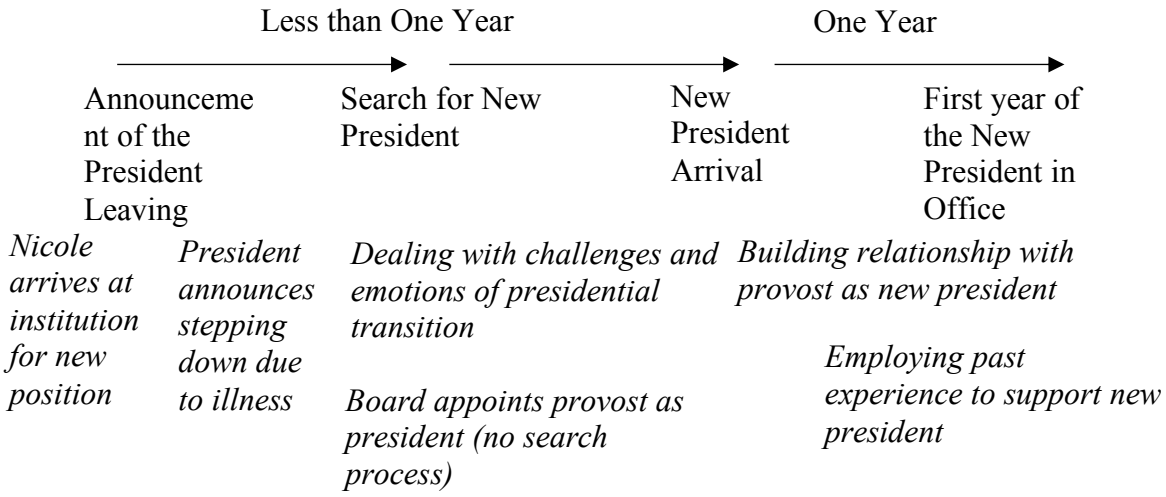
Nicole compared the experience of the former and new president. Whereas the former had been either a provost or president for 20 years and "could do this job in her sleep," the new president was learning on the job. Nicole recognized that this first year of the transition was going to be "tough" and "challenging" for the new president. She explained that while transitioning from provost to president might seem natural, it could also be really challenging because "you get to this job and, man, you have to be looking at this from every angle and it takes a while to get there."

For Nicole, she said it did not matter who was in the role. Her job was to look out for "the person who's in the top job." Her primary goal, she said, was to support the work of the president and, therefore, the institution. The majority of her attention was dedicated to the president and she was not doing it to "satisfy an ego." She elaborated, "It's on behalf of the institution because no position matters more in terms of the reputation of the institution."

Nicole: Structural Analysis

Figure 10

Nicole's Presidential Transition Timeline



As seen in Figure 10, Nicole's narrative followed a similar storyline to most presidential transitions but differs because of her personal relationship with the outgoing president. While the transition began when the president resigned due to illness (complicating action), Nicole's narrative began when the president originally recruited her for the position and she ended up moving her whole life for it (orientation). The complicating action was that Nicole had not even been there a year when the president announced she was stepping down and they immediately had to work on the transition. The transition itself presented challenges as it had to remain confidential and had to be completed quickly (complicating action). Nicole's emotional ties to the outgoing president definitely played a role in the success and the challenging nature of that transition (complicating action). There was no search process. The provost was appointed as president (orientation). This, however, presented further challenges as Nicole had to work with a president who was learning on the job versus someone who she not only had worked with prior to this role but who also had decades of experience in top roles (complicating action). The resolution of the narrative was Nicole employing her vast experience with presidential transitions to support the new president, who was new to his role at the institution as well as to the role of president.

Other structural components of Nicole's narrative can be seen in how she repeatedly described how much she loved working at academic institutions. Throughout her narrative, she emphasized this point by describing previous roles and why she was "not happy" doing one job or "got soured" by another. She explained that when she was looking for what field she would go to next "it was absolutely higher education." She attributed her first job in higher education to "serendipity." She said education was in her

"family DNA." She expressed how "profoundly gratifying" it had been to work with all the institutional leaders she worked with.

One aspect of the job Nicole felt "invigorated" by was the fast-paced, problem-solving nature of the job. Nicole used the metaphor of a "firefighter" to describe her role. Throughout the narrative she emphasized this point, describing her job as "snuffing out fires" here and there. She highlighted this point again when describing the presidential transitions she had been through, saying, "You are eager to put out the fires when they flame up as they do." This emphasis was important to Nicole's narrative in that she ultimately channeled her experience and excitement about working in higher education to support the new president and ultimately the institution.

Chapter 5: Themes from the Cross-Case Analysis

The purpose of this study was to understand how board professionals experience job crafting during a college or university presidential transition. The thematic and structural analysis of each case narrative in Chapter 4 highlighted what the board professionals thought was important to emphasize from their experience. For the analysis across the board professionals' case narratives, I looked at each of their themes and structural components. I highlighted and took notes on the themes that varied across the presidential transition experience: the president's departure being announced, an interim president being placed or a presidential search being conducted, and the new president's arrival. This analysis focused on the similarities and differences within the board professionals' experiences of the presidential transition.

The board professionals' experiences varied across types of institutions, circumstances of how the outgoing presidents left office, and challenges faced during the transition. Sarah and Sam, for example, both dealt with long-serving presidents who left their positions due to illness. Nicole and Carmen also dealt with presidents who had to step down from office due to illness but, unlike Sarah and Sam, they were new to their jobs with less than a year at their institutions. Two of these board professionals work at large public institutions and two work at small private colleges.

The narratives also varied by who the board professionals were, what they valued, seniority of their roles, where they were in life, and the length of time they had been at the institution. Sam, Sarah, Jessica, Charlotte, Greg, and Marie have all been at their institutions for many years. Greg and Charlotte are alumni of their institutions while Nicole was new to the institution and relocated her family across the country for her role.

Jessica, Charlotte, and Marie considered retirement. Carmen was still working on her career and professional development was important to her.

In order to grasp how the board professionals experienced job crafting throughout the presidential transition, it is necessary to understand them, what motivates them, what is important to them, their past job experiences, and how they perceive their roles. Based on my analysis across the board professionals' experiences, three overarching themes emerged: how board professionals shaped new relationships and reframed existing ones throughout the transition; the significance and uniqueness the board professionals saw in their roles; and how the board professionals' loyalty to the president was an extension of their loyalty to the institution and its mission. Key points of similarities and differences across the board professionals' experiences with the presidential transition included their relationships with presidents, as well as managing confidentiality of the search process and job uncertainty among other challenges. This chapter presents the themes from the analysis across the eight board professionals' experiences. The following chapter will explore the findings from these themes in more detail and will connect them to the literature on job crafting, presidential transitions, and board professionals.

Theme One: Reforming Relationships Through Stages of the Transition

The importance of relationships came across the eight narratives in different forms, whether it was with the president, colleagues, or the external community. Some of the board professionals were reframing the existing relationships with the outgoing presidents and their colleagues, all were forming new relationships with incoming presidents, and three of the board professionals had to manage relationships with interim presidents. Descriptions of the reframed and newly established connections occurred

across the various stages of the presidential transition: announcement of president's departure, interim president, presidential search, and the new president stepping into office.

President's Departure

Sarah was the only board professional who focused on the length of time for the president's departure, describing it as a "prolonged" and "quite difficult" two-year departure. Other board professionals went into varying details about that time between the announcement and the actual departure. For Sarah, the time was difficult and complex because the outgoing president was a beloved, long-serving president in declining health. Sarah described the time as emotional because she had been hired by the outgoing president and was very close to him. His health was declining and this was difficult to witness because he was a mentor to her. Sarah reframed her relationship with the outgoing president, growing closer to him through the transition. She was in contact with him regularly and would go everywhere with him. She became his translator and would literally have to speak for him when he physically couldn't.

For Nicole, like Sarah, the president's departure was an emotionally complex time. She had been recruited by the outgoing president less than a year before the announcement of the president's illness and her stepping down. She and the outgoing president had previously worked together and Nicole moved her whole family across the country to work with her again in this new role. The outgoing president's health was also emotional for Nicole because she considered her a friend and a mentor. Nicole said she managed by remaining "laser focused on the next thing that needed to be done" rather than focusing on her emotional relationship with the president.

Sam described the president's departure as "unfortunate" because it was meant to be a year of celebration for a beloved, long-serving president and instead it was taken over by the president's health issues and pressing matters at the institution. Sam shifted his relationship with the outgoing president to a more personal one where he was checking in on him between treatments. Sam also shifted his focus on activities to honor the outgoing president. Making sure things ended well with him was important for Sam.

Jessica compared the year in which the president stepped down to "one big stomach ache." The outgoing president stopped coming into the office, leaving Jessica to run and be the face of the office. Jessica described shifting her role, taking on presidential duties to "keep things going as if there was nothing going on." Her role with colleagues and the college community shifted as she began attending more events throughout campus, making sure that everything that had to go through the president was signed and returned, and covering up for an absentee outgoing president by interacting with everyone who came into the office.

For Charlotte, the outgoing president kept to himself and didn't share much. He also created a high-pressure environment which Charlotte said she was relieved to be rid of with the new president. Marie and Carmen struggled with the outgoing presidents' lack of recognition of their roles. Sarah, Nicole, Sam, Jessica, Charlotte, Marie, and Carmen's relationships with the outgoing presidents shaped how they approached building a relationship with the new presidents.

Interim President

Many institutions place an interim president in the time between the former president leaving and the new president arriving. This was the case for three out of the

eight board professionals who took part in this study. The board professionals who worked with interim presidents during their presidential transitions shared varying experiences.

Charlotte welcomed an interim president who was called out of retirement to run the president's office for six months. She said the interim president understood the board professional position and "what was required and what was needed to do the job." Charlotte said the interim president was "easy to talk to" and described working with her as a "relaxing" atmosphere compared to the "high-pressure situation" she had with the outgoing president.

Carmen's experience with an interim president was also positive in that the person was on her hiring committee so she had a good relationship with her. Carmen said the interim president trusted her and her capabilities. Based on this trust, Carmen began forming relationships with local organizations and the external community. She joined the local Rotary to maintain a presence there and began serving on other community organization boards. Because Carmen was still new to the institution and the community, she said seeking out relationships with the local organizations was a great way for her to establish friendships.

Sarah's experience with the interim president was different in that the provost was asked to step into that role and the outgoing president was also still there and very much involved. Sarah said that time was not "sunshine and rainbows" as she had to do a lot of negotiating between the outgoing president and the provost who was in the interim president role. Her close relationship with the outgoing president complicated her relationship with the provost serving as interim president. Sarah shifted her role with the

interim president/provost from confidant and counselor to a day-to-day focus on other areas of her job.

Presidential Search

Of the eight board professionals included in the study, Greg and Nicole were the only ones who did not go through a presidential search because the provost was appointed as president at their institutions. Others, like Carmen and Jessica, described the confidential nature of their closed search process. Jessica had gone through an open presidential search before and was used to meeting the presidential candidates before a president was selected and came into office. She was not happy with the confidential nature of this last closed presidential search because she and others on campus wanted the opportunity to get to know the candidates.

Because of the confidential nature of her role, many of Jessica's colleagues approached her for information on the presidential search. She had to shift relationships with colleagues throughout the transition. She said she had to "watch her mouth" so that she did not misrepresent anything. Jessica said she became a hermit and took to eating lunch alone. She described the search process as a lonely time for her.

For Carmen the closed search process was different because she was part of the search committee and had a chance to meet the candidates. The difficult part of the process was not being able to share information with colleagues who knew she had access to the candidates. She described that part of the process and the tension it brought on as "uncomfortable" and "super stressful." Carmen said she viewed her role as "reporting to the board chair" and shifted her focus on her relationship with the board during this process to ensure she was doing her job properly.

New President Steps into Office

The experiences with the new presidents once they stepped into office varied across all board professionals. In Greg's experience, the provost was appointed as president. Greg had a relationship with the provost but had to shift to a different working relationship. Greg described the uncertainty of not knowing how to work with him, what his role would be, or whether the new president would "keep" him. He focused his attention on being a resource for the new president, providing him institutional knowledge based on his many years with the institution. Greg also asked the president to let him know when he didn't like something or if he wanted him to do something differently.

Sarah's role shifted during the former president's departure and so she had to shift back to more of a support role for the new president. Like Greg, Sarah was uncertain about whether she would be asked to stay in her job. She had a conversation with the new president early on which led to the president asking Sarah to stay in her role. Focusing her role to be more of a support person for the new president meant shifting other relationships such as the one she had built with the board chair throughout the transition. Sarah said she went from speaking with the board chair four or five times a week to going a couple of weeks without speaking to her. She did this so that the new president could build her own relationship with the board chair.

Similar to how Greg and Sarah had early conversations with their presidents about the future of their roles, Sam and his new president clicked early on and the new president not only confirmed that he wanted him there but also elevated his role. It was important for Sam to build his relationship with the new president and ensure the success

of the transition. In addition to being more involved with the new president's work and even being promoted as part of the transition, for Sam, part of building his relationship with the new president was making sure that new president was informed. He said he "owed it to him to be open, honest, and forthright" with what he knew. This meant shedding light on information that did not reflect well on the prior administration while being careful "so not to malign or to disparage the former president who served so faithfully."

Carmen described how she did not feel the former president trusted her. This relationship shaped how she approached her relationship with the new president. Prior to the new president's arrival, Carmen spent her time building relationships and ensuring she was ready to be of service to the new president. Compared to her relationship with the former president, her relationship with the current president has only grown. She attributed this to her focus on building relationships so that she could be well-placed when he started.

In Charlotte's case, the new president is more easygoing and more of a friend than the former president had been. She said they "talk a lot" and Charlotte was learning the system of shared services that were put in place upon the new president's arrival. For Charlotte, switching to a system of shared services during the transition meant learning new technology. Charlotte struggled with the technology and found it difficult to work with. Throughout the transition, Charlotte leaned on her colleagues reaching out to them for help. She was teased for her frequent reaching out to IT. Charlotte described her colleagues as "good people" who care about the college and are the main reason why she was still there.

Marie expressed some difficulties with the former president not recognizing her in her board clerk role. With the new president, Marie shaped the relationship so that her role was defined more. She made sure he understood her role and how she could provide guidance to him and the board. As a result, Marie's relationship with the new president was more involved and she was included in strategic discussions and correspondence. Marie's relationship with her colleagues also shifted throughout the transition. Noticing that there was a certain level of anxiety among her colleagues due to the transition, Marie said it was important for her to be sensitive and help them adapt. She considered herself a mentor and provided assurance as well as resources to them.

Jessica and Nicole both had the experience of first-time presidents stepping into the role of a new president. For Jessica, this meant that she would hold off on retirement to get the president acquainted with the institution. Nicole said she had a lot of experience working with experienced presidents. She worked with the former president in two different capacities and described the president as being so experienced that she could do the job in her sleep. Nicole also had a relationship with the provost who became the new president. They started at the college at the same time. She reframed her relationship to one of support for him as a new president. Nicole referenced all her prior experience working with presidents to serve as a resource for him.

Summary

From the announcement of the president's departure through the arrival of the new president, the board professionals described experiences shaping new relationships and reframing existing relationships. Sarah shifted her relationship by growing closer to the outgoing president and becoming his translator. Nicole shifted her focus away from

the emotional relationship to what needed to get done. Sam shifted his relationship with the former president to a more personal one. Jessica shifted her relationship with colleagues and the campus community by taking on presidential duties while the outgoing president was absent.

Charlotte, Carmen, and Sarah described their experience with an interim president during the transition. Charlotte and Carmen welcomed the interim presidents, who they described as understanding their role and trusting their capabilities. Sarah described a less-welcoming experience where she had to manage relationships between the outgoing president and the interim president. These relationships affected how Carmen and Sarah shaped relationships in different ways. Having the interim president's trust, Carmen formed new relationships with local organizations and the external community, while not having the interim president's trust, Sarah reframed her role with the interim president to less confidant and counselor and more focused on the day-to-day job.

Confidential search processes led to Jessica and Carmen reframing their relationships. Because they were privy to confidential information, Jessica and Carmen described having to manage uncomfortable conversations with colleagues. Jessica shifted her relationships with colleagues, retreating so that they would not request confidential information. Unable to share confidential information with her colleagues, Carmen focused on her relationship with the board and making sure she was meeting its needs.

Most of the board professionals shaped their relationships with the new presidents mainly as support to the president. Greg built his relationship as a resource of institutional knowledge. Sarah built her relationship to be more of a support role; this was a shift from the much more involved relationship she had developed during the departure

of the former president. For Sam, building his relationship with the new president involved making sure that the new president was informed. Carmen utilized her newly formed relationships throughout the transition to be of service to the new president. With new presidents who were also new to the president's role, Jessica used her institutional knowledge and Nicole referenced her years of experience working with experienced president to support the new presidents.

With the new presidents' arrivals, Marie and Charlotte shaped their relationships with colleagues. Charlotte reached out to her colleagues more as she needed assistance with new technology. Marie shifted her relationship to be more of a mentor when she noticed that many of her colleagues were experiencing anxiety due to the transition.

Theme Two: The Role of the Board Professional is Unique and Important

A common theme across all of the board professionals' narratives was how they perceive the unique nature of their roles. They described their roles as a bridge, a mimic, a constant, a firefighter, an enforcer, a train conductor, "wearing many hats," and "I do it all." Marie said she navigated the waters. Sam saw his role as a thread between the outgoing president and the incoming president. Nicole said putting out fires was part of her role. Greg described his job first as an enforcer for the president and then as a train conductor "trying to keep the train on the tracks as it was flying down the tracks." Jessica said she was the "glue" and the "constant." The way the board professionals saw themselves at work and why their work mattered was important to how they described and made meaning of their job crafting throughout the presidential transitions.

Taking Control During the Transition

For many of the board professionals, the presidential transitions meant taking on more as part of their roles. The transitions were described as complex, difficult, challenging, frustrating, unfortunate, uncomfortable, and "one big stomach ache." For Sarah, the transition was complex and difficult for many reasons but one major reason was that she took on presidential duties, or began "operating more levers," when the outgoing president's sickness worsened. Jessica described having to "keep things going as if there was nothing going on" and that meant taking on presidential duties such as attending events throughout campus, making sure that everything that had to go through the president was signed and returned, and covering up for an absentee outgoing president by interacting with everyone who came into the office. Sam said there was so much to do that every day he would ask himself what the most important thing was that needed to be done that day. Sam focused on honoring the outgoing president because "it was easy to not prioritize making sure things ended well with the outgoing president" with everything that was happening at the institution.

While taking on more was part of the transition for many of the board professionals, one of the unique features of the role is having the latitude to take control and just get things done. When the former president was absent from his job, Jessica said, "I did what I had to do" and that meant running the president's office to the best of her ability. Marie said part of her job was to "do whatever it's going to take to make that happen." Greg described how he was always given "a wide latitude to do what I think needs to be done." Sam and Nicole also described the presidential transition period as them doing whatever needed to get done.

The board professionals described how they took control of their jobs throughout the transition. Charlotte was not comfortable with technology. When having to learn new systems as part of the presidential transition, she took control by calling on colleagues for help. Marie took control when the new president stepped in and she made it a priority to explain her role so that he understood how she could be of value. For Greg, taking control of his work meant using his institutional knowledge to support the incoming president who was in his first presidency. Carmen was new to her role when the president announced his departure. She took control of her work by getting to know and making connections with internal and external organizations.

Unique Relationship with the President

The role of the board professional is unique in that it is intimately close to the president. Sam, Sarah, Nicole, Greg, and Charlotte described how involved they were with the president. Sam said he was "100% involved." Sarah described it as an "intimately professional relationship." Charlotte described how she would make sure the president was where he needed to be when he needed to be there. Greg would "pepper" important details throughout the president's speeches and meetings.

The board professionals who experienced not being intimately involved with the work of the president described it as a source of concern. Marie and Carmen shared a common experience of feeling excluded by their former presidents. Both Marie and Carmen were fairly new to their roles the year the presidential transition began, although Carmen was just hired as chief of staff while Marie had just been promoted to board clerk after years of being at the institution. Carmen and Marie described how the former presidents did not include them in important conversations that they should have been

participating in as part of their roles. When Marie began working with the new president and Carmen began working with both the interim president and her new president, they emphasized how great it was to have the presidents trust their capabilities and support their being included as part of the larger processes.

Marie compared the former president to the new president, describing how the former president's not including her in meetings and conversations impeded her from doing her job. After not being recognized in her role by the former president, Marie made it clear to the new president that her role as a board clerk was more than support staff. She provided the new president background so that he could see how she could be of benefit by the "unique" position she holds. When Carmen began working with the former president, she said he did not trust her yet. She said that he had finally started including her when he announced he was leaving. For Carmen, it was important to her that the interim president and the new president did trust her and her capabilities.

Jessica also had a less-than-desirable relationship with her outgoing president. However, Jessica did feel very valued by him. She said that he treated her like a vice president and always asked for her opinion. As a result, others came to her for advice and this emphasized the importance of her role and made her feel valued as part of the team. Several times in her narrative, Jessica described her role as "more than just an executive assistant." She said she "was not a vice president" but was treated like one. Jessica also described how she was "not a chief of staff" but the chief of staff came to her for answers. She understood the importance of her role, describing it as a "glue" or a "constant."

Summary

The board professionals described how important and unique their role was throughout the transition. Many of the board professionals took on additional work as part of the transition. While describing this as challenging, they saw this as part of their role. They described their roles as doers, doing what needs to get done. For Jessica and Sarah, that meant operating more levers and taking on presidential duties. For Sam, that meant making sure the outgoing president was honored in the best way possible. Charlotte reached out to colleagues for help throughout the transition. Carmen made connections with the external community. Greg used his institutional knowledge to support the incoming president.

Their unique relationship with the president and feeling valued and appreciated in that role is also important. The board professionals described the intimate professional relationship with the president as part of their role. They describe the importance of being valued and needed. The board professionals worked to build that intimate relationship, especially when that relationship had not been there as was the case for Carmen and Marie with their former presidents.

Theme Three: Loyalty to the President Stems from Loyalty to the Institution

Common across the eight narratives was the board professional's commitment to the success of the president, which stems from their loyalty to the institution. Loyalty to the president and to the institution and wanting both to succeed was seen across all eight narratives. An extension of this loyalty is their dedication to the mission of the institution, which for most, is improving students' lives.

The board professionals said their job was to help their presidents succeed. Carmen shared that her experience throughout the transition—the external and internal connections she made—helped prepare her to be the chief of staff the new president needed. She leveraged her position to be of value to the president.

Sarah and Sam's loyalty extended to the outgoing and incoming president. As the new president was arriving, Sarah explained that she felt she "owed it to the former president" to make sure the institution was in good hands. She perceived her job as trying to do what was best for the institution.

Describing herself as "loyal," Sarah said she was dedicated to the president's initiatives and projects. She clarified that the loyalty was not to the person but to the role of the president who is committed to the institution and its mission. Sarah viewed her work with the president as a direct correlation to the institution's mission of changing students' lives. Through the transition, Sarah was uncertain whether she would be asked to step down from her role. She said she adopted a mindset of "we're all interim." Reframing her role allowed her to focus on being a "good steward" with the time she had and "try to do what's best for the people of the institution."

Similarly, Sam described focusing on doing what was right for the institution. For Sam, that was honoring the outgoing president and doing all he could to make sure the incoming presidential transition was a success. Sam perceived his job as helping the presidents be as effective as possible. He explained that he had the responsibility to ensure that they got through the transition as best as they could.

Sam had a year left on his contract throughout the transition and, although his job was not guaranteed past that year, he said it didn't mean that his role was less important.

For Sam, there was such a high volume of things that needed to get done that his role was not about his promotion or publicity or even staying on past the year; it was all about doing all he could to make sure the transition went well. Sam's perspective was to do the best he could with where he was. He felt "inherent responsibility" to deliver on what he could "to make sure that the institution got through as well as it could."

Jessica described herself as loyal. Although she was loyal to the president, that dedication was mainly to the success of the institution. When the outgoing president stopped being a presence at the institution, Jessica felt the responsibility to finish the job right. She felt "betrayed" by the former president, but she said she did not mind because she loved the office. She said she felt it was her job to take care of it. Because of this framing, Jessica attended every event she could so that the campus community could see the face of the president's office was there and they would feel supported. She ran the president's office. Jessica put her plans to retire on hold so that she could help transition the incoming president in his first year. She believed that the success of the new president would ultimately be the success of the institution and felt the responsibility to stay and see that through.

Greg and Nicole both described their primary goal as helping the president to succeed. Nicole described her job as supporting "the person who's in the top job." She said she didn't do this to satisfy the president's ego. Rather, she was dedicated to the president on behalf of the institution because "no position matters more in terms of the reputation of the institution." Her primary goal was to support the work of the president and, therefore, the institution.

Greg described himself as an "institutionalist." He was committed and invested in the college and believed that if the president was doing a good job, then the institution was too. Greg viewed his job as "the enforcer." He described himself as the guy that does the "nitty gritty day-to-day, in the trenches kind of stuff to make the place look good." Greg said his job was helping the new president look good and making sure that the president's time was spent on the big picture. Greg's focus, however, was also on the bigger picture. He viewed his role as keeping the institution moving forward.

Student Success as the Ultimate Goal

Throughout the narratives the success of the institution was tied to its mission and that was ultimately the driving force for the board professionals. For them, the institution was making a difference in students' lives. They worked on behalf of the students. Their work translated into creating institutions in which the students could thrive.

Marie described her work as trying to gain the best results for the students. For Carmen, it was important to work at an institution that was dedicated to and thoughtful about the student experience. For Greg, it was about "giving back" to the institution that is part of his family and that "transformed" him. He was focused on moving the institution forward for the next generation of students.

Sarah said her loyalty to the president was not blind loyalty to a person but loyalty to the institution's mission. In Sarah's case, the mission was to improve the lives of the students. She said that advocating for students was what fed her soul. Like Sarah, Sam described himself as a mission-oriented person. His focus was also on helping the president achieve the institution's mission to developing its people. Jessica was drawn to

the institution, its students, and its community from the first time she visited the campus. She said it became a part of who she was. Nicole said education runs in her family DNA and described her work as "profoundly gratifying."

Charlotte said she aspired to be a teacher. She decided against it but saw her current role as still working with students, just in a different capacity. Charlotte said she was motivated by helping students succeed. She explained that by working in the president's office, she was able to help those students directly. Whether it was connecting students with colleagues to help get them out of trouble or making sure they had time on the new president's calendar, Charlotte framed her role as a direct connection with students, which she described as "rewarding."

Summary

Throughout the transition, the board professionals reframed their roles, connecting them to the larger purpose of helping the institution, its mission, its people, and its students succeed. When supporting the transition to a new president, the board professionals described their role as making sure the institution was in "good hands." When managing job uncertainty, Sam, Greg, and Sarah all described how they would be fine with leaving their roles as long as it was best for the institution. Jessica put her plans to retire on hold because she felt a responsibility to support the new president. She reframed her role as ensuring the success of the institution.

Marie and Charlotte connected their roles directly to the students. Marie described her role as making sure that the president and the board were working in tandem to gain the best results for the students. Charlotte had once aspired to be a teacher and connected

her role of making sure the students were properly greeted, helped, and had time allocated to them on the new president's calendar to helping students succeed.

Chapter 6: Findings, Conclusions, and Implications and Recommendations for Future Research and Practice

The research question guiding this study was: how do board professionals at colleges and universities describe and make meaning of their job crafting experiences during a presidential transition? A sub-question was added to understand where cognitive job crafting, or employees changing their perceptions of their jobs, fit within the job crafting process. The sub-question was: how do board professionals perceive their jobs throughout the entire transition experience, from the departure of the sitting president through the first one to two years of the new president's term?

Eight board professionals who went through a presidential transition within one to two years of the start of the study were interviewed. The board professionals shared their experiences throughout their presidential transitions and their stories were captured in individual case narratives. Each of the case narratives was analyzed for thematic and structural themes and then an analysis was conducted across all eight narratives.

The previous chapter summarized the themes that emerged from the analysis across the eight narratives. The themes included: how board professionals shaped new relationships and reframed existing ones throughout the transition; how significant and unique the board professionals saw their roles; and how the board professionals' loyalty to the president was an extension of their loyalty to the institution and its mission. This chapter focuses on six findings that emerged from the themes and how they fit within the job crafting, board professional, and presidential transition literature. Conclusions on how board professionals describe and make meaning of their job crafting experience as well as how cognitive job crafting fits within the job crafting process follow the summary of the

findings. Finally, implications for the job crafting model and recommendations for future research and practice are presented.

Summary of Findings

Job crafting is important to how employees understand their experience at work and how they matter in the work they do (Lysova, Allan, Dik, Duffy, & Steger, 2019; Michaelson, Pratt, Grant, & Dunn, 2014; Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001; Wrzesniewski et al., 2003). With the board professionals who participated in this study, by crafting their jobs throughout the presidential transitions they were experiencing their work differently. Whether it was a shift in how they interacted with colleagues or whether they were taking on additional tasks, the board professionals were changing how they framed their work. They were altering how they understood the meaning or purpose of their work and how they defined themselves at work (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001).

Employees craft their jobs to fit their needs, goals, and values (Petrou et al., 2018; Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). Every employee is unique and comes to a different understanding of how they work and how they feel about work (Wrzesniewski et al., 2003). The same work can be experienced differently depending on the employee (Pratt & Ashforth, 2003; Wrzesniewski, 2003; Wrzesniewski et al., 2003). This is the case for the eight board professionals who participated in this study. They all went through a presidential transition. However, the circumstances leading up to the transition were different, the steps in the transition process were not the same, and the experience with the new presidents varied. Additionally, the board professionals' backgrounds varied by life experiences, education, prior work experience, rank, length of time on the job, and what was important to them, among other differences.

The themes that emerged when analyzing the eight board professionals' case narratives showed commonalities in how they described and made meaning of their job crafting experiences. The findings across the themes emphasized what was learned about job crafting and cognitive job crafting as they pertain to board professionals undergoing a complex work situation such as a presidential transition. The findings include:

1. Relationships with former presidents shaped how board professionals crafted relationships with new presidents.
2. Relationships with colleagues were crafted for support throughout the transition.
3. Board professionals job crafted to serve as resources for first-time presidents.
4. Board professionals perceived themselves as "doers"; they crafted their jobs by taking on more tasks throughout the transition.
5. The close relationship with the president was important to the board professional role; board professionals job crafted to build up that part of their role.
6. Board professionals' calling orientation and intrinsic motivation toward work was linked to their cognitive job crafting.

These findings are organized across the three themes that emerged from the case narrative analysis outlined in the previous chapter.

Theme One: Reforming Relationships Through Stages of the Transition

Social context is important to how employees build the experience of work (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). Relational job crafting involves changing how, when, or with whom employees interact (Berg et al., 2010; Berg et al., 2013; Wrzesniewski &

Dutton, 2001). By altering relationships, employees can craft their interactions with others at work in ways that foster meaningfulness (Berg et al., 2013). Relational job crafting includes changing the nature of relationships to focus on a more meaningful purpose, providing others with valuable help and support in carrying out their jobs, or adapting relationships to mentor or support new or less experienced colleagues (Berg et al., 2010).

A presidential transition is a unique context in which to study job crafting. Relationships are shifting throughout the transition as one president departs and another president steps in. During a presidential transition it is the board professional's job to support and build a relationship with the new president. Job descriptions do not change as a result of job crafting; it is the meaning of the work and how employees define themselves at work that changes when job crafting occurs (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). Throughout the transitions, board professionals formed and shifted relationships with the outgoing presidents, their colleagues, the external community, interim presidents, board members, and new presidents. While managing these relationships is part of a presidential transition and the board professional's job, the following findings show how in managing the relationships, board professionals relationally job crafted, altering their meaning of work and how they saw themselves at work in the process.

Finding One: Relationships with Former Presidents Shaped How Board Professionals Crafted Relationships with New Presidents

Challenging times at work, such as those caused by a presidential transition, can spur a loss of control (Wang, Demerouti, et al., 2018). The need for control is a basic human drive and employees are motivated to job craft to take control of aspects of their

work (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). For board professionals, loss of control during the transition could stem from the additional responsibilities that are part of the transition process, changes within the senior administrative team as result of a new president taking office, or anxieties around their own jobs coming into question as a new president steps in (Gaval, 2008; Jackson, 2018; Overend, 2011; Reed, 2017). This study found that the board professionals experienced challenges with the outgoing presidents and their relationships with those presidents shaped how they crafted their relationships with the new presidents to regain control.

Sarah's relationship with the outgoing president was one where he became much more dependent on her and her identity shifted to one where she felt she could be a president. In building the relationship with the new president, Sarah supported the president in more independent ways. With the outgoing president's absence, Jessica's identity changed to someone who could run the president's office and her meaning of work shifted to where she felt responsible for the college. When the new president stepped in, Jessica's relationship with him was one where she felt responsible to see him through his first year. After not having a close relationship with the former president, Charlotte shaped her relationship with the new president to one where they talked a lot and shared their family backgrounds. The familial relationship and work environment were meaningful to Charlotte. With a lack of trust from the outgoing president, Marie shaped her relationship with the new president into one where she was much more involved. Her identity at work elevated to become a contributing member of the president's team. After not being recognized by the former president, Carmen's identity changed to be the face of the college, shifting to someone who could be a bridge between

the college and the community. She crafted her relationship with the new president so that she could be that for him.

The board professionals' identities at work and meaning of work shifted through this relational job crafting. This supports Wrzeniewski and Dutton's (2001) model where the meanings and identities from job crafting are not static. Once they craft their jobs, employees meaning of work and identity changes and they then use this new meaning and identity as feedback for engaging in additional job crafting, further shaping their work meaning and identity (Berg et al., 2013; Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001; Zhang & Parker, 2019). The board professionals' relational crafting with the former president led to further relational crafting with the new president, showing the ongoing production of meanings and identities shifting at work. The board professionals were continuously shaping their relationships with others and changing their work identities and meaning in the process.

Finding Two: Relationships with Colleagues Were Crafted for Support Throughout the Transition

A presidential transition process produces a great deal of stress on an institution (Quinn, 2007). Lohse's (2008) study focused on welcoming new presidents to the institution and touched on best practices for managing this period so that it does not have a long-term impact on the institution's welfare. One of Lohse's (2008) recommendations was clear and timely communication with constituents in order to minimize any anxiety caused by the change in leadership. According to Lohse (2008), the communication plan should provide status updates, priorities, and plans for the transition.

In the absence of a communication plan or when a communication plan did not fully minimize the anxiety of colleagues, this study found that board professionals relationally job crafted to either provide support to or seek support from colleagues. This finding supports Wrzesniewski and Dutton's 2001 model that employees are motivated to job craft by a need for human connection. Employees forge connections with others as a way to introduce meaning in to their lives Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001).

In building relationships with others at work, the board professionals reframed their meaning of work and their work identities. Marie's identity shifted to one of mentor for her colleagues, which she valued because she had someone who mentored her into her role. Her meaning of work shifted in that she felt a responsibility to her colleagues who she thought of as family. Jessica's relationship with her colleagues and the campus community shifted when she became more involved in campus activities and provided the support and validation her colleagues needed from the president's office. She saw herself as someone who could provide that support and appreciation to her colleagues. In Charlotte's case, her colleagues were a source of support for her. Charlotte leaned on her colleagues throughout the transition, reaching out to them for help when she was stuck on how to work with a new technology system. This further fostered the familial relationship and work environment that was meaningful to Charlotte.

Finding Three: Board Professionals Job Crafted to Serve as Resources for First-Time Presidents

According to Keen (2019), many of the presidents who will take office in upcoming years will be individuals who have never served in the role. Keen (2019) studied effective leadership and management strategies from the perspectives of

experienced college and university presidents. Keen (2019) explained that learning from experienced leaders will help prevent first-time presidents from failing and many of the experienced leaders from Keen's (2019) study found that having a good administrative team is crucial to success and an ineffective team could cause failure (p. 80). The experienced presidents shared how senior leadership team members either helped them or mispositioned them early in their presidency (Keen, 2019). In line with the findings from Keen's (2019) study, board professionals who participated in this study job crafted to support and serve as resources for first-time presidents. This finding further supported relational job crafting as a way to focus on a more meaningful purpose by providing others with valuable help and support in carrying out their jobs (Berg et al., 2010).

Jessica, Greg, and Nicole had the experience of working with first-time presidents stepping into the new president role. For Jessica, this meant that she would hold off on retirement to get the president acquainted with the institution. Jessica and Greg became resources for the new presidents, providing them historical knowledge from their many years at their institutions. Nicole reframed her relationship with the new president to one of support, using all her prior experience working with presidents to serve as a resource for him. Jessica, Greg, and Nicole described that they served as resources to the first-time presidents because they felt a responsibility to do so. Their identity and meaning of work changed. They saw themselves as valuable contributors to the presidents' team and to the presidential transition. There was also a shift in their meaning of work that was focused on the success of the president, which was the success of their institutions.

Theme Two: The Role of the Board Professional is Unique and Important

In their study on why employees craft their jobs, Niessen et al. (2016) found that the need to maintain a positive self-image at work was a main reason why employees engaged in job crafting. Employees job craft to maintain positive self-images and this helps them experience the work differently (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). According to Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001), individuals make claims about what their work is, defining themselves at work and creating an identity around who they are and why their work matters. This positive sense of self is expressed by the employees and confirmed by others at work (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). Maintaining this positive sense of self is an important motivator for job crafters to change their tasks or relationships at work or to reframe their work in a more positive light (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001).

Throughout their narratives, the board professionals described how they saw themselves at work and why their role was important throughout the presidential transitions. The board professionals were motivated to job craft by a need to maintain this image and this was in great part tied to their being intimately involved with the work of the president. Maintaining this close relationship with the president was also a motivator for the board professionals' job crafting.

Finding Four: Board Professionals Perceived Themselves as "Doers"; They Crafted Their Jobs by Taking on More Tasks Throughout the Transition

According to Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001), job crafting may create more work for the employee. This was certainly true for the board professionals who task job crafted by taking on more responsibility throughout the presidential transition. A successful transition process is key to establishing a strong presidency and board

professionals play an essential role in the process (Reed, 2017). The board professional's multifaceted role is that of a strategist, expert, planner, coordinator, record keeper, logistics manager, and so forth (Reed, 2017, p. 59). The board professionals participating in the study described the additional responsibilities they took on as challenging but also a positive part of how they saw themselves at work. They valued being needed and appreciated. They saw themselves as key to getting things done.

This finding supports the bottom-up approach of the job crafting model where employees take charge of shaping their jobs (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). Employees' autonomy, their ability to determine what they do in their jobs and how they do it, determines whether they will go through with job crafting behaviors (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). Because their jobs were directly tied to the presidents who were in transition, the board professionals felt they had the latitude to job craft. The autonomy of the board professionals' roles was evident in their facility to "get things done," as they described it.

Finding Five: The Close Relationship with the President was Important to the Board Professional Role; Board Professionals Job Crafted to Build Up That Part of Their Role

In her study of senior administrators' perception of a presidential transition, Overend (2011) highlighted the important relationship between the presidents and these top leaders and the dynamics that go into building the senior team. Senior administrators valued exclusive communication with new presidents because it allowed them to get to know the presidents, their habits, likes, and the best way to communicate with them. To develop these relationships, the senior administrators would limit their interactions with

other senior administrators, trusting only one individual during this process, which was most likely their spouse or significant other (Overend, 2011). Study participants expressed that they felt abandoned when they lacked that exclusive communication with the new presidents and this affected their roles (Overend, 2011). The need to develop a close relationship with the new presidents often led to anxiety for the senior administrators (Overend, 2011).

According to Reed (2017), board professionals have a special relationship with the president and the board, one of a "trusted counselor and confidant; a prognosticator who is capable of 'seeing around corners,' anticipating needs before they are felt and issues before they arise; and, ideally, a strategic partner and advisor to leadership" (Reed, 2017, p. 2). To build trust, board professionals must develop personal relationships as well as be able to read people and understand where they are coming from (Reed, 2017). Board professionals are expected to resolve dilemmas and maintain a high level of trust (Reed, 2017; Rubenstein & Riddell, 2014). They must be neutral and know how to keep secrets (Reed, 2017).

The board professionals who participated in this study described their main job as supporting the president, being a resource and confidant, and communicating on behalf of the person in "the top job." A close, trusting relationship with the president was important to the role. When Sarah, Sam, and Greg were uncertain whether the new president would ask them to stay in their role, they had conversations early on to try to build that relationship. For Sam, his role was elevated and he became even more involved in the president's work. For board professionals such as Marie, Carmen, and Charlotte, who did not have this close connection with their outgoing presidents, this was a cause for

concern and they crafted their relationships with their new presidents to build this close bond.

Theme Three: Loyalty to the President Stems from Loyalty to the Institution

Whether they view their work as a job, career, or calling and whether they are doing the job for intrinsic or extrinsic reasons affects how employees approach their work (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). It also determines how employees job craft. Employees who view their work as a job or career tend to have extrinsic work motivations and view work as a separate from the rest of their lives (Berg et al., 2010; Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). An employee with a job orientation is more likely to focus on tasks done for extrinsic motivations such as pay (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). Employees with career orientations are also more likely to focus on extrinsic reasons so they might job craft to interact more with those who can advance their careers (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). Employees with intrinsic motivation, on the other hand, engage in work because it is interesting and satisfying (Amabile, Hill, Hennessey, & Tighe, 1994). Those who view their work as a calling tend to have an intrinsic work motivation and engage in job crafting related to their passion (Berg et al., 2010; Moon et al., 2018; Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001).

Those who view their job as a calling tend to engage in cognitive job crafting (Berg et al., 2013). With cognitive crafting, employees change the way they perceive their work and why it matters, deriving more meaning and purpose from their jobs (Slemp & Vella-Brodrick, 2013; Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001; Zhang & Parker, 2019). Cognitive crafting allows employees to appreciate the effect of their work and recognize its value (Slemp & Vella-Brodrick, 2013; Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). Employees

engage in cognitive job crafting when they think about their job as a whole rather than separate tasks or relationships, narrow the purpose of their job to a specific task or relationship, or draw on mental connections between specific tasks or relationships and interests or outcomes (Berg et al., 2013). Cognitive job crafting was seen across all eight of the board professionals' narratives; this could be due to their calling orientation and intrinsic motivation toward work.

Finding Six: Board Professionals' Calling Orientation and Intrinsic Motivation Toward Work was Linked to Their Cognitive Job Crafting

The board professionals who participated in this study all displayed a calling orientation and intrinsic motivation toward work. For the board professionals, their relationship with their work changed during the course of the transition as they reframed the purpose of the job and experienced their work differently. Via cognitive job crafting, they cultivated that positive sense of meaning in their work throughout the presidential transition.

Marie described her work as trying to gain the best results for the students. Nicole said education runs in her family DNA. She was dedicated to the president on behalf of the institution because "no position matters more in terms of the reputation of the institution." Whether they perceived their work as tied to the success of the students like Marie or to the success of the institution like Nicole, the board professionals cognitively crafted their jobs connecting them to a broader purpose.

The need to meaningfully interact with people who benefit from the work or a desire to fulfill a passion are other motivators for job crafting (Berg et al., 2010; Berg et. al., 2008, 2010). Sarah viewed her work with the president as a direct correlation to the

institution's mission of changing students' lives. When uncertain whether she would be asked to step down from her role, Sarah connected her role to her commitment to the president's office and to the institution and its students. This cognitive reframing allowed her to focus on being a "good steward" with the time she had and to "try to do what's best for the people of the institution." Like Sarah, Greg was unsure if the new president would "keep" him in his role. Greg viewed his job as doing what was best for the institution, even if that meant that he would have to leave his role. Sam also questioned whether he would be in his position after the new president's arrival. Sam reframed his role to ensuring that the presidential transition went well in whatever capacity he was in, which at the end of the day was for the success of the institution and its students.

A presidential transition is a time of anxiety for board professionals for many reasons but a main one is that their tenures are sometimes under question (Reed, 2017). This was the case for Sarah, Greg, and Sam who were unsure if their relationships with the new president would flourish and continue past the transition period or whether a change would be needed. According to Wang, Demerouti, et al. (2018), during "tough times" at work employees tend to question the meaning of their work and whether they want to stay in their current jobs or with the organization. Job crafting is an alternative to leaving the organization, helping the employee achieve more positive meaning from their work and work identity (Wang, Demerouti, et al., 2018). While Sarah, Sam, and Greg did not question whether they wanted to stay but rather whether they would be asked to stay, cognitive job crafting helped in reframing their role so that it was more about the success of the institution, which brought meaning to their work and transcended whether they were in the position or not.

Charlotte had an unanswered calling to be a teacher. Unanswered callings are jobs other than their own that employees feel drawn to pursue because they consider them to be meaningful and an important part of who they are (Berg et al., 2010). According to Berg et al. (2010), employees craft their jobs to pursue unanswered callings. This was certainly the case for Charlotte. She described how in her current role she still gets to work with students, just in a different capacity. Whether it was connecting students with colleagues to help get them out of trouble or making sure they had time on the new president's calendar, Charlotte viewed her role as a direct connection to working with students.

Conclusions

The six findings from the study led to three general conclusions. The first conclusion is that who the board professionals are, their characteristics and personalities, influenced their experiences with job crafting throughout the presidential transition. The second conclusion relates to cognitive job crafting and where it fits within the job crafting process as it seems to be a key component of the board professionals' job crafting. The third conclusion is that the narrative design of the study was key to understanding how board professionals made meaning of their job crafting experiences.

Conclusion One: The Board Professionals' Characteristics and Personalities Influenced Their Job Crafting Experiences

Tims and Bakker (2010) identified several characteristics of employees who are more inclined to job craft. The characteristics included self-direction, initiative, and ability to deal with stressors and challenges of high-pressured situations (Tims & Bakker, 2010). The employees who were more likely to job craft had proactive personalities that

allowed them to take initiative to improve current circumstances (Tims & Bakker, 2010). They were self-efficacious employees that believed they had the ability to change or influence their work environment (Tims & Bakker, 2010). The employees' regulatory focus determined how they were likely to job craft, whether they were promotion-focused and concerned with advancement and growth, or prevention-focused and were more concerned with safety and responsibility (Brenninkmeijer & Hekkert-Koning, 2015; Petrou & Demerouti, 2015; Tims & Bakker, 2010).

Few studies have focused on linking personality characteristics to job crafting (Bipp & Demerouti, 2015). Seeking to clarify how personality dimensions related to employees designing their jobs, Bipp and Demerouti (2015) looked at the approach and avoidance temperaments of employees when job crafting and found that those scoring high on the approach temperament sought out resources and challenges while those scoring high on avoidance temperament tried to reduce demands. Similarly, Zhang and Parker (2019) extended the approach and avoidance focus in a hierarchical job crafting structure where approach and avoidance crafting are at the higher order. According to Zhang and Parker (2019), those who crafted with approach motivation sought to achieve positive aspects of the job such as development opportunities or reminding themselves of the broader meaning of work, while those who crafted with avoidance motivation escaped or moved away from negative aspects of the job such as avoiding a project or downplaying a demanding aspect of the job.

For the board professionals who took part in this study, who they were, their personalities and characteristics, influenced their job crafting. Board professionals are described as driven self-starters (Reed, 2017). They lack big egos, get along with

everyone, and are comfortable with a low profile (Reed, 2017). The board professionals' work, according to AGB (2015), is often unheralded. Board professionals prefer to stay away from the spotlight and their work is mostly conducted behind the scenes (AGB, 2015). They are able to manage multiple relationships (Reed, 2017). Cieslack and Mersereau (2008) described board professionals as problem solvers known for "keeping cool under pressure" (p. 16) and they can remain calm in the middle of a crisis (Reed, 2017).

These characteristics are key to not only why and how the board professionals job crafted, but also why and how they are able to maintain and develop such close relationships with their presidents. Trust is a key part of a successful relationship between the board professional and the president. A major part of the board professional's role is managing relationships between the board and the president to ensure that they are well-aligned on mission, goals, and priorities, as well as that their values are in the best interest of the institution (Reed, 2017; Rubenstein & Riddell, 2014).

In line with the promotion regulatory focus and approach job crafting, the board professionals relationally job crafted toward positive aspects in support of their colleagues and the community, and they task job crafted by taking on additional responsibilities throughout the transition process. All of the board professionals who took part in the study displayed a calling orientation and intrinsic motivation toward work. This could be due to the dispositions of the individuals who typically take on the board professional role.

Conclusion Two: Cognitive Job Crafting Was a Key Component of the Board Professional's Job Crafting

Within the job crafting literature there is a debate as to whether cognitive job crafting is a type of job crafting (Zhang & Parker, 2019). Introduced in the Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) job crafting model as a change in how employees perceive their jobs, Tims and Bakker (2010) rejected cognitive job crafting as part of their JD-R model focusing on the tangible, behavioral aspects of job crafting. Since then, cognitive crafting has been viewed as most closely related to the outcomes of aligning meaning in work and work identity to one's values, beliefs, and goals (Niessen et al., 2016; Slemp, 2013; Zhang & Parker, 2019). Niessen et al. (2016) described cognitive job crafting as an important proactive strategy for achieving fit with one's work. They explained that individuals are more in control of cognitive job crafting as it is less effortful, less risky, and less time-consuming than the behavioral aspects of job crafting that require altering tasks and relationships at work. According to Slemp (2013), cognitive crafting allows employees to appreciate the broader efforts of their work and recognize the value their jobs may hold in their lives. Because it requires less preparation and negotiation, there is speculation that cognitive job crafting might be the first step of the job crafting process (Niessen et al., 2016; Slemp, 2013; Zhang & Parker, 2019).

Although it is unclear whether it was a first step in the job crafting process, cognitive job crafting was a key component of the board professionals' job crafting throughout the presidential transitions. When cognitive job crafting, the board professionals connected their work to a broader purpose that was tied to the success of their presidents, institutions, and the students they served. This broader purpose was also

tied to their relational and task job crafting. When taking on more responsibilities as part of the transition process or when relationally job crafting with the new presidents, the board professionals connected taking on additional tasks and shaping new relationships to the success of the presidents and the institutions. In the case of the board professionals who participated in this study, they were connecting their work to a broader purpose, or cognitively job crafting, through all aspects of the job crafting process.

Conclusion Three: The Narrative Design of the Study Was Key to Understanding How Board Professionals Made Meaning of Their Job Crafting Experience

In their conceptualization of the job crafting model, Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) made a case for narratives of work as the best approach to study the job crafting process because it involves how people see their work and themselves in their work. Tims and Bakker (2010) introduced the JD-R model as a tool for measuring job crafting and since then much of the research on job crafting has been quantitative in nature (Lazazzara et al., 2019; Zhang & Parker, 2019). Recent studies have called for more qualitative approaches, particularly narrative studies of how individuals find meaning in their jobs by constructing stories about their work experiences (Lazazzara et al., 2019; Lysova et al., 2019; Scott, 2019).

Narrative research studies seek to understand how people make sense of their work and its personal meaning to them (Lazazzara et al., 2019; Lysova et al., 2019; Scott, 2019). By listening to stories, researchers are able to gain a better understanding of how people draw meaning from work and how that meaning is perceived (Scott, 2019). Narratives also offer a way for people to make meaning of their lives and, when applied

to work, they offer a way for people to make sense of how they derive meaning from their jobs (Lysova et al., 2019).

Studying how individuals make sense of their work, Scott (2019) made a case for work narratives, or autobiographical accounts about work lives. According to Scott (2019), these narrative studies facilitate meaning-making about work. This work narrative approach uses question prompts to help people identify an overall theme to their career stories (Scott, 2019). The answers to the reflective questions as part of this narrative approach provides a snapshot of a person's overall sense of identity (Scott, 2019). According to Scott (2019), creating narrative themes offers a way for people to find meaning in one's life and reflect on what is important. Scott (2019) recommended future research expand on this approach to understand how individuals shape their meaning of work through the stories they tell and the themes drawn from those stories.

Along the lines of Scott's (2019) work narrative approach, this narrative study featured interviews that were open-ended, taking on a conversational tone that allowed for meaningful collaboration and exchanging of detailed accounts from the board professionals (Riessman, 2008). Through the conversations, the board professionals reflected on their values, behaviors, and what was meaningful to them about their work (Carless & Douglass, 2017; McAlpine, 2017). The board professionals' narratives were rooted in their present at the time of the interviews, which was a year or so from when the new president stepped into office, and so their past experiences with the transition were told from the vantage point of that present (McAlpine, 2016; Spector-Mersel, 2010). Through the narrative interviews, the board professionals looked back and recounted their experiences with job crafting throughout the presidential transition. For several of the

board professionals who participated in the study, the interview process was the first time they said they were able to reflect on the transition. The reflective approach of the narrative study provided a way for them to make sense of their past (Riessman, 2008) and integrate it into meaningful learning (McAlpine, 2016).

Implications and Recommendations for the Job Crafting Model

The findings and conclusions from the study, particularly those related to meaning-making and the unique personalities of the board professionals, had implications for the Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) job crafting model (see Figure 1). The 2001 job crafting model served as a foundation for this study. An inclusion of the meaning-making process and an exploration into theories of personality were recommended for the model's framework.

Meaning-Making as Part of the Job Crafting Process

While prior research connected the meaning-making process to the job crafting process, the findings from this study highlight the importance of meaning-making throughout the job crafting process (Petrou et al., 2017). Meaning-making is defined as a process where employees engage in reflection to find a deeper meaning of their work, what role it has in their lives, and ways in which changes at work are meaningful to them (van den Heuvel et. al., 2009). The board professionals went through the meaning-making process, understanding their experience at work and how they matter in the work they do. This process can be considered as a possible phase of the job crafting model. As Wrzesniewski and Dutton (2001) outline it, the job crafting model (see Figure 1) begins with antecedents and motivation to job craft, followed job crafting, which then leads to outcomes from job crafting. Once the job crafting happens, there is a space for meaning-

making in which the individual can reflect on their experience prior to the outcomes. Future research can expand the job crafting model, adding meaning-making as part of the job crafting process.

Unique and Important Role of the Board Professional

Findings and conclusions from this study also highlight the unique personalities of board professionals and how their dispositions influenced their job crafting. Described as driven self-starters, board professionals lack big egos, get along with everyone, and are comfortable with a low profile (Reed, 2017). As they described themselves throughout their narratives, their work is mostly conducted behind the scenes. Cieslack and Mersereau (2008) described board professionals as problem solvers known for "keeping cool under pressure" (p. 16) and they can remain calm in the middle of a crisis (Reed, 2017). The board professionals who took part in the study displayed a calling orientation and intrinsic motivation toward work. This could be due to the dispositions of the individuals who typically take on the board professional role.

Job crafting models highlight proactive personalities as part of the antecedents to job crafting. There have also been studies linking self-efficacious individuals, their regulatory focuses, and approach and avoidance temperaments to job crafting (Bipp & Demerouti, 2015; Brenninkmeijer & Hekkert-Koning, 2015; Petrou & Demerouti, 2015; Tims & Bakker, 2010; Zhang and Parker, 2019). However, the unique personalities of the board professionals and how they relate to their jobs reveals that there are other aspects of individuals' personalities that can be explored as part of the job crafting process. An understanding of how theories of personality relate to job crafting can contribute to the

job crafting model, particularly as part of the literature on antecedents to job crafting (see Figure 1).

Recommendations for Future Research

The findings and conclusions of the study led to recommendations for future research. Recommendations included employing longitudinal and qualitative, narrative studies that would allow for ongoing reflection on work and a better understanding of how the job crafting process unfolds. Future research on the board professional's relationship to the board and research targeting varying contexts and demographics were also recommended.

Longitudinal Qualitative Studies

To study the job crafting process, one recommendation could be a longitudinal study that looks into how board professionals job craft as they go through each stage of the presidential transition process. Job crafting is an ongoing process. There is a feedback loop where job crafting leads to additional job crafting, further shaping employees' meaning of work and identity at work (Berg et al., 2013; Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001; Zhang & Parker, 2019).The advantage of a longitudinal study on job crafting as board professionals go through the process is a better understanding of how the process unfolds and whether one form of job crafting such as cognitive job crafting precedes another form of job crafting such as task or relational crafting. It would also offer a better understanding of the meaning-making process and how it fits within the job crafting process.

Narrative Studies

With a call for more qualitative, especially narrative, studies on job crafting (Lazazzara et al., 2019; Lysova et al., 2019; Scott, 2019; Zhang & Parker, 2019), future studies could take a narrative interview approach. Narrative interviews take on a conversational tone that allows for meaningful collaboration and exchanging of detailed accounts. As highlighted in the conclusions of this study, the open-ended approach allows for board professionals to reflect and make meaning of their job crafting throughout the process. This reflection could then be feedback for further job crafting and an interactive approach to the research.

Relationship with the Board

While the board professionals report to both the board and the president, the experiences shared throughout this study were mostly focused on their relationship with the president. This could be due to the interview protocol mainly focusing on the president or it could have been because the board professionals' experiences throughout the transition were more involved with the president. The board plays a major role in the transition process. It would be beneficial to understand that role and the dynamics of managing the relationship with the board throughout the transition. Future research could focus on the board professionals' role with the board throughout the transition. The interview protocol could be adapted to include more questions on the board and its relationship with the board professionals throughout the transition.

Targeting Varying Contexts and Demographics

The limitations and delimitations of the study were focused on targeting specific board professionals under specific contexts. These limitations and delimitations present

opportunities for future research. One of the delimitations was the exclusion of board professionals who work at international institutions and other higher education-related entities such as foundations. The board professional role is prevalent in those institutions as well and the differences in structures of governance and administration could provide an interesting perspective for a future study. The outcomes could differ under a context where the important role of the president might be shifted to the members of the board as they are in many international institutions. The mission of the institution may differ for a foundation board professional and a chief executive officer.

Another delimitation was that the board professional stayed in their position through the presidential transition, and one to two years after the new president's stepping into office. This leaves an interesting perspective out of the study, which is the board professional who left the institution during the transition. Depending on the reason for the board professional leaving, and whether it was voluntary or involuntary, this could offer an interesting perspective for a future study. A board professional who was asked to leave as part of the transition could have a different perspective than a board professional who decided to leave, whether it was because they preferred not to work with the new president or felt ready for a new stage of their life such as a different role or retirement.

One limitation that opens up a very important area for future research is the lack of control of diversity of participants. While the study portrays varied perspectives in terms of types of institutions and ranks of the board professionals, other demographics such as age, gender, and race were not considered. AGB's (2021) survey on board professionals was administered to 1,200 board professionals in 2020. Out of the 228 that responded to the survey, 84% were white, 85% were women, and 60% were over 59

years old (pp. 4–5). Similar demographic trends were seen in the 2015 and 2010 board professional surveys (AGB, 2021). The job crafting experiences for board professionals from different demographics might differ greatly and would be a great contribution to the research and literature on job crafting, board professional, and presidential transition.

While the board professionals who participated in the study were selected from a list developed by AGB, the board professionals for future research could be selected from other sources that might yield greater diversity. One strategy to find a potentially more diverse set of board professionals could be by identifying institutions who, for example, have recently announced a presidential departure. Several higher education associations and journals publish these lists regularly. Many institutions publish their staff listings on their websites, especially senior administrators. A review of the institution's website and senior staff members would reveal the board professional(s) and contact information for reaching the president's office.

Recommendations for Practice

This study offers recommendations for practice related to the role of the board professional and more generally to all employees adapting to changing work environments. Findings from the study point to coaching as a possibility to facilitate reflective and meaning-making processes that are key to job crafting. This type of coaching or intervention can also be set as an employee benefit for organizations to assist employees in adapting to transition via job crafting. Other recommendations involve associations with a focus on the development of the role of the board professional in higher education. These associations can provide resources and opportunities to facilitate board professionals' job crafting throughout a presidential transition.

First, in line with one of the recommendations for future research, this study suggests that the time of reflection needed by board professionals and others in similar critical administrative roles could be facilitated through coaching. Several of the board professionals who took part in this study described how the study's narrative interview process was the first time they were able to reflect on the transition and their work. As they took on more responsibilities and their work lives became hectic during the transition process, there was little time for reflection. The reflection period is key for them to make meaning of their work. Coaching can facilitate reflection and meaning-making, strengthening the board professionals' sense of self or identity and continued connections with their meaning of work.

This recommendation could extend to similar senior roles in organizations that have the potential to significantly influence critical change. Coaching individual employees is an approach that could be used to develop their capacity for ongoing resilience and adaptation throughout the transition. This coaching could be recommended by the organization or potentially offered as employee development. Although job crafting is for the benefit of the individual not the organization, extending opportunities for coaching, particularly during critical changes such as presidential transitions, is beneficial for both the individual professional and the organization.

Several studies have recommended the use of coaching as a developmental tool to encourage job crafting and as a tool for reflection that would lead to altering employees' meaning and identities at work (Jackson, 2019; Petrou et al., 2016; Scott, 2019). In Jackson's (2019) case study on how a new president formed a senior leadership team, she found that coaching was a strategy that assisted the new president throughout the

transition period. Jackson (2019) recommended using coaching for senior leadership team members as a developmental tool. Jackson's (2019) study supported the importance of coaching for growth and development and recommended that the role of coaching be more widely employed (p. 153). Petrou et al. (2016) also recommended the use of coaching for organizations undergoing major changes. They explained that coaching could be a strategy for empowering and encouraging employees undergoing changes at work to job craft (Petrou et al., 2016). According to Scott (2019), coaches who use work narratives can draw on themes that surface when clients reflect on their work. They can then help clients tie these themes to their meaning of work (Scott, 2019). Coaching could be a strategy to help employees shape their work stories in response to changing work environments and proactively build their work identities (Scott, 2019).

Second, this type of intervention does not have to be facilitated by a coach. It can also be applied by a manager or an internal senior leader. The literature on job crafting emphasizes job crafting as a proactive approach, where the manager is not involved and might not even know the job crafting is happening (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). Tims and Bakker (2010) made a case for the role of the manager or supervisor in job crafting. According to Tims and Baker (2010), in some cases a manager or supervisor might be needed to help employees "allocate time to follow a course" or to provide feedback that could "stimulate job crafting behaviors" (p. 18). Organizations expecting significant shifts such as leadership transitions can put in place a system where managers or senior leaders can facilitate reflection and meaning-making with individuals to prompt job crafting. This intervention could also apply to other contexts such as new hires in the onboarding process. A similar system of managers, supervisors, or senior leaders as

coaches could be in place to trigger job crafting through reflection and meaning-making, helping the new employees with the development of their identity and meaning of work early on in their role.

Lastly, there are two associations that offer professional development for board professionals, AGB and the National Association of Presidential Assistants in Higher Education (NAPAHE). Both AGB and NAPAHE offer support services, research, and networking opportunities for individuals in roles such as board professionals. The findings from this study can inform the work of the associations with this professional group. Guides for reflection can be offered as part of a transition process. Sessions at networking events such as conference and workshops can also be facilitated to provide board professionals an opportunity to reflect and make meaning of their work and their relationships. These sessions could be developed as modules for ongoing individual reflection throughout the transition or as one- to-two-day programs where interactions and learning from others in similar roles can be facilitated.

Providing the space for board professionals to reflect on their work throughout the transition could lead to them finding more meaning in their work, which could help in the success of the presidency. The literature on job crafting specifies that individuals do not engage in job crafting for the benefit of the organization and therefore job crafting could have a positive or negative effect on the organization (Wrzesniewski & Dutton, 2001). However, in the case of board professionals job crafting throughout a presidential transition, the outcome is the board professional better understanding the meaning of their work. This would ultimately lead to the success of the president, which, in turn, leads to the success of the organization.

Concluding Remarks

With an expected surge in presidential transitions at colleges and universities, the purpose of the study was to understand how board professionals, an often overlooked group of individuals who are key to the success of a college or university presidency, experience job crafting throughout complex work conditions such as those brought on by presidential transitions. The study shed light on how board professionals experienced job crafting, shaping their jobs in personally meaningful ways and altering their meaning of work and who they were at work in the process. Ensuring positive outcomes for board professionals throughout the presidential transition period is key for the success of the search process, the presidency, and ultimately the institutions they serve.

The study contributed to the small quantity of literature that exists on job crafting, board professionals, and presidential transitions in higher education. The study found that board professionals were continuously shaping their relationships with others and changing their work identities and meaning in the process, that they relationally job crafted by supporting or seeking support form colleagues and by serving as resources for new presidents, that they task job crafted by taking on more responsibilities throughout the transition, that job crafting to build their relationships with new presidents was a priority, and that their calling orientation and intrinsic motivation toward work contributed to their cognitive job crafting through all aspects of the job crafting process. The study concluded that the board professionals' characteristics and personalities influenced their experiences with job crafting, that cognitive job crafting is a key component of the board professionals' job crafting, and that the narrative design of the study allowed for reflection that was key to how board professionals made meaning of

their job crafting experiences. These conclusions had implications for an inclusion of meaning-making and the exploration of different personalities as part of the job crafting model. Recommendations for future research included employing longitudinal and qualitative studies that would allow for ongoing reflection on work and a better understanding of how the job crafting process unfolds.

The study also contributed to practice. When undertaking a presidential transition, board professionals can job craft as a strategy to minimize turnover as well as feelings of uncertainty and anxiety produced by the changes and disruption at work. Board professionals can also job craft to make their jobs more meaningful, maximizing the opportunities for growth and development that arise from a shift in leadership. Recommendations for coaching or similar interventions to promote and facilitate the important reflection process that is part of job crafting can benefit board professionals undergoing presidential transitions and more generally employees who are adapting to continuously changing work environments.

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Appendixes

Appendix A: Sample Invitation for Study Participation

Hello [name],

My name is Elizabeth Alvarado. I am the director of consulting at the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (AGB). I have been with AGB for seven years now, providing governance consulting services to presidents and boards of colleges and universities. I don't believe we've had the pleasure of working together.

In addition to my role at AGB, I am also a doctoral candidate at the George Washington University. Throughout my years at AGB, I have been impressed with the work of presidential staff members like yourself who manage dual roles and relationships with presidents and boards. As part of my doctoral studies, and separate from my work with AGB, I am focusing my dissertation on how presidential and board staff members shape their jobs during a presidential transition. I am particularly interested in speaking with professionals who have been through a presidential transition within the last two years.

With the placement of President [name] last year, I was wondering if you would be interested in sharing your story with me for the dissertation. Your participation would entail taking part in a telephone or a Zoom video interview (based on your preference) to share your experience during the presidential transition. The interview will last approximately 90 minutes and will be followed up with a 30 to 60-minute video or phone interview.

All interviews are confidential and interview questions will relate to your personal experiences. You will not be identified by your real name during the interviews. Also, the

name of your institution (or any other identifiable information) will not be identified during the interviews and in the study.

Would you be available for a quick call to learn more about the study? Please contact me at ealvarado210@gwu.edu or at 202-660-2543. I am happy to answer any questions. I look forward to hearing from you.

Best,

Elizabeth Alvarado

Appendix B: Sample Interview Guide

Pseudonym:
Date:
Start time:
End time:

Introductory Script

Thank you for participating in this doctoral dissertation study. As a brief reminder, the purpose of the study is to understand board professionals' experience with crafting their jobs during a presidential transition. I am interested in learning about your work experience as a board professional during a presidential transition. This will include learning more about your job—how you started, how your job has changed, and what your goals are for the future.

Participant Benefits and Minimal Risks

There are some benefits and minimal risks associated with participation in this study. While you will not benefit directly from participation in the study, your participation in this research and answering interview questions may help you reflect on your work experiences, which may bring up positive feelings for your work. More generally, taking part in this research may also benefit the role of the board professional by helping others understand the complexities of the role, particularly during a time of transition.

Minimal risks associated with participating in the study include:

- Any emotional discomfort such as feeling hesitation about answering questions which may seem more personal to you about your work experience. Your participation is voluntary. You are free to provide as little or as detailed

information as you would like for each question. You may also choose to skip any questions or stop the interview at any point.

- An inadvertent breach in confidentiality could have professional repercussions. Please note that everything stated is confidential. You will not be identified by your real name at any point during the interview, only by your pseudonym. Your pseudonym will be linked to your identity via a master list that will be kept separate from other study data. To preserve confidentiality, please refrain from using any names in the interviews. In the case that you do mention your name, the name of your institution or any other related information, such as names of individuals you work with, these names will be replaced in the transcripts with pseudonyms.

Participant Consent

Your participation in this interview serves as consent to be included in this study. You are free to withdraw at any time and for any reason without penalty. All you need to do is tell me to stop. Please note that your participation will not affect your relationship with AGB. Do you have any questions about the purpose of the study, why I am conducting this interview or benefits and minimal risks associated with your participation?

Interview Process

I will be conducting two interviews with you for this study. This is the first of the two interviews. The interview will last approximately 90 minutes. The questions I will ask today will be open-ended and general, so please elaborate to the extent you feel comfortable and appropriate. The second interview will be a follow-up conversation and

will be used to further clarify any information you would like to share as part of your story and to close out our time together.

I will be taking some notes during the interview. With your permission, both interviews will be recorded so that I do not have to write as much while we are talking. The recording will be transcribed by Zoom automatically. Only audio recordings and transcripts will be used for data analysis and will be deleted when the study is complete.

I will share the interview transcripts with you shortly after the interview. The interview transcripts will not be included in the dissertation. After the interviews are completed and transcribed, I will analyze the interview transcripts and create a case narrative for you to review and provide feedback. A case narrative provides a condensed account of the pertinent details of the interviews with a goal of preserving your experiences as best as possible. These case narratives will be included as part of the findings in my doctoral dissertation.

[start recording]

Before we start, do you have any questions for me?

Questions:

I. **Background and Work Experience** (values, work motivation and orientation)

I would like this to be more of a conversation with you that will allow me to learn more about

you, your values, and your work experiences.

- How would you describe yourself? What is important to you? [Follow up probes: What characteristics of your identity or values are most important to you?]

- How did you become involved in higher education? [Follow up question/probes: How did your educational background prepare you for this field]
- Please tell me about your past work experiences (i.e., different jobs/careers—including positions, length of time spent at each job, etc.).
- What was the nature of these roles? What aspects of these roles were important to you? What motivated you?
- Have you had experience with a transition of a senior administrative role or a president during previous jobs?

II. **Current Role and Presidential Transition**

Now I would like to continue our conversation with questions that will allow me to understand your current work experiences.

- How long have you been at your job? What led you to it? What were your goals with this job?
- Please describe the nature of your job. [Follow up questions: What are your duties? reporting structures? Who are your peers and colleagues? What was important to you when you began this role?]
- Please describe the departure of the prior president. [Follow up questions: When was the departure announced? How was it announced? Did you have a role in the announcement? What happened after the announcement was made? How did you feel about the transition? How did you see/perceive/understand your role at that point?]
- Please describe the search process for the current president and your role throughout that process. [Follow up questions: What was your role throughout the

search process? How did your role change throughout the search? How did the changes happen? How did your experience at work feel to you at the time you went through them? How did you see/perceive/understand your role at that point?]

- Please describe your experience working with the new president. [Follow up questions: How did your role change once the new president was in office? How did the changes happen? How did your experience at work feel to you as you went through the changes? How did you see/perceive/understand your role at that point?]
- Looking back on the changes that have occurred to your role, do you think you or your experience at work have changed since then? [Follow up questions: specifically, in what ways have the changes occurred? How do you see/perceive/understand your role now? How do you describe yourself now? What is important to you? What motivates you?]

Interview Wrap-Up

That was the last of my questions. Is there anything that you want to add to our conversation that I haven't asked and you feel is important for me to know? I will send the transcript of the interview to you as soon as it becomes available. Due to the timeframe of the study, I ask that you send it back to me with any feedback within two weeks. Does this sound okay to you?

Thank you for sharing your story. Please don't hesitate to reach out to me if you have questions.

[Schedule the second interview, preferably within a week from the date of the first interview].

Second Interview

Introduction: It is great to talk to you again. Thank you for agreeing to answer a few more questions for the study. As a reminder,

- After going over our last interview, I have a few follow up questions on your background and work experience. [Questions to be added]
- I also have questions related to your current role and the presidential transition. [Questions to be added]
- After reflecting since our last interview, do you have any further thoughts or feelings that you would like to talk about to add to your response from last time?

Wrap-up: That was the last of my questions. Is there anything that you want to add to our conversation that I haven't asked and you feel is important for me to know?

I will be preparing a case narrative based on both interviews. A case narrative provides a condensed account of the pertinent details of the interviews with a goal of preserving your experiences as best as possible. I will share this narrative with you as soon as it is completed. Due to the time frame of the study, I ask that you send it back to me with any feedback within two weeks. Does this sound okay to you?

Thank you for sharing your story. Please don't hesitate to reach out to me if you have questions.

Appendix C: Researcher Subjectivity Statement

For this study, I, as the researcher, must acknowledge how my background will influence the study of board professionals experience with job crafting during presidential transitions. Professionally, as a director for consulting at the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (AGB), I work with board professionals on a regular basis. AGB is a membership association and board professionals serve the institutions that are members of AGB. My interactions with board professionals include providing governance resources to inform their work as well as offering consulting services to their institutions at a fee. As a result, I have heard many stories of board professionals' experiences with presidential transitions and have an understanding of the ups and downs of these transitions on their roles.

While board professionals who I am currently working with will not be included in the study, the board professionals who will participate in the study will be provided information on AGB and my role within the organization. There will be a level of understanding about each other's work and there might also be a level of trust as AGB is a well-known and respected entity in higher education.

Personally, I understand the board professionals' experience with presidential transitions because in 2019 AGB went through a presidential transition. Within the first month of the transition, I had two new supervisors and my role within the organization changed drastically. Just as my department and job were changing, other departments were also restructuring throughout the organization. I began reflecting on my role within the organization. My experience with the presidential transition and my reflection process

throughout the experience will certainly influence how I understand the board professionals' experiences.