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The focus of this qualitative study was to examine how faculty members at three community colleges in North Carolina made meaning of concept of trust and to explore the leadership behaviors or actions that were perceived to build or destroy feelings of trust. More understanding about the nature of trust within higher education and the roles played by leaders in shaping trust within their organizations is needed, especially now as colleges are experiencing large numbers of retirements in key leadership roles.

Trust is the cornerstone of a healthy, positive, productive organizational climate. Without trust between leaders and those whom they lead, organizational progress is slowed, even simple processes can become politicized and approached with caution. Risk-taking, the birthplace of innovation, is reduced, and collaboration is rendered difficult. Within a low trust environment, change is often approached with fear, not curiosity or hope. The actions or behaviors of leaders set the tone for trust within an organization. This narrative study explored faculty perceptions of trust and the leadership behaviors that build or destroy trust as expressed through participants' personal experience stories. Elements within and among stories were analyzed for patterns, which were later clustered into the following categories: ethics, valuing others, communication, competence, and consistency.

LEADERSHIP BEHAVIORS THAT BUILD OR DESTROY TRUST:

A NARRATIVE CASE STUDY

By

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To my family, with immense gratitude for their unwavering love and support

APPROVAL PAGE

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### *Statement of the Problem*

Over the next 10 years, significant numbers of higher education administrators and faculty are estimated to retire, creating both opportunity and challenge for current and future college leaders. According to the American Council on Education, 90% of presidents are or soon will be eligible to retire (Fain, 2009; March 20). Within the largest American community college system, California, for example, the loss of key leadership has already been significant. At the beginning of the fall 2007 semester, 46% or 50 of the 109 community college presidential posts were either vacant or newly filled (Ashburn, 2007; September 14). Similar turnover is expected for other administrative personnel and faculty as well (Shults, 2001). One potential consequence of these widespread changes in key leadership is a diminished sense of trust within the transitioning institutions (Kramer, 1999); yet this issue has been largely overlooked in the extant literature. In light of this research gap, trust between leaders and followers within an organizational context is the focus of this study.

Trust has been described as “the bedrock of effective leadership and a healthy organizational climate” (Shugart, 1999, p. 3); the “mortar that binds leader to follower” (Baier, 1986, p. 238); and “the miracle ingredient in organizational life—a lubricant that reduces friction, a bonding agent that glues together disparate parts, a catalyst that

facilitates action” (Shea, 1984, p. 7). Baier (1986) used the metaphor that trust is like air: invisible but essential. When it is present, we may hardly notice it. When it is in short supply, however, we are keenly aware of its absence (Baier, 1986).

Over the past decade, the concept of trust as it relates to organizational leadership has become a central interest of organizational scholars (Cook, Hardin, & Levi, 2005; Kramer, 1999). Trust has been studied within military contexts (Duffy, Lafferty, & Lafferty, 2001), within the business world (Kramer, 1999), and in primary and secondary education (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000). Even though the dysfunction that results from distrust is familiar to higher education scholars (Lucas, 2002), empirical research on trust and higher education leadership remains quite limited. Such a gap in the literature merits attention, because trust has been associated with organizational health (Smith, Hoy, & Sweetland, 2001), student achievement (Goddard, Tschannen-Moran, & Hoy, 2001) and faculty commitment (Hoy, Tarter, & Witkoskie, 1992).

### *Assumptions*

As I enter into this research, I do so embracing the following assumptions about trust and organizational climate: (a) Leadership behaviors set the tone for trust within an organization; (b) High levels of trust lead to a positive organizational climate; (c) Positive organizational climates are desirable.

### *Relevant Terms*

*Trust.* Cummings and Bromily (1996) defined trust as:

an individual’s belief or a common belief among a group of individuals that another individual or group (a) makes good-faith efforts to behave in accordance with any commitments both explicit and implicit, (b) is honest and (c) does not

take excessive advantage of another even when the opportunity is available. (p. 4)

While many other varying definitions exist, this one will be used throughout this study.

*Organizational climate.* Baker (1992a) defined organizational climate as “the complete mixture of feelings, perceptions, expectations, norms, values, policies, and procedures that prevail within and are unique to a particular college environment” (p. 57). Climate can be described as the “mood” (Baker, 1992a, p. 19) or the “atmosphere” (p. 19) of the organization or, alternately, the answer to the question, “what is it like to work here?” (p. 19).

*Organizational culture.* According to Schein (1985), organizational culture is made up of the visible behaviors and artifacts of a group, the beliefs and values of a group, and the invisible implied underlying assumptions or values of the group that shape behavior.

*Leader.* The researcher defines the term leader as one who through actions, words, and behaviors guides, influences, directs the actions, behaviors, and attitudes of others.

*Leadership.* Northouse (2004) defines leadership as “a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal” (p. 3).

*Leadership Behaviors.* Leadership behaviors include any observable behaviors used directly or indirectly, intentionally or unintentionally to exert influence, including verbal and nonverbal communication, actions, and the implied attitudes associated with those actions.

*Follower.* Northouse (2004) defines the term follower as a person “toward whom leadership is directed” (p. 3), or one within the influence or control of a leader. It is accepted and acknowledged that individuals can be both leaders and followers.

*Followership.* The collective body of people within the influence or control of a leader will be referred to as the followership.

*Narrative.* Riessman (1993) defines narrative as story or “story telling” (p. 1), as “representations [used by an individual to] structure perceptual experience, organize memory” (p. 2), interpret, and explain the events of life. Other terms that have been used interchangeably include “life history, biography, autobiography, testimonial, memory, folk tale, urban legend, or spoken performance” (Atkinson & Delamont, 2006, p. xix).

#### *Conceptual Framework*

The concept map in Appendix A illustrates the premise of this study. Within the map, trust, featured as a positive green, is at the center or the metaphorical heart of the organizational climate. Leaders within an organization behave in ways that tend to build trust and create a positive organizational climate or that tend to diminish trust and create a negative organizational climate. This study will seek to share faculty perspectives on leadership behaviors that positively or negatively impact trust among the followership. Behaviors that positively impact trust are featured as blue circles buoying up, supporting and strengthening the institutional climate. Actions that negatively impact trust are featured as yellow squares that are weighing and breaking down the organizational climate. The non-linear design of the map is meant to suggest the effect of the clustering of actions, any of which alone would not likely either buoy up or degrade the overall

organizational climate. However, collectively they function in a push and pull fashion, much like Lewin's (1938) force field analysis model, to impact the overall climate.

What are the dynamics of trusting in a college setting? What do leaders in higher education do to build trust? What do they do to destroy it? How can trust be nurtured between leaders and those who follow them? This proposed study seeks to address this critical gap in understanding trust within the college environment. The vast majority of the studies on trust are quantitative, with indicators of trust defined a priori based upon reviews of the literature—which circularly is comprised primarily of quantitative studies, often written by leaders and oriented from a leadership perspective. In contrast, the qualitative design of this study has allowed me to focus on the less attended perceptions of followers, those who do not hold official positions or titles denoting formal authority over others. By presenting a followership perspective, I have sought to address a critical gap in understanding faculty trust within the college environment. I hope that this exploration of trust will be a unique contribution to the literature, providing a window into missing perspectives, and offering an open opportunity to go beyond the preconceived notions of trust and how it is engendered from leaders to those being led.

#### *Purpose of the Study*

The purpose of conducting this study is to identify and describe the leadership behaviors that community college faculty perceive as rendering a climate of trust. The following research questions will be explored:

1. What does trust mean to faculty members?
2. What leadership behaviors or actions build trust?

3. What leadership behaviors or actions destroy trust?

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF THE RELEVANT LITERATURE

Over the past decade, the concept of trust as it relates to organizational leadership has become a central interest of organizational scholars (Cook, Hardin, & Levi, 2005; Kramer, 1999). Trust has been studied within business (Kramer, 1999; Ryan & Oestreich, 1991) and military contexts (Duffy, Lafferty, & Lafferty, 2001), and within schools (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 1998, 2000). However, empirical research on trust and higher education leadership remains quite limited, often focusing on student trust in faculty or the institution (Ghosh, Whipple, & Bryan, 2001; Lucas, 2002). Therefore, this multidisciplinary review considers relevant research from across disciplines to provide an informed context for this study. While college environments are very different from school environments, the richer body of research on trust in schools will be particularly called upon, understanding that trust within organizations of different types will hold significant similarities (Kramer, 1999). The purpose of conducting this exploratory study is to add to the slim body of research related to trust in higher education leadership by sharing the valuable perspectives of faculty members at three North Carolina community colleges.

#### *Organizational Behavior*

For the purposes of this study, trust will be considered through the lens of organizational behavior, the field of research that examines the micro-level complexities



of organizational social systems from a psychological perspective (Pfeffer, 1997).

Research in this area considers the individual and collective behaviors of people within an organization, as opposed to the macro-level study of organizations as a whole as in organization theory (Katz & Kahn, 1978). I will focus primarily on the behaviors of leaders and how these behaviors relate to trust, which impacts the overall climate of the organization.

*Scientific management.* The beginnings of organizational theory, as it relates to leadership behavior, can be traced to the work of Frederick Taylor, the father of the Scientific Management movement, and Elton Mayo, the father of the Human Relations movement (Hersey & Blanchard, 1993). Scientific Management theory was steeped in positivistic industrial thought, regarding people within a work environment as equipment or parts of a machine to be manipulated by managers to increase output and efficiency. Taylor (1911) in his *The Principles of Scientific Management* discussed his use of time-and-motion studies to analyze tasks to discover the one best way to get the job done. Within this model, managers focused on improving the procedures and processes used by workers to increase performance and propel the success of the organization. Trust between leader and follower was not a valued issue; efficiency of perfecting the system and processes was the center of discussion and thought.

*Human relations movement.* In contrast, Mayo (1933) put forward the view that the needs of the individual are important. After years of research at Western Electric Corporation, Mayo and his assistants came to the conclusion that while seeking out efficiencies by studying the systems and improving processes is important, attention must

be paid to the human relationships and developing individual employees. Mayo (1933) theorized that leadership behaviors, how leaders treated employees, had a major impact on their performance. Through research conducted from 1924 to 1932, often referred to as the Hawthorne experiments, Mayo and his research associates, Roethlisberger and Dickson, explored the effects of increasing and decreasing lighting levels on employee productivity. Their findings on the impact of lighting were determined to be inconclusive as productivity increased with every change whether brighter or darker. However, the unexpected findings of their experience pointed to the idea that the human relationships between workers and managers had a greater impact on productivity than focus on physical work conditions and processes. When leaders expressed caring and built relationships, workers continued to improve production, even when the light became too dim to see the work properly. This idea of congenial, relationship-building leadership behaviors formed the basis for the Human Relations movement and heralded the perennial leadership struggle that still exists today, the need to balance the needs of the organization with the needs of the individual (Hersey & Blanchard, 1993).

### *Leadership Theory*

The body of literature concerning leadership is vast, including much theory and opinion, as well as empirical studies. Burns (1979) noted in his seminal work, *Leadership*, that “leadership is one of the most observed and least understood phenomena on earth” (p. 4). A review of the literature reveals that many have tried and others are still trying to understand leadership. The resulting body of literature is immense and sometimes “bewildering” (Yukl, 2006, p. 12). There are a multitude of ways of

organizing the literature. Yukl (2006) has categorized the major leadership theories into five approaches: trait, behavior, power-influence, situational, and integrative. The trait approach to leadership is grounded in the notion that great leaders possess certain traits or characteristics, which might be innate, that make them excel in leadership. The behavior approach focuses on the behaviors or actions of leaders, which might be learned, that make them successful. The power-influence approach research examines how leaders gain and use power to influence the behaviors and attitudes of those who follow them. The situational approach includes studies that are based on the premise that in different situations, different leadership styles are needed. The research focuses on contextual variables like follower characteristics, type of work, external environment, and organization type. The integrative approach blends together two or more of the leadership variables focused on within the other four approaches. The traits and behavior approaches are most closely aligned with the approach of this study; therefore, I will review key studies within these two categories.

*Leadership traits.* The trait approach is based upon the idea that effective leadership emanates from certain attributes and skills possessed, perhaps innately, by the leader. Attributes can include elements of one's personality, values, motivations, and even physical features. Skills could include abilities of a technical, interpersonal, or conceptual nature. Research in this area has a long and controversial history that continues to the present. Hundreds of leadership trait studies were conducted during the 1930s and 1940s, and many others since, in an effort to identify the common attributes of effective leaders (Yukl, 2006). From the positivistic perspective, if one could identify the

ideal attributes and skills through empirical research, then one could predict which individuals would be effective leaders and perhaps leaders could be trained to adopt or develop these traits. However, the results of these studies have failed to reveal a conclusive list.

As part of the body of leadership research now referred to as the Ohio State Leadership Studies, Stogdill (1948/1981) reviewed over 100 leadership trait studies from 1904 through 1948, seeking commonalities within the findings. He noted that 15 or more of the studies indicated that leaders are typically more intelligent, scholarly, dependable, participatory, and of a higher socio-economic status than their average followers. However, the attributes and skills needed for a leader are determined by the individual situation. According to 10 or more studies, typical leaders are more social, enterprising, persistent, self-confident, aware/intuitive, cooperative, popular, adaptable, well spoken, and knowledgeable about how to get things done than their average followers. When ranked by the highest average correlation coefficient, the following traits were most highly correlated with leaders: “originality, popularity, sociability, judgment, aggressiveness, desire to excel, humor, cooperativeness, liveliness, and athletic ability” (Stogdill, 1948/1981, p. 66). A low positive correlation was noted for traits including physical attributes like height, weight, appearance, body type, as well as age, energy, aggressiveness, and the ability to control one’s mood.

Stogdill (1948/1981) also emphasized the theme of situation, stating that “an adequate analysis of leadership involves not only a study of leaders, but also of situations” (p. 67) as a leader who is successful in one situation might very well not be in

another situation and certainly a leader in one situation might be a follower in another situation. Stogdill (1948/1981) concluded that “leadership is not a matter of passive status, or of the mere possession of some combination of traits. It appears rather to be a working relationship among members of a group” (p. 66) and the leader, who brings the group together to accomplish their common goals. Having the combination of the innate attributes of intelligence, awareness, intuition, and insight along with the developed skills of responsibility, confidence, determination, and initiative increases the likelihood of success.

In 1974, Stogdill continued surveying leadership trait research from 1949 through 1970. Many of the same trait themes were repeated and others found to be relevant including ambition, decisiveness, diplomacy, persuasiveness, and tolerance for stress. Again he concluded that leadership traits alone cannot determine effective leadership and that different situations might require different skills, which by extension could render a leader who is successful in one situation, unsuccessful in another. Stogdill (1974) did not single out trustworthiness as a major theme trait, however others like Bennis have done so.

In a five year study of ninety noteworthy leaders and their followers, Bennis (1984) determined a cluster of four traits were common to the leaders in his study. These traits were identified as the effective management of attention, meaning, trust, and self. Bennis (1984) defined management of trust as exhibiting reliable and consistent behaviors. The findings indicated the importance of leaders saying what they mean and

doing what they say they are going to do, which in turn engenders trust of the followership.

The ability to build and maintain trust was also a leadership trait identified by a five-year study by Gardner (1990). After a wide review of the literature related to leadership, hundreds of interviews with leaders from a variety of organizations, conversations with leadership scholars, and visits to centers of leadership research, Gardner (1990) identified 14 attributes of effective leaders. These attributes included

physical vitality and stamina; intelligence and judgment-in-action: willingness (eagerness) to accept responsibilities; task competence; understanding followers/constituents and their needs; skill in dealing with people; need to achieve; capacity to motivate; courage, resolution, and steadiness; capacity to win and hold trust; capacity to manage, decide, set priorities; confidence; ascendance, dominance, and assertiveness; and adaptability, flexibility of approach. (p. 48-53)

Gardner (1990) concluded that the importance of each of these attributes is relative to the situation. However, the capacity to build trust contributes significantly to skill of fostering agreements between constituents, one of the top five leadership skills noted in the study.

McCall and Lombardo (1983) examined the trait differences between seemingly promising leaders and those who truly experienced success and went on to become top leaders. Working with politically savvy top executive at several Fortune-500 companies, the researchers compared the career stories of 21 “derailed executives” (p. 26) and 20 “arrivers” (p. 26), all of whom were labeled by other top executives as intelligent, talented, and promising. By analyzing the career stories, McCall and Lombardo (1983)

discovered many similarities between the two groups, but they also discovered key behavioral differences, termed “fatal flaws” (p. 28), that repeatedly derailed promising leaders. “Betrayal of trust,” (p. 28), which McCall & Lombardo (1983) define as having a lack of integrity, was one of the top ten traits that were found to stem a budding leader’s success. In fact, betrayal of trust was noted to be the single “unforgivable sin” (p. 28) from which leaders could rarely rebound.

Kirkpatrick and Locke (1991), after an in-depth review of the literature related to leadership traits, echoed the importance of possessing honesty and integrity, both of which form a basis for trust. They identified six defining leadership traits, “drive, the desire to lead, honesty/integrity, self-confidence, cognitive ability, and knowledge of the business” (p. 49), which separate leaders from nonleaders. They concluded that even though possessing certain leadership traits does not ensure effective leadership, possessing them does seem to facilitate gaining the necessary skills and vision to plan and implement their vision successfully. By extension, one might say that having integrity and fostering trust alone does not ensure effective leadership, but it does create favorable conditions for the leader to learn, share vision, and implement that vision successfully.

*Leadership behaviors.* Other researchers have considered leadership in terms of behaviors. During the 1950s and 1960s the research programs at Ohio State University and the University of Michigan began multi-disciplinary research in this area. Much of the research since has followed the patterns set by these research programs (Yukl, 2006).

At Ohio State, researchers like R. M. Stogdill, D.T. Campbell, J. K. Hemphill, C. L. Shartle, A. W. Halpin, M. Seeman, and A. E. Coons brought together the perspectives

of psychology, education, sociology, and economics in order to create a richer theoretical framework for understanding effective leadership behaviors (Schriesheim & Bird, 1979). Over 1,800 examples of leadership behaviors were compiled and then consolidated into 150 major leadership functions, which were used to create a questionnaire that was administered to military and nonmilitary participants regarding their perceptions of the leadership behaviors of their supervisors. Factor analysis of these perceptions suggested that leadership behaviors could be grouped into the general categories of “consideration” and “initiating structure” (Yukl, 2006, p. 51).

Consideration includes behaviors that demonstrate concern for people like showing interest in the ideas and feelings of others, and encouraging open communication and teamwork. Initiating structure includes behaviors that demonstrate concern for completing tasks and goals like focusing on deadlines, prescribed rules, and performance standards. The researchers then developed three questionnaires to measure consideration and initiating structure: the Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire (LBDQ), the Supervisory Behavior Description (SBD), and the Leader Opinion Questionnaire (LOQ). Since their development, these questionnaires have been used, directly and in modified forms, in hundreds of leadership studies (Yukl, 2006).

Around the same time period as the Ohio State Leadership Studies, a similar movement was taking place at the University of Michigan. The area of focus for the Michigan researchers was to identify the connections between leader behaviors, group processes, and group performance. Through a series of field studies (Katz, Maccoby, & Morse, 1950; Katz & Kahn, 1952; Katz, Maccoby, Gurin, & Floor, 1951), the researchers



collected data about management behaviors from leaders within the insurance and rail road industries, using interviews and questionnaires. Then, based upon objective measures of the level of productivity of their groups, leaders were categorized as effective or ineffective and the leadership behaviors of the two groups compared. For behaviors labeled task-oriented, effective leaders focused on providing direction and support to their followers, rather than just working on like tasks with their subordinates. The task-oriented behaviors of the Michigan studies are similar to the initiating structure behaviors in the Ohio State Leadership Studies. For behaviors termed relations-oriented, effective leaders offered more support and help to followers than ineffective leaders. The relations-oriented category is similar to the person-valuing consideration category of the Ohio State Leadership Studies. Demonstrating trust, confidence, understanding, helpfulness, friendliness, appreciation, and interest in subordinates were positively correlated with effective leadership (Yukl, 2006). In the final category of behaviors labeled participative, effective leaders used more of a group approach to leadership, as opposed to interacting with each subordinate individually. Through group meetings, effective leaders encourage cooperation, open communication, and participation in decision making and conflict resolution (Likert, 1961, 1967).

In a study initiated in 1983, Kouzes and Posner (1995) wanted to explore what ordinary leaders did when they were “at their ‘personal best’ in leading others” (p. xxi). The study was based upon the philosophical assumption that leadership, like management, can be taught. By 1995, more than 7,500 leaders had responded to the long or short forms of the personal best survey and more than 300 leaders had

participated in in-depth interviews regarding their personal best leadership stories. From their responses, Kouzes and Posner developed a conceptual framework of five key leadership practices, which they term “challenge the process, inspire a shared vision, enable others to act, model the way, [and] encourage the heart” (p. 9). Actions that make up these practices were then translated into behavior statements that became the basis for the Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI), an instrument that has since been used extensively worldwide. Practices that challenge the process include taking risks to make improvements and recognizing and supporting good ideas. Inspiring a shared vision includes behaviors that cause others to see and be excited by future possibilities. Practices that enable others to act include creating an atmosphere of trust and respect, where people are valued and developed, and fostering open communication and teamwork. Modeling the way includes leader behaviors that establish and demonstrate organizational principles, especially concerning the treatment of people and the pursuance of goals.

*Leadership attitudes.* Likert (1961) focused on the attitudes of leaders, rather than their traits or behaviors. Attitudes about leadership and predispositions toward leadership behaviors were collected using a scaled survey instrument. Based upon his research, Likert developed an organizational management style continuum, which categorizes management styles into four groups, ranging from no or low trust and strict hierarchy in System 1 to high trust and less formal hierarchy in System 4. The results from hundreds of surveys administered to managers from a variety of organizations indicated that

managers perceived that organizations using high trust System 4 management were more productive and desirable than those scoring nearer no/low trust System 1.

Studies such as those conducted by Likert (1961, 1967) have provided a basis for more specialized inquiry that Kramer (1999, 2006) refers to as Trust Theory. This fledgling area of research is one of growing interest, spawning a two day national conference at Stanford University, and a book series sponsored by the Russell Sage Foundation, as researchers seek to explore the role of trust in cooperation between group members, coordination of efforts, and issues of control (Cook, Hardin, & Levi, 2005; Kramer, 2006; Kramer & Cook, 2004; Kramer & Tyler, 1996).

#### *Leadership Behaviors, Trust, and Organizational Climate*

After a comprehensive review of trust-related literature from across disciplines, Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2000) noted patterns of leadership behaviors that build trust. These behaviors include readily sharing information, following through, maintaining consistency, treating others equitably, holding confidences, exhibiting competence, and demonstrating caring and ethical behaviors. Conversely, negative behavior patterns were also noted, including allowing personal issues to overshadow the needs of the group, lying, cheating, verbally abusing subordinates, demonstrating incompetence, failing to follow through, and acting unpredictably.

Repeatedly, trust has been described as one of the key contributing elements to a strong organizational climate (Baker, 1992b; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000) and, as Duffy, Lafferty, and Lafferty's (2001) study suggests, the actions of key leaders within the organization contribute to organizational trust. The research of Baker and the

National Initiative for Leadership and Institutional Effectiveness (NILIE) related to the Personal Assessment of the College Environment (PACE) are based upon these two premises. NILIE has studied over 100 different colleges to describe their organizational climates, using Likert's (1967) organizational systems theory as a basis for the PACE instrument. Based upon responses from people across an institution, the results of the survey are used to define the predominant perception of the college environment as shaped by leadership style, ranging from a System 1 (coercive) environment, a System 2 (competitive) environment, a System 3 (consultive) environment, up to a System 4 (collaborative) environment, which is defined as the most desirable state.

Another particularly interesting collection of research has grown out of the use of a survey instrument created by Hoy and Kupersmith (1984a) called Trust Scales, which were designed to measure trust levels between groups. In elementary schools (Hoy & Kupersmith, 1984b; Hoy, Tarter, & Witkoskie, 1992), in middle schools (Hoy, Sabo, & Barnes, 1996; Tarter, Sabo, & Hoy, 1995), and in high schools (Smith, Hoy, & Sweetland, 2001; Tarter, Bliss, & Hoy, 1989; Tarter & Hoy, 1988), trust has been found to be the cornerstone of healthy relationships and, by extension, healthy organizations. The findings from each echo that "trust and healthy relationships are ones of mutual dependence and reciprocal influence" (Hoy, Sabo, & Barnes, 1996, p. 27).

Hoy and Kupersmith (1984b) used the Trust Scales in a study of authentic principal behaviors and faculty trust in 46 elementary schools. The researchers define authenticity as having three aspects: accountability, non-manipulation, and salience of self or of role. According to the researchers' model, authentic principals' behaviors

would include accepting responsibility for personal and organizational errors and their resulting consequences, not manipulating the behaviors of others, and breaking free of the restraints of their prescribed role. Inauthentic principals would blame and manipulate others, and rigidly adhere to the expectations of their role as principal. The researcher administered either the Trust Scales or the Leader Authenticity Scale randomly to nearly all of the teachers, half receiving one of the instruments and the other half receiving the other instrument, at the 46 schools during faculty meetings. Using the school as the unit of analysis, the researchers found a positive correlation between faculty trust in the principal, and trust in colleagues and in the school. The results suggested that the greater the degree of authentic principal behavior, the greater the level of teacher trust in the principal, and in colleagues and the school. While principal authenticity correlated most strongly with teacher trust in the principal, principal behaviors were clearly related to organizational climate (Hoy & Kuppersmith, 1984b).

In a similar study, Hoy, Tarter, and Witkoskie (1992) investigated the connection between supportive leadership and trust in colleagues and principals, and the connection between trust, leadership, and effectiveness. Supportive leadership was defined as “behavior that reflects a concern for teachers...[and] healthy, interpersonal relations among teachers” (p. 37). Using a sample of 44 elementary schools in New Jersey, the researchers, as in the previous study, collected data during faculty meetings using the Organizational Climate Description Questionnaire-RE (OCDQ-RE) and the Trust scales. Correlational analysis of the data indicated a positive relationship between supportive leadership and faculty trust in colleagues and perceived school effectiveness. However,

the findings did not support the hypothesis that a relationship exists between perceived school effectiveness and trust in the principal.

Tarter, Sabo, and Hoy (1995) retested Hoy, Tarter, and Witkoskie's (1992) model. As with the previous study, Tarter, Sabo, and Hoy (1995) wanted to investigate whether supportive leadership was directly related to organizational effectiveness or trust in colleagues. The researchers analyzed the relationship among supportive leadership behaviors by the principal and faculty collegiality, faculty trust, and organizational effectiveness. Studying 87 middle schools in New Jersey, the researchers found that supportive leadership by the principal, collegiality among faculty, and trust in the principal and in colleagues were significantly related to organizational effectiveness. Path analysis illustrated the interrelation of the variables, which points to the importance of a culture of trust that pervades the organization. While faculty collegiality leads to faculty trust in colleagues and supportive leadership leads to faculty trust in the principal,

Hoy, Sabo, and Barnes (1996) further explored faculty concepts of trust in 86 New Jersey middle schools and the correlation of trust to the overall health of the school organization. Using the trust scales developed by Hoy and Kupersmith (1984a) and the Organizational Health Inventory—Rutgers Middle, the researchers found that a significant relationship existed between organizational health and faculty trust in the principal and, to a lesser degree, faculty trust in colleagues. Generally, findings indicated that the healthier the organizational climate, the greater the degree of faculty trust, with principals who use a collegial leadership style being most successful in fostering a

climate of trust. The behaviors that the researchers defined as collegial were “openness in helping, supporting, guiding, and setting an example” (p. 33).

Smith, Hoy, and Sweetland (2001) examined organizational health and faculty trust in a stratified sample of 98 rural, suburban, and urban high schools in Ohio. As with the Hoy, Sabo, and Barnes (1996) study, this study concluded that the better the organizational health, the greater the levels of faculty trust. The study sought to link specific dimensions of organizational health as predictors of faculty trust in colleagues, in the principal, in the students, and in parents. The researchers considered institutional integrity, principal influence, consideration (or respect), resource support, initiating structure (or providing clear expectations), academic emphasis, and morale. Randomly selected teacher groups were administered the Organizational Health Inventory or the Faculty Trust Survey to capture their collective perceptions. The results indicated that consideration and initiating structure were significant predictors of faculty trust in the principal. Therefore, as leaders, principals must offer support, respect, and structure to their teachers to create a climate of trust.

### *Conclusions*

Considering this cluster of trust studies in schools, the patterns are clear. Supportive leadership behaviors do contribute to a climate of trust, which contributes to healthy and effective organizations. Given the consistency of results across educational institution level, it seems likely that similar results might also be found in community colleges. Clearly more research like that which is proposed in this study is needed. Hoy and Tschannen-Moran (1999) noted the need for more qualitative research in this area;

“the review of the literature suggests that trust is complex...hence qualitative analyses are in order, ones that examine the dynamics of the process of trusting,... what principal behaviors illicit trust, why teachers trust their principals, and how teacher trust can be developed” (p. 205). The same could be said for a need for more qualitative research in higher education settings. Knowing what leadership actions and behaviors build trust can inform professional development for current and future leaders, and form a basis for change, especially within institutions plagued by distrust (Bryk & Schneider, 2003). Ultimately, as Baier (1986) pointed out, “trust is much easier to maintain than it is to get started and [trust] is never hard to destroy” (p. 242). Particularly during this time of rapid change and record numbers of retirements for American community colleges, establishing and sustaining trust is essential to healthy organizational climates. This narrative study has utilized the personal experience stories of participants as they have developed their meanings and understandings and perceptions of trust through their interactions with leaders.



## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, I describe the design of this study in detail including the philosophical assumptions that underpin the design as well as the research questions, data collection methods, data analysis methods, and study limitations. Merriam (1998) advocates for the use of qualitative methods for discovering “the meanings people have constructed . . . how they make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world” (p. 6). The purpose of this study was to achieve a greater understanding of how faculty members make sense or meaning of the concept of trust and the leadership behaviors that might either increase or decrease feelings of trust among followers. Therefore, I have employed a qualitative approach, collecting personal experience narratives to meet this purpose.

Denzin and Lincoln (2005) have described qualitative research as “a situated activity that locates the observer in the world...[and] consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible...including fieldnotes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to self” (p. 3). I became one such listening-observer, “attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them” (Denzin & Lincoln, p. 3). I have tried to capture participant perspectives through their personal experience stories in order to explore the following research questions:

1. What does trust mean to faculty members?
2. What leadership behaviors or actions build trust?
3. What leadership behaviors or actions destroy trust?

### *Philosophical Assumptions*

I began this research embracing the following philosophical assumptions, which have shaped my qualitative research design. Creswell (2007) described philosophical assumptions as “consist[ing] of a stance toward the nature of reality (ontology), how the researcher knows what she or he knows (epistemology), the role of values in the research (axiology), the language of research (rhetoric), and the methods used in the process (methodology)” (p. 16). Using Creswell’s framework, I will share my philosophical orientations.

Ontologically speaking, my views are similar to those of Searle. Searle’s (1995, 2004, 2006, 2008) philosophy of ontology divides reality into external and social realities, with external reality being completely independent of humanity’s interpretations of it. He argues that there are what he terms basic facts like the existence of molecules and matter, and then there is social reality, which includes social and institutional facts, which are replete with human interpretations, like the institutional facts of marriage, government, or money. Simply put, I believe that there is a reality independent of human interaction, and this is the realm explored through the hard sciences. Social reality deals with our collective social and institutional concepts, which exist because we collectively agree to believe that they exist. These are social constructions. Trust is a social construction.

Epistemologically, I also embrace the philosophies of Lyotard (1984) and Bakhtin (1993), whose views are at the other end of the social constructionism spectrum from those of Searle. Searle, Lyotard, and Bakhtin all focus on language as “the vehicle through which the self and the world are articulated” (Talja, Tuominen, & Savolainen, 2001). This study focused on the language in narrative as participants articulated their personal experiences. My philosophical perspective is squarely post-modern, shaped by living in a world of constant change where many of the modernist ideologies no longer fit and knowledge is growing exponentially. I embrace the plurality of meanings, with each interpretation being meaningful though not absolute or necessarily equal. Like Lyotard (1984), I possess a certain level of “incredulity toward metanarratives” (p. xxiv) or the big stories that explain the way the world is and should be. As Lyotard pointed out, these stories tend to oversimplify the vast possibilities of the life experience and naturally reinforce dominant ideology. Instead, I, like Lyotard, see value in the micronarratives or the many small local stories that together capture the more textured, diverse experience of the individual.

The essence of Russian philosopher, Bakhtin’s (1993) concept of each individual as a “once-occurrent” (p. 40) whole also resonates with me. Bakhtin put forward that each person is radically unique and obligated to choose and to speak and to act for one’s unique self. Bakhtin (1993) wrote,

I, too, exist [et ego sum] actually—in the whole and assume the obligation to say this word. I, too, participate in Being in a once-occurrent and never repeatable manner. I occupy a place in once-occurrent Being that is unique and never-repeatable, a place that cannot be taken by anyone else and is impenetrable for anyone else. In the given once-occurrent point where I am now located in the

once-occurrent time and the once-occurrent space of the once-occurrent Being. And it is around this once-occurrent point that all once-occurrent Being is arranged in a once-occurrent and never-repeatable manner. That which can be done by me can never be done by anyone else. The uniqueness or singularity of the present-on-hand Being is compellingly obligatory. (p. 40)

As Anton (2009) put it, to be unique carries with it the burden to make real and to respond to “certain truths about the world, about your relationships with it, with your relationships with other people. Those truths will rely upon you and only you can tell them” (n.p.). Through this study, I have sought out the unique perspectives of participants as they tell their truths by recounting their experiences.

Epistemologically, I have come to “know what [I] know” (Creswell, 2007, p. 16) through my interactions with the participants, listening, speaking, and seeking to understand the common themes between perspectives. I, like other qualitative researchers, have tried “to get as close as possible to the participants being studied” (Creswell, 2007, p. 18) as they are the source of my knowledge, rather than maintaining a detached, objective distance from them.

Axiologically, as a researcher, I openly acknowledge the connection between my values, and myself as a research instrument and interpreter of participant perspectives. I believe that there is value in each individual story, and it has been important to me throughout the study to honor and learn from each once-occurrent participant’s personal experiences. “Locating myself” (Riessman, 1993, p. v) within the context of this study, I acknowledge that trust is a deeply held value for me in my personal and professional relationships, thus my interest in this topic.

The kernel of the idea for this study emerged from my experiences in higher education and as an interested observer of organizational behavior and culture. I noticed the differences in the performance, attitudes, and perceived capability of team members when new leaders were introduced. In particular, I was struck by how dramatically teams could change when trust between the leaders and followers was diminished. When team members felt that information was intentionally withheld in order to control and manipulate them and that mistakes would be permanently damaging to their careers, formerly high performing team members became distracted from their normal functions, spending more time trying to figure out real and imagined innuendo and the hidden subtexts of conversations between leaders and followers. I saw diminished productivity, creativity, and job satisfaction. My personal preference is to work within a high trust environment.

Rhetorically, I refer to myself in the first person and utilize the language of narrative and qualitative research, avoiding overtly quantitative terms that would be inappropriate for this type of study. I have attempted to “restory” (Creswell, 2007, p. 56) participant stories to illuminate and link various perspectives, and “interpret the larger meaning of the story” (p. 156). I have using large chunks of participants’ stories to better convey their individual voices.

Methodologically, I have used an inductive approach, allowing the study to evolve as it progressed, informed by the personal experience stories of participants and the emerging patterns between them. As Creswell (2007) explained, “the logic that the qualitative researcher follows is inductive, from the ground up, rather than handed down

entirely from a theory or from the perspectives of the inquirer” (p. 19). I have used theory to form a context or basis for understanding the connection between leadership behaviors and trust, but I have not been bound by existing theory. Rather, I have remained open to whatever patterns emerge from the narratives, rather than looking for predefined patterns.

### *Narrative Inquiry*

When considering the best possible methodologies for answering my research questions, narrative was a natural choice. How does one make meaning of an experience? Dyson and Genishi (1994) contend that meaning making comes through story as one organizes thoughts about the experience in an effort to make sense of it. Webster and Mertova (2007), echo this position by paraphrasing Jean-Paul Sartre: “People are always tellers of tales. They live surrounded by their stories and the stories of others; they see everything that happens to them through those stories and they try to live their lives as if they were recounting them” (p. 1). Stories construct a framework for our perceived experiences, organize our memories, and give meaning (Webster & Mertova, 2007). Stories “segment and purpose-build the very events of a life” (Bruner, 1987, p. 15). We use stories to explain what has happened and is happening to ourselves and others.

The act of telling stories or narrating has been called “a universal human activity [and] one of the first forms of discourse we learn as children” (Riessman, 1993, p. 3). Within the context of narrative research, this compulsion to tell stories can provide rich insights. Riessman (1993) observed how “respondents (if not interrupted with

standardized questions) will hold the floor for lengthy turns and sometimes organize replies [to interview questions] into long stories” (p. 3). These stories can reveal the perceptions and perspectives of participants that could have been missed by other methodological approaches.

The use of the phrase *telling stories* here must not be confused with telling tales of fiction or with lying. The traditional image of a story teller is somewhat like a magician of words, entertaining listeners by weaving fantastic tales. However, these are not the story tellers of narrative inquiry. As Labov (1997) reflected on his considerable experience with narrative research, he drew a helpful distinction between traditional story tellers and study participants:

the [study participant] tellers were not known as gifted story tellers; people did not gather to hear them speak. They were ordinary people in the deepest sense of the word. They did not manufacture events or elaborate the experience of others. Their narratives were an attempt to convey simply and seriously the most important experiences of their own lives. Sometimes the stories had been told many times, but very often they had not been, or were perhaps told for the very first time. (n.p.)

While participants might or might not be skilled speakers or story tellers, the narrative researcher is more interested in the meanings behind and within the story, without an expectation of being entertained.

The field of narrative research is relatively new, offering what Chase (2005) calls “a rich but diffuse tradition, multiple methodologies in various stages of development, and plenty of opportunities for exploring new ideas, methods, and questions” (p. 651). Narrative studies take many different forms. Creswell (2007) has divided these into the

following categories: biographical study, autobiographical, life histories, and oral histories. In a biographical study, researchers recount the life experience of others. In an autobiographical study, researchers write and record their own accounts of an experience or an event. In a life history study, researchers capture and retell the story of an individual's whole life. In an oral history study, researchers collect the spoken stories of personal perspectives of events (Creswell, 2007). For the purposes of this study, I have used a biographical approach with a "specific contextual focus" (Creswell, 2007, p. 55) on leadership stories related to trust. Care has been taken to preserve the integrity of the narratives by avoiding over-dissection of the stories.

#### *Research Sites*

The study was conducted at three of the 58 community colleges in North Carolina, one small, one mid-sized, and one large institution as indicated by full time equivalent (FTE) curriculum enrollment. Each of the three represents a different institutional size and geographic location of the state, and it was my hope that using three different sites would add to the variety of perspectives. Each of the host institutions is referred to herein by pseudonyms, as are each of the participants and anyone they referred to by name, to encourage participation and to offer privacy.

Forest Hills Community College is categorized as a publically controlled, rural small 2-year community college, utilizing the Katsinas, Lacey, and Hardy (Hardy & Katsinas, 2006) community college classification system. Forest Hills has an average annual FTE of less than 1,500 and is located in the Piedmont region of the state. Appalachia Community College is a publically controlled, rural medium 2-year



community college in the Mountain region with an average annual FTE of around 3,000. Coastal Plains Community College is a publically controlled, suburban large 2-year community college in the Coastal region of North Carolina. Coastal Plains Community College has an average annual FTE of about 10,000.

Being a staff member at another one of the 58 North Carolina community colleges, I had anticipated that my sister-college colleague status could be helpful to me in terms of gaining institutional consent to conduct the study, and it did. Each site was very gracious and open to the study. By design, I was not well acquainted with anyone from the research sites and had limited prior knowledge about each of the institutions.

### *Participants*

The sampling strategy that was employed is maximal variation, whereby participants are selected to mimic the complexity and variety of a typical educational organization (Creswell, 2005). Purposeful sampling was targeted to yield 9 to 15 participants, 3 to 5 faculty members from each site, with representation from a variety of disciplines. The selection was limited to full-time faculty, due to the lack of funding to compensate part-time faculty for their participation. However, I recommend that a subsequent follow-up study be conducted with part-time faculty, and the resulting narrative data be compared to the perspectives of the full-time faculty. The purposeful sampling was intended to encourage a more even spread of individuals across disciplines and across supervisors, which I had hoped would yield some varied perspectives on the participants' experiences.

Potential participants and their academic disciplines were identified with the help of the resident institutional researcher at each of the three community colleges. The institutional researchers generated lists of possible participants, taking care to include participants from varied disciplines. The lists included names, departments, office phone numbers, and email addresses. I then emailed and/or called individuals to introduce myself, explain the study, and invite them to participate (see Appendix E for script). I made them aware of the time commitment, how the data was to be collected and used, and how their confidentiality would be maintained, if they chose to participate. Appointments for face-to-face interviews were then made for those individuals who agreed to participate. I followed up with an email thanking them for their time, explaining the study again, and including the informed consent form, which I asked them to sign at the beginning of the interview. A copy of the informed consent form is located in Appendix C.

#### *Data Collection*

Narrative data was collected from participants via face-to-face interviews. Interviews were all conducted in a mutually agreeable location on the respective college campuses, most often participants' offices or classrooms. The objective in selecting location was that it be free of distractions and offer an appropriate level of privacy to encourage more comfortable, forthright responses. Allowing participants to recommend the location seemed to work well and add to their personal comfort.

Beyond the opening question, "Would you please tell me a little bit about yourself?" which is designed to provide a self-described personal context for each

participant, all of the interview questions relate directly back to the research questions and were aimed at gaining understanding of the participant perspective (Maxwell, 2005). See Appendix B for the interview protocol and Appendix D for a cross-walk that details the connections between the research questions and the specific interview questions. The interview questions toggled back and forth between the topics of building and destroying trust to encourage participants to contrast the two clearly.

While, as Creswell (2005) pointed out, one-on-one interviews are time-consuming, the wealth of data gathered through the interviews demonstrated the value of such an approach to me. Moreover, the format readily allowed for follow-up questions, as needed for clarification. As Riessman (1993) described narrative researchers, “unlike historians who work with archival materials, can ask participants what they mean by what they say” rather than guessing or accepting the language as “self-evident, transparent, [and] unambiguous” (p. 32). I recorded all of the interviews with a digital audio recorder, which was invaluable in allowing me to review the dialogue later, focus my attention on participants, and focus my field notes on questions and observations.

### *Data Analysis*

Data analysis began, as suggested by Maxwell (2005), as quickly as possible after collection. I scheduled a block of time after each interview to transcribe and reflect upon participants’ personal experience stories. As Riessman (1993) observed, “Analysis cannot be easily be distinguished from transcription,” (p. 60); thus through repeated listening and transcription, I began the process of analyzing the participant narratives. The initial transcriptions were then “retranscribed” (Riessman, 1993, p. 58) once captured

to break the text into manageable chunks for analysis. Notable features beyond the simple content of the participant's narrative, like laughter, repetitions, and emphatic tones were noted in the margins as I looked for emerging patterns and began to form possible codes and themes (Creswell, 2007). I then reviewed my field notes and began to capture my developing thoughts in writing via researcher memos. As suggested by Miles and Huberman (1994), I tried to remain open to new patterns and avoid being over-hasty in labeling data into pre-conceived etic categories, which would blunt the opportunity of analyzing trust from a fresh perspective, from the perspective of followers. Throughout data analysis, I constructed and reconstructed cognitive maps to display the emerging and shifting thematic patterns of the data. This helped to organize my thoughts, identify connections between ideas, and shape my understanding (Maxwell, 2005).

Validity, in the quantitative sense of the term, was not a consideration for the study as it relies on "realist assumptions and consequently [is] irrelevant to narrative studies" (Riessman, 1993, p. 64). Participants' stories are their own "selective reconstruction[s]" (p. 64) of the past, shaped by their world views, and told in a way that supports the image of self that they would like to portray. As Riessman (1993) explained, "Narrative analysis allows for systematic study of personal experience and meaning: how events have been constructed by active subjects" (Riessman, 1993, p. 70). Historical truth is not is not the point. However, member checking of participants and was used to provide validation that participant's stories had been accurately captured. Each participant was provided with a transcript of the interview and invited to make corrections, and to add clarifications or further thoughts.

The results of this study could expand scholarly dialogue around the topic of trust in higher education leadership. The results do offer what Maxwell quotes Judith Singer as terming “face generalizability” (p. 115), meaning there is no apparent reason why the results would not be generalizable. Given the universal nature of trust, as outlined by Baier (1986), one would assume a certain amount of transferability between similar social/organizational cultures.

#### *Possible Risks and Benefits*

The primary risk to participants taking part in this study is breach of confidentiality. Participants have shared personal experience narratives that could involve their current leadership; therefore, every effort has been taken to protect participants’ confidentiality. Pseudonyms have been used in reference to individual participants, their institutions, and any other proper names shared during the interviews. Because the sound of participants’ voices are potentially identifiable, I uploaded the audio files to my personal laptop computer, which is password protected, immediately after each interview. Then I deleted the audio files from the digital recorder to prevent unauthorized access to the interview data. All files were backed up to an encrypted flash drive that has been locked in a fireproof box in my home. I have maintained secure possession of the files throughout the study, and then will erase them completely upon conclusion of the study in accordance with the University of North Carolina at Greensboro’s Institutional Review Board protocol. Using these steps, I have reduced the possible risk of breach of confidentiality for study participants.

No monetary or other material incentives were provided to study participants. The possible benefit to participants was limited to helping them collect, clarify, and reframe their thoughts regarding their trust-building or trust-destroying experiences with leaders by recounting their own stories. Hopefully, this refreshed understanding will be useful to participants as they assume leadership roles, officially or unofficially, in the future. More generally, by contributing to current research on trust, society and institutions of higher learning might also benefit. Leadership development programs might be more informed about the importance of trust in cultivating positive, healthy organizations, and then create learning experiences that encourage the development of more trustworthy leaders. By extension, college climates might also be improved by the increase in trustworthy leadership.

### *Conclusions*

In this chapter, I have described the methodology used for the study, including the research questions, philosophical assumptions that undergird the study, an overview of narrative inquiry, and a description of the research sites and participants, as well as details about data collection and analysis. Possible risks and benefits were also addressed. Using a narrative approach provided a rich opportunity to explore various perspectives on the research questions: what does trust mean to you, what leadership behaviors or actions build trust, and what leadership behaviors or actions destroy trust. As Casey (1995) described it, “the principle value of a narrative is that its information comes complete with evaluations, explanations, and theories with selectivities, silences, and slippage that are intrinsic to its [rich] representations of reality” (p. 234). Narrative

captures an oral history that when “read in all its rich wholeness, will illuminate conscious human activity in a way positivism never can” (Casey, 1993, p. 13). Through exploring the stories of others and my own stories, I was able to see a glimpse of the complex elements that build up or break down trust relationships between leaders and followers.

## CHAPTER IV

### FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to examine how faculty members at three community colleges in North Carolina made meaning of the concept of trust and to explore the leadership behaviors or actions that were perceived to build or destroy feelings of trust. To that end, I interviewed 13 community college faculty members, who shared their perceptions of the concept of trust and the leadership behaviors that they associate with increasing or decreasing trust. I hope that by understanding these perceptions, current and future leaders can reflect upon and adjust their own behaviors to become more effective in building trusting college environments.

In this chapter, I introduce the study participants and convey their personal experience stories with trusted and distrusted leaders. To begin, I will describe the interview process, and provide verbal snapshots of the participants and their concepts of and tendencies toward trust. Then I will explore recurrent themes within their stories.

Large chunks of participants' personal experience stories will be used to capture their individual voices, and to convey what they value, how they regard themselves, and how they make meaning of the world. As Reissman put it, stories are more than words strung together to convey facts; "Informants' stories do not mirror a `world out there.' They are constructed, creatively authored, rhetorical, replete with assumptions, and interpretive" (Reissman, 1993, p. 4-5). Stories do not reveal the truth; they do not



reveal the absolute facts. They convey the participants' meaning-laden renderings of own their experiences.

### Process

With the help of the resident institutional researchers at the three selected North Carolina community colleges and using a random purposeful sampling, I invited by email, phone, or both a minimum of five faculty members per institution, each from different disciplines, to participate in the study (see Appendix E for the script). The sample was not intended to be representative, but different participants from different academic discipline areas were sought to try to encourage a diversity of personal experience stories. As prospective participants initially accepted the invitation, I followed up with an email thanking them, providing a copy of the informed consent for their further consideration prior to the interview (see Appendix C), and asking them to select or recommend best interview dates and times. Participants selected the location of their interviews with the understanding that the locale should be quiet, relatively distraction-free, and private enough to allow for candid dialogue. Nine participants chose their own offices, three selected their classrooms, and one scheduled a conference room.

Only one prospective participant declined after initially accepting, citing that he felt overextended that semester. Thirteen accepted the invitation and participated in the study. Nine of the participants were female and four were male. Nine taught in associate in applied science degree programs, which are designed to prepare graduates for entry into technical or vocational careers. Four taught in associate degree programs, which are designed to prepare students for transfer into bachelors degree programs. The full-time

tenure of faculty at their current institutions ranged from three to 25 years, with a mean of 13.6 years of service. However, several had numerous additional years of teaching experience at other institutions, and most started out as adjunct faculty, teaching one to six years at the institution before being hired full-time. (See Table 1 for participant profile details.)

Table 1

*Participant Profiles*

Pseudonym	Gender	Discipline/ Program	Institution	Full-Time Years	Trust Level
Anne	Female	English	Appalachia Community College	6	TS
Beverly	Female	Graphic Design	Appalachia Community College	25	T
Bill	Male	Electrical Electronics	Appalachia Community College	3	T
Carol	Female	Early Childhood Education	Coastal Plains Community College	23	T
Charles	Male	Electrical Electronics	Coastal Plains Community College	12	T
Evelyn	Female	Office Administration	Forest Hills Community College	20	DT
Helena	Female	Medical Assisting	Forest Hills Community College	20	T
Jackie	Female	Healthcare Management	Coastal Plains Community College	13	TS
Mark	Male	Psychology	Forest Hills Community College	8	TS
Roberto	Male	Sociology	Coastal Plains Community College	25	TS
Sarah	Female	Nursing	Coastal Plains Community College	9	T
Tina	Female	Criminal Justice	Forest Hills Community College	8	DT
Vicki	Female	Psychology	Appalachia Community College	5	TS

*Note.* T=trust; TS=trust some; DT=don't trust

The category called Trust Level refers to the participant's self perception of their own tendency toward extending trust to others. Seven participants explained their personal

tendency was to trust someone until a cause to not trust arises. Those whose first tendency is to trust are labeled T. Four participants indicated that they initially offer limited trust to someone, which is expanded if the original trust is maintained. These participants are labeled TS for Trust Somewhat. Two participants acknowledged that they do not trust others initially until they have an indication that trust is warranted. Those two participants were coded DT for Don't Trust.

Each of the 13 interviews was conducted during the 2009 summer semester and lasted 25 to 65 minutes, with a mean of 40 minutes per interview. After reintroducing myself and the purpose of the study, and having the participant sign an informed consent form, I asked the participant the open-ended question, "Would you tell me a little bit about yourself?" which not only provided me with a helpful context for understanding the participant's perspective, but also allowed the participant to relax and provide more routine information before addressing more in-depth prompts. See Appendix B for a copy of the interview protocol and Appendix C for a copy of the informed consent form.

Participants were also asked: What does the word trust mean to you? How do you decide whether someone in your life is trustworthy? Take a moment to think about the leaders with whom you have worked over your career. Tell me about a time when you have worked with a leader in whom you had a high degree of trust. Why did you trust this person? Without naming anyone, tell me about a time when you have worked with a leader in whom you had a low degree of trust. Why didn't you trust this person? Interviews were audio-recorded to allow for more accurate transcription and review. To protect the identities of participants and their institutions, both were assigned

pseudonyms completely unrelated to their real names. Any other individuals referred to by name by participants during the interviews were also assigned pseudonyms as well. These pseudonyms have been used throughout the study.

### Participants

The following participant profiles are presented to provide a context for understanding the varied perspectives and experiences shared. These verbal snapshots use chunks of the participants' stories of self to more realistically convey a sense of their individual voices, what they value, and how they make meaning of the world.

#### *Anne*

The first participant of the study was Anne. Like many of her community college colleagues, Anne wears multiple hats, both teaching English and serving as department chair for her discipline at Appalachia Community College (ACC). ACC is a medium-sized, rural, 2-year community college in the mountain region of North Carolina with an average annual FTE of around 3,000. "I didn't start teaching at the community college level until 1990, when I was almost 40," Anne explained, not commenting on her previous professional life. Anne, like many community college faculty, started as an adjunct faculty member and after four years was offered a full-time position.

I started teaching full-time in '94, and that was not here. I taught for nine years in another county and really enjoyed working at this level—at the community college level. Then we moved, and I taught at a private college for a year...and then was fortunate enough to find this job and have been here since.

Other participants echoed Anne's affinity for teaching at a community college.

*Vicki*

Vicki was one of those participants. “I prefer community colleges, because folks are more motivated. You know, they are just *better*.” Vicki had previously taught at one of the North Carolina public universities and a private college, and she described it as frustrating, “they come in drunk, you know, that kind of stuff. I mean someone is paying their tab and just, you know, whatever...but I had some good students there...but I do prefer community college work.” Vicki is a psychology faculty member, who had been at Appalachia Community College for five years, though she had been teaching at the college level since 1997. She describes herself as “The Psychology Department,” being the only full-time faculty teaching psychology, but she did not seem to mind. “I love this place. It’s a *wonderful* college...colleagues down to custodians. I mean everybody. You know, it’s small and it’s nice. I mean, I work hard and I love it. I love the students and I get good feedback.”

Prior to her career in teaching, Vicki worked for about 15 years as a clinical practitioner, doing contract work and having a private therapy practice, developing skills that have helped her as a faculty person and mentor to students. While on the ACC campus, I had noticed a flyer with Vicki’s name on it posted in the restroom, soliciting personal care item donations for battered women. Vicki explained,

I volunteer, do a lot of community service stuff, uh, and uh one of my areas of specialty is domestic violence, and so I work for our [domestic violence] program. So I am their sub-psychologist when their other one is on vacation and or with helping, especially with debriefing when they [abuse victims] first come in and are in crisis, when they are like—when they are in their most vulnerable time. And I do a lot of donation stuff. I do a lot of things through my Presbyterian Church. I’m in a pastoral program now, so I’m busy!

Vicki credits her children as being the reason for her work and certainly for her busyness as she is a mother of six children, four of whom are teenagers.

*Beverly*

Beverly is an advertising and graphic design faculty member, whose tenure at Appalachia Community College spans nearly 25 years, not counting the time that she spent there as a student. She has served under the leadership of three different presidents and various vice presidents and deans. She jokingly describes herself as a veteran of the institution “with the battle scars to prove it.” During our time together, Beverly was quick to laugh and proud to speak of her husband, daughter, and granddaughter. Relationships seem very important to Beverly, and she wanted to know about me as a person, whether I was married, if I had children, and if I taught.

*Bill*

Bill is an Appalachia Community College graduate with Associate in Applied Science degrees in electronics and mechanicals. Having worked and then been repeatedly displaced in textiles, he began his teaching career as a high school teacher.

I worked at a local industry and got the infamous thirty minute layoff. And then I worked for another company and when the work ran out, got laid off again. But luckily, uh, a gentleman here at the college that I went to class with, he knowed of an opening at a high school in the neighboring county being an electronics teacher but they also needed somebody with some background in mechanical because they had to teach a Principles of Technology class which is basically a low level physics.... So I fit the bill just wonderful. They were desperate, I needed a job, so... match made in heaven.

After five years of teaching vocational education, Bill had completed a bachelors degree and started into a masters program, when had the opportunity to work at ACC materialized. Bill explained,

The other person quit. Gave the old notice under the door and never seen ‘um again trick. So...again, they are desperate, I’m looking to move, so I move up from--took me six years to get, or five years to get out of high school, but I’m finally at the college level and thoroughly enjoy it.

Despite his endless wit and self-deprecating humor, Bill is serious about education, both as a learner and as a teacher. In the three years since, Bill has completed his masters degree and started an educational specialist (EdS) program. He feels like he has found his vocation in education. “I like it here...doing what I love to do. I love to teach.”

### *Roberto*

Roberto has taught at Coastal Plains Community College (CPCC) for 25 years and served as chair of the social science department for about 12 of those years. CPCC is large suburban public 2-year community college in the coastal region of North Carolina with an average annual FTE of about 10,000. Roberto has a masters degree in rural sociology from NC State and identifies himself as a social scientist in his habits of thinking. “I am always looking for evidence,” Roberto explained. He accepts and factors into his judgments the fallibility of human perceptions. Roberto commented, “As my grandmomma used to say, ‘My mouth ain’t no prayer book.’” This was a phrase I had never heard before, but he explained that, “A prayer book is gospel...that everything that I think or say is not absolutely true. I’m fallible.... [My grandmother] was an Episcopal lady, and she believed in the Common Book of Prayer, which was sort of the cannon of

the Episcopal church.” I found this saying to be a perfect metaphorical complement for the study as a whole. While every story is important and offers something for others to learn, their sum is not a prayer book.

### *Charles*

Charles, like Bill, came to become a community college faculty member at Coastal Plains Community College after working in industry. Charles is also a community college graduate, with an associate in applied science degree in business and accounting and experience in farming.

When I didn't land a job in that area [business and accounting], I grew up on a farm and I'm used to working with my hands doing stuff and so I wound up in industry. I had an opportunity there to hire on with the Maintenance Department, and uh, which, uh, pulled from my skills on the farm. Uh, and from there I got kind of drafted into the electrical career. And I'd done some electrical back on the farm, and um, from 23 years of experience there and training and uh I found out that I drew upon some of the skills that I had learned in auditing in the Accounting area in trouble shooting, because some of the same logical thinking process is used to diagnose equipment that's used to find problems in financial papers.

His electrical experience in industry prepared Charles for his role as a faculty member in the electrical electronics program, a position he has enjoyed for the past ten years. “I really enjoy it here. Meet a lot of people and interact. Make a difference, I feel like, in people's lives. And I try to be a positive influence on those who I come into contact with.” Charles embraces the college's open door policy, expanding the meaning of the phrase beyond admissions policy.

I love it here because we have an open door policy--and not just in admission--but people are allowed to come and go in and out of the classrooms and offices as uh,



as they feel comfortable to. We try to make them feel comfortable to come by and see us anytime. And uh, I like to interact with people outside of the classroom too, because it keeps me fresh, inspired.

Charles describes community colleges as true “community institutions,” a notion which reflects his personal values of inclusiveness and positive community.

### *Sarah*

Sarah is a faculty member and director of the nursing program at Coastal Plains Community College. Starting out ten years ago as an adjunct faculty member in nursing at CPCC, Sarah worked her way up to a full-time faculty position and then to director.

Prior to teaching, she worked as a hematology/oncology nurse.

I’ve been a hematology/oncology nurse for maybe almost 25-26 years now. I can’t remember but close to that, and really just got to a point that I absolutely loved the clinical, but I had been doing it for a long time and got the opportunity to do some part-time faculty and I hit CPCC ten years ago and that was it. I absolutely love what I do. Had no interest in going into a leadership role actually. I was very happy in my faculty role, because here at PCC we have a wonderful saying that leadership is measured by contribution, not position. So, I felt very excited about my role, and then when the director decided to retire, she came to me and said I think that you would be very good in this role and I thought, I—don’t think I want to do that. I’ve been a nurse manager for years, and I’ve done that, and decided to throw my name in and got selected. And I have just absolutely have loved it.

Sarah is proud to talk about her team mates, the Nursing program faculty. Having high standards is very important to her. She explained,

We’ve got ten other faculty, all absolutely incredible faculty. I mean just wonderful, very excited to be here. They like each other. We do things together. There’s a very, very, very high standard here, but they all meet it.

She feels equally passionate about the students in her program.

*Carol*

Carol has been a full-time faculty member for the past 23 years in the Early Childhood Program at Coastal Plains Community College, but her history with the college and the Early Childhood Program goes back to 1980, when she began teaching part-time in the evenings. Looking back on our interview, I think it seems appropriate that we met in her classroom, rather than her office, to talk. She commented,

So I've been in this room, this particular room that we are sitting in, since the beginning, more or less, other rooms in other buildings from time to time, but [sighs] this is where I started [laughs]. It seems like, you know, pretty much finishing up here too.

Carol has undergraduate and graduate degrees in child development. She was originally hired full-time in a combined role of preschool director and faculty member, but eventually was faced with having to choose between the two as program enrollment grew. Carol explained,

I began to advocate for those two positions to be separated. And I had to pick which one I would apply for when they split my job, and I chose the full-time instructor, because I had run various programs in the past and teaching is really my passion. I'd always been lucky enough to do both, but I had more luck than I could handle for a few years there, so we hired a new director....and I just started then teaching full-time, which for about three years was like I was on vacation. I kept thinking, well, is that all there is? At the end of the day, I had a breath, and my family got to see me, and since that time, work expands you know to fill the space allotted. So this job has now become like that one, much more than a full-time position. It's one that I enjoy doing. There's enough variety in it that I'm never, ever bored.

Carol projects a sage calmness as she speaks about her life as a teacher and as a mother and grandmother, roles that are intertwined. She credits her children with rerouting her planned career path.

I was an English and French major, I'm embarrassed to tell you, until I had my first child. And I had that child—my son...he was the most interesting thing that I had *ever* experienced in my entire life and I have had lots of experience with children in the past. So, but watching him, figuring out how much more to know about children, just took me off taking courses not for credit, auditing classes, and my husband was a professional graduate student, so we moved around a lot, and everywhere we went, I took a course or something in child development or education or something like that. And I'd figured out by then, when I got to go back to school, it would be in child development and before that happened, I had a second child. And when I did finally go back, that meant that I was a mom, a wife, part-time worker.

Having had these experiences, Carol is not only passionate about her discipline, she understands the struggles of her community college students who might also be balancing a variety of life responsibilities in addition to academics.

*Jackie*

Jackie has taught at Coastal Plains Community College full-time since 1996 and part-time for several years before that. She helped to start the Healthcare Management Program and now serves as the department chair. In her previous career, she had managed a medical practice for over 27 years. With a masters degree in accounting, Jackie also teaches business and accounting courses. She explained,

Oh yeah, I teach about three classes. Um, I teach, I teach in accounting, and I teach business courses, and I teach healthcare courses. I do not teach in just one area. I cannot stand to be stuck in just one area. I get very bored, very easily [laughs]. Like I've said, my background is in healthcare management. And that's why I helped start that program. I do in that program just mostly healthcare

finance class. My masters is in accounting, but then I also teach strategic management. Like this summer, I am teaching business math online. So, you know, I teach, I can teach a little bit of everything. And I just, I just, I don't like to teach two of the same of anything.... I like to teach. I would not want to get out of teaching. So, I do teach. I probably teach heavier load than a lot of other department chairs do, because there is always a need. And we, we service a lot of needs. Our department is one of the bigger departments in our division, and we service a lot of the college transfer students, because of the accounting and econ and stuff. So there always seems to be a need here for more instructors....

Jackie is a proud mother and grandmother, and she projects maternal affection for her students. "I love the kids and I love being around them. So I enjoy being in the classroom. When I'm in the classroom, I forget all the other stuff that's going on." She values and advocates for tough love and honesty when advising students, even if the truth is difficult. She noted,

You know there are kids that I see sitting in...college transfer—and I know they will never make it..., and I set them right down in here and we have a heart to heart. I call them my younguns and they call me their momma. And I say, 'Look, what are you going to do? Where do you want to go?' And we have a heart to heart, and sometimes it's hard to say, "Hey, I'm not going to make it."

Such difficult conversations are based in caring and are aligned with Jackie's upbringing and family value of unvarnished honesty.

### *Tina*

Tina started teaching part-time in the Criminal Justice Program in 1996 at Forest Hills Community College (FHCC), a small institution located in the Piedmont region of North Carolina with an average annual FTE of less than 1,500. "It didn't take me long to figure out that I loved the classroom," she said. "So in 2001, they had an opening for the Criminal Justice head, and...I accepted that, so I was the criminal justice head and the

BLET director.” After about a year, Tina was promoted to associate dean overseeing criminal justice, BLET, early childhood, food service, medical assisting, dental assisting, human services, and practical nursing. She still teaches in the Criminal Justice Program. Before becoming a faculty member, Tina was a juvenile probation officer for eight years. She has bachelors and masters degrees in criminal justice.

*Mark*

Mark has been teaching as a full-time psychology faculty member at Forest Hills Community College for about eight years. Like many others, he started teaching part-time. “I started out with one class, but by the semester prior to moving into full-time, I was teaching about four classes, which is, which is getting close, getting close to full-time. And so I taught part-time for about three years, and of course, I was working somewhere else.” He has a graduate degree in counseling and worked in the mental health field, including private practice work, before becoming a faculty member. His counseling background comes in handy with his additional responsibility as a faculty advisor. Like a number of the other study participants, Mark fills and has filled a number of different roles while serving as faculty. “I came on initially as just a full-time psychology instructor. I chaired the department for a couple of years. And for the past four years I believe it is, my duties are split between academic advising and psychology instructor. I guess I’m about one-third advising and about two-thirds teaching....” Pictures on Mark’s desk suggest that he is family-oriented, and his personal experience stories certainly reflect that image.

## *Helena*

Helena is a faculty member in the Medical Assisting Program at Forest Hills Community College. She got her start in healthcare, first as a respiratory therapist and then as a medical assistant. Helena explained,

Years ago, I started out as a respiratory therapist. I went to a community college for respiratory therapy. I was in their first graduating class--makes me feel so old! And uh, was immediately employed. In those days, you could work as a respiratory therapist without going to school, so I was working as I went to high school. So, then I went to school for respiratory therapy and got a job...in critical care.

Over time, she found herself burned out and looking for a change.

It was just about shift change and one of my patients was going home that day, so I went to check on him and do the final things I had to do with him, and he looked at me and said, "You look so tired. What's wrong?" And I said, "It's just been a long night." I was working third shift, and he said, "I want you to do me a favor. I want you to sit down in that chair and read the paper and rest while I do my last little breathing thing." "I'm not allowed to do that, but I appreciate it. I've got other things to do." And he said, "No, I insist." And I thought well it's the end of the shift, so okay I'll do that. He's one of my good patients. You know, he's not going to be tattling on me or anything. And I looked down, and there was an article about Medical Assisting, and they were starting a class, and it just clicked. That's my something else that I can do. So I went back to school—to make a long story short—I went back to school for Medical Assisting, thinking that I was going into pulmonology. Never got there [laughs]. I worked for a family practice. And then one of my instructors asked me to help her teach a class, and I was reluctant to do that, but because she had done so many things for me, I thought payback. Um, so I helped her, and I've been hooked ever since. So I've been in the classroom since then teaching Medical Assisting.

Helena understands first-hand the circuitous route that community college students often take on their educational journeys, and making learning relevant for them is a point of pride for her.

*Evelyn*

Having worked in a variety of areas at Forest Hills Community College, Evelyn currently teaches in the Office Administration program and serves as the Associate Dean of Business Technologies. She explained,

I am in my 20<sup>th</sup> year here at Forest Hills Community College. And uh, I have worked all over this college really. I started out in Student Services as an Administrative Assistant many years ago, and um, I went from there to Continuing Education. I worked in that area for a number of years. I then had the opportunity to go back to Student Services, and I did Financial Aid for five years. And then there was a retirement in the faculty in the program area that I teach, Office Administration. And they, um—some of the faculty members thought that I might be good with that program, so they encouraged me to seek that. And I did, and I absolutely love it. I've been teaching in the area now for—let's see, it's going on--coming up in my tenth year doing that.

Starting out as an administrative assistant herself, Evelyn is able to bring practical experiences into the classroom. Prior to her experiences at Forest Hill, she also worked at a bank, a car dealership, and a doctor's office, but she describes teaching as “never boring” and her students as the source of constant renewal.

But this is definitely, um, the best place, I think, to work. For me, it really suits my personality.... I've never been, been bored here. There's always something new and different every day. And when you are working with students, you really tend to learn so much from them. You know, hopefully you are imparting information to them too, but very semester, every class, I always learn so much myself from them. And so it's continual renewal process, which I really like. I think it keeps me on my toes.... I guess, for me, the most significant, important part of the year for me is graduation. When you see your students that you've worked with for two years, perhaps one year, actually graduate, and they are able to get a job, you feel like I have done something worthwhile and just being able to see that come together is just really, um, important to me.

Evelyn describes herself as “not an open book,” but her deep caring for her students, her colleagues, and her institution are clear in the careful and appreciative way she describes them.

### Defining Trust

When asked the seemingly simple question, what does the word trust mean to you, participants provided a variety of responses, not all mutually exclusive. This is not surprising given the multitude of definitions of trust that exist. As Mark commented, “Trust is one of those words that we use a lot but may have an ambiguous meaning, depending upon who you are talking to.”

### *Integrity or Ethical Behavior*

Two participants responded that trust meant having confidence in the integrity of a person. Of course, integrity is another seemingly simple but complex concept that includes honesty, truthfulness, honor, reliability, and uprightness. Mark suggested that, “A person of integrity is someone that naturally will have trust,” that to him trust is a natural outgrowth of integrity. Or stated differently, when one is honest, truthful, honorable, reliable, and upright, others naturally trust this person.

With definitions related to integrity, five participants indicated that trust meant honesty and openness, the knowledge that someone was telling the truth. Jackie explained it like this, “Trust is somebody being honest with me.... It’s hard to explain, but you know, honest and, and they are truthful to you, even if you don’t want to hear the truth.” Sarah had a similar response; “I think I just define trust as believing that what somebody is telling me is the truth...whether good or bad.” Bill spoke in terms of being



one's self; "You know, just being honest and open. Being who you are," as opposed to putting on a false front.

Four participants indicated that trust meant that confidences would be held, that confidential information shared with an individual would not be shared with others. Tina explained, "Confidentiality I guess is the big one for me, because if I trust someone and tell them something and I mean for it to be confidential, it will stay that way." Jackie elaborated, "Sometimes it's just as simple as being a sounding board...and to trust that I can go up there and say, 'I've had it, and it's a bad day,' and say what I want to say, and know that it's not going out of those four walls." Evelyn concurred that a trusted person is "someone who is able to hold your confidence, you know [clears throat] not be able to—to be able to hear information and process it, and not, of course, spread it out everywhere else too."

#### *Valuing and Protecting the Interests of Others*

Four others said that trust meant knowing that the decisions a person made would be in the best interest of the group or individual being led. "You know they are looking out for your best interests." Jackie explained, "I guess they care about you too. And sometimes you don't find that." Roberto applied this same idea in a more global sense, trust is knowing that "someone is going to take the organization in the direction that it needs to go...in a direction that is best for the organization, and in the end, that will protect everybody's interests." Roberto also suggested that there was a link between trust and compassion for him; "Trust involves a sense of compassion" or caring for the individual as a fellow human being.

One participant said that trust meant being safe. Carol addressed the question from a child development perspective,

It's funny that you brought that one up, because I have to teach about trust a lot. In teaching about infancy, that is *the* developmental role of infancy. It's the developing the sense of trust. That babies come into the world and their first developmental task, other than survival, is to figure out am I safe here; am I okay. And they can only learn about that at first, by how other people treat them. So, if I cry and someone comes, and I'm hungry and I'm fed, and I'm cold and someone puts a blanket on me, uh, then I get the idea that this is a safe place be, but not only can I trust other people, I can trust myself to do things. And I think it doesn't really change. At first, then, in infancy, trust comes from how other people treat you. And then you develop a certain mind set, I think, and approach people and situations in terms of that decision that you made and don't even remember making in those early years of life, especially that first one when we have no conscious memory. Later on, so I get to see that in my students. I get to see students who come in open to me, open to learning, open to authority in general, and a sense of themselves. And I have quite a few students who come to me with the opposite. They don't basically trust people in authority. Um, they are testing their limits all the time. And I have to earn their trust. And it makes it harder to teach them. Because you spend the first semester with first year students figuring out who is who, and which ones are already there and which ones have to get there—all the time while covering your course competencies, [laughs] while trying to reach them. So over time, my definition of trust has been just that, am I okay? Am I safe here? Am I safe to be who I am here? So that's my definition of trust.

#### *Consistency or Predictability*

Four participants correlated trust to their confidence in being able to predict behavior of others, that the trusted ones were reliable and would do what they said they were going to do. Charles said,

My definition of trust...[is] being able to take certain aspects of life for granted in relationships with others, whatever your potential relationship is, whether boss and employee, family member and family member . . . . It's being able to take certain things for granted, and go on with life, knowing how others will respond.

Mark echoed Charles response, “I would say that trust is, in a general sense, when somebody does what they say they are going to do.... I wouldn’t say that’s the only piece of it, but I would say that it’s the most important piece—is that you know that the person is, is a person of, of their word.” Bill used the phrase “no surprises” when describing trust as meaning predictable.

### *Professional competence*

Two participants indicated that trust suggested an expectation of professional competence or knowledge.

Trust involves a sense of knowledge. In other words, somebody can take this organization in a direction, but if they don’t have the knowledge to do that, then, then, um—there has to be some, uh, evidence of faith, almost in the Paulian in the sense that there is substance or evidence of things not seen. Of course, leaders of an organization are not Saint Paul, so there must be some evidence, uh, that what has happened in the past has been successful.

Roberto and Sarah both made the point that providing evidence of professional competence allows trust between leader and follower to grow, because followers can depend upon or have “faith” in the expertise, good judgment, and technical understanding of the leader. Without professional competence, even intelligent, caring, well-meaning leaders can cause harm to their teams.

### Determining Trustworthiness

How do people decide who can be trusted and who cannot? Is it a conscious process of deciding? Is it a gut reaction or intuition? When participants were asked how they decide whether someone is trustworthy, most responded in terms of experience and

observation. As they described their methods for determining trustworthiness, most also commented on their own personal tendencies or capacities for extending trust to others.

According to Anne, she relies upon her experience with a person, by observing “what that person chooses to do and how that person treats other people...the proof is in the pudding.” Vicki echoed this method, “I am a great observer of human nature...observation and feedback from other people...and I listen.” With her background in psychology, Vicki has been trained in both observing and listening. A major piece that she is looking for is consistency of behavior and between what is said and what is done. She explained, “If things aren’t consistent—you know I have a good memory for that [laughter]—or if I hear somebody’s been hurt unnecessarily or backstabbed or let down or you know things like that, I would make a judgment” not to be as trusting with that person. For Vicki, trust must be built or earned over time through positive interactions.

Mark, who also has a psychology background, repeated Vicki’s sentiments regarding earned trust and a reliance on observation of behaviors and looking for consistency between what is said and what is done.

In my opinion, generally speaking, trust is earned—not so much with words, but with behavior. It’s by what somebody does—or doesn’t do. And again, it goes back to that definition, if somebody tells me, “Yes, I’m going to do this,” and then they do it, that builds trust, because trust is not either you have it or you don’t, it’s really a matter of degree or dichotomy of trust when you begin to look at that. Because people can do things to break your trust, but they can earn that trust back. In parenting, I think there are a lot of illustrations with trust that you can really glean from that in that sense. . . . My parents trusted me to go places and do things and not get into trouble and not do the wrong thing; whereas, um, some other parents might not have trusted their children to do certain things. So a child could break that trust by disobeying or not doing what they need to do, and then their

parent, you know, pull back and no longer let them do—I'm going to give an example, when I was about 16 years old—and looking back, I don't think I would ever let my child do this—at 16, they let me drive with a friend all the way to Snowshoe, West Virginia to go snowboarding. And we just—and it just still shocks me that they let me do that. We were staying with a friend's friend, and you know, my parents trusted me to be able to go and do that. Now we went, had a great time, came back, no problems, but I could have done things along the way that would have broke or breached their trust in the sense of not calling them when we got there, you know, checking in, and doing some of the things that they wanted me to do. And if I had breached that trust, then the next time that I wanted to do something, then they would have pulled back and not let me done that.

Mark's story illustrated how trust can be built through successfully passing a test of trust. His parents extended trust, Mark did not abuse their trust in him, and as a result, the parents continued to provide the greater freedom along with the earned trust. Mark commented that he uses the same technique with his students, allowing them the opportunity to earn his trust. Roberto used similar terms and referred to the need for the establishment of "evidence" when forming trust relationships.

In contrast, Beverly is more initially trusting, regarding trust as a given until the trust is broken. She describes herself as possibly too trusting, but she draws a connection between her own trustworthiness and her expectations of others.

I get criticized for this, but personally, in my professional and my private life, I assume that everybody is trustworthy until they prove otherwise to me.... I guess it's just because I, my nature is to be open and honest, and I am not out to deceive or, um, manipulate anything, and so I don't expect that in someone. I don't expect it outright, until someone shows me something, and they break that trust or they break my confidence, and they don't respond the way I think that would be logical or in our, you know, in the best interest, and then I am, "Whoa!" You know, maybe we're not on the same page.

Like Vicki, Beverly looks for consistent, predictable behaviors to determine trustworthiness.

Bill also looks for consistent behaviors, but he also emphasizes fairness. He also draws a connection between the way he would like to treat others and the way he would like to be treated.

I pretty much give everybody the benefit of the doubt up front. Uh, I listen to what other people say about 'em but I like to think that I have my own judgment of the person when it comes down to it. I've seen plenty of situations, had plenty of supervisors to treat some employees one way--pretty much like dirt--and other employees just like regular human beings. I wouldn't say buddies or pals but they was straight up, fair, equitable, all across the board. So I try to judge 'em like that [straight up, fair, equitable, all across the board] to start with....I like to give everyone a fair shake.

This emphasis on fairness and lack of prejudging was echoed in Charles' explanation of how he determines trustworthiness.

I try to let that take care of itself in time. You, you can't—you have to be careful in being prejudiced against people as to whether or not they are trustworthy or not, whether or not--where they stand on issues or whatever, even you may, a lot of times you may in your first meeting with them you do have preconceived notions. You've really got to be able to put those on the back burner. And sometimes you've got to manually do that. You've got to make a concerted effort to do that, because, uh, you miss out on opportunities when you don't do that. Uh, opportunities of, uh, getting close to people, of really understanding and learning them, getting a different perspective on life, or even getting an opportunity to be a positive influence on them, if you don't. So, uh, it's kind of, uh, even though you might have an inclination to trust or distrust, uh, I really try to go back to the old adage, everyone is innocent until proven guilty. Uh, and I guess that's one of those areas, when you mistrust somebody, it has the effect of being guilty of something.

By keeping an open mind, Charles allows himself more time to observe, gather more information, before judging a person's intentions and behaviors as trustworthy or not. However, he acknowledged that sometimes his trusting stance is not without risk. "I'm a little bit more trusting of people, probably, or willing to open myself up to, uh, being hurt or being, you know, let down or whatever," but he finds the risk worth the possible gain of building more trusting relationships.

Sarah described herself similarly, as assuming that others that she meets are trustworthy or innocent until proven guilty.

I think that I trust everybody—and I tell the students this—until, I guess they do me wrong . . . when I catch them in something that is not truthful, and then that trust—it's not that it necessarily goes away, but I need to—I'm a little more cautious. But I think that when I meet people that I don't know that I go at them with an angle that they are who they say they are, until I find out that they are not.

Sarah also describes a trust tendency that I will refer to as loaned trust. When she meets someone who is referred to her by a trusted person, she extends trust more fully to that newly met person. She explained by using me as the example. I had been referred to Sarah by Dr. Thomas, the well-respected resident institutional researcher at Coastal Community College.

If it is somebody that is introduced to me by someone that I respect, for example you, okay? I trust Dr. Thomas. I've worked with him now on committees—I've seen him, I know that he's a trustworthy person . . . . So, my—you already had built in trust coming in here this morning, because you came from Dr. Thomas.

Sarah had extended a certain extra amount of trust to me as a loan of trust from her trusting relationship with Dr. Thomas.

Mark described a similar type of loaning of trust based upon position. If a person filled a position of authority, then he would initially extend greater trust to that person beyond that which he would give to another coworker on the basis of the position. He explained,

I'm a man of respect, and you do need to respect your supervisors. Uh, and the fact that they are in that position, says something in and of itself, so I guess there's a certain baseline respect that everybody—when I say respect I mean baseline respect and trust, because that's another one of those words that goes with integrity—and since I am respectful with supervisors, they get a baseline sense of trust—and you know, I try not to quantify it too much—but . . . you know if I moved into a new position, and there's going to be a certain sense of trust with whoever my supervisor is, because they are in that position. And from that point, they are either going to build that trust, or they are going to break that trust down, based off of what they do and what they say.

While the trust is initially loaned to the new leader on the basis of position, Mark indicated that this preferential status is temporary, and susceptible to change based upon the behaviors of the leader.

Carol is a self-described “trusting person.” When asked how she determines trustworthiness, Carol was ambivalent.

That's a tough one, because I don't always trust my judgment on that. And when I say that, it's truthful [laughs]. I am a trusting person. I don't, I don't start out with a sense of foreboding. So I assume the best, unless I am given evidence to the contrary, which makes me vulnerable, and you'd think by this old age that I am that I've been burned enough in life I should have changed, but I really haven't changed. That is truly—I won't say it's a problem [laughing], because it's not. I have survived and am doing okay, but I'm disappointed a lot, and as I get older I notice that those disappointments...they surprise me less. And I'm thinking, “Am I changing? Am I getting more realistic?” I don't know that. I really don't. But I assume the best until I have a reason to think something different. Generally, but I couldn't statistically tell you, but I great majority of the



time, I am not disappointed. People do tend to respond the way you expect them to.

Knowing that people have disappointed her and that people will disappoint her again, Carol continues to offer trust anew and hope that it will be deserved in the end.

Helena also describes herself as having a very trusting nature, and therefore, she tends to extend trust until she is given a reason not to trust. “I am really bad about judging people, and I assume that anything they tell me is the truth . . . . I trust everybody, until they give me a reason not to trust them.” She noted that her trusting nature has caused her “to be burned on occasion,” but she continues to want to believe the best of others and give them a chance to earn her trust again. “You’ll have to earn my trust back, and although I’ll want to think good, like they made a mistake saying that, they misspoke, or whatever, I try to see the good in it, [but] I’m skeptical until they earn it back.”

Jackie described using a more intuitive method in making decisions regarding trust. Her personal trust tendency is somewhat guarded, guided by what she identified as “learned instinct” and reinforced by testing the trustworthiness of others.

I have to be with them a while. I guess it’s called gut. It’s instinct, having been through the hard knocks . . . . I have kids. I have three boys and, you know, and one is 25 and one is 22, and you see them and they trust somebody to do something and then they find out they are not going to do it. And the answer is in time you will learn who to trust and who not to trust. You, you, a lot of times you have to give a little bit and see how far that goes. Um, you don’t give them everything. It’s just kind of like a fishing rod. You give them a little bit and reel a little in. And you just have to go with your instincts a lot of times, and you don’t give them everything. And you have to get to that point where you are comfortable. And it may take months. It may take years to get to that point. And it may never get to that point. You know there are some people that I wouldn’t

trust with nothing. [Laughter] And then there are people that you would trust with everything. . . . So, it's just more of an instinct thing, but I think it's a learned instinct. Kids have to learn, and I think you see kids in high school and college. They have to learn that. And when you go out into the workforce, you have to learn that. People, you think they are your best bud and you can trust them, and then they are stabbing a knife in your back. I-i-it comes with time. And everybody, I think everybody, if you could talk to everybody, everybody could give you an incidence that they thought that that person was their friend and they could trust them and they ended up, they weren't and they stabbed a knife in their back. I think it comes with learning and, you know, the hard knocks of life that sometimes you have to learn it that way.

Like Charles, Beverly, Helena, and Carol, Jackie acknowledged that deciding to trust is risky, and it means opening oneself up to disappointment or betrayal.

Tina echoed Jackie's intuitive stance. With a background in law enforcement, Tina identified herself as guarded, not only relying upon keen observation skills but on instinct as well.

Well, it might be different for me since I come from criminal justice, so I have, I definitely have a sixth sense, and I go with my gut. I know that sounds crazy, but in probation you pretty much had to. You had to determine early did you need to leave your guard up or could you trust somebody, even people you were working with. Um, but their behavior, um, how they interact with other people. Um, if they, a lot of times if I am around somebody and they are talking negatively about someone else, or their behavior indicates that they are not, um, not honest, in that they are saying something about somebody or you know, backstabbing or whatever, trying to climb up the ladder. Well, if you are going to do that to that person, you may very well do that to me, so I'm probably not going to trust you. So I think it's just their demeanor and their behavior, verbal and nonverbal.

Tina observes how a person behaves with others and makes some assumptions about how she will be eventually treated by this person on the basis of those observations.

Evelyn is an observer as well. She describes herself as one for whom trust does not come easily.

It takes me a while to get to know people. And um, that comes from working with them on a daily basis and um, seeing them, seeing how they interact with other people...as well, watching the friendships that they develop, and um, that kind of thing. . . . It takes me a while to build up trust with someone.

Like Tina, Evelyn watches not only for behaviors but also for associations or friendships that a person might develop, knowing the person by the company they keep, so to speak.

Not surprisingly, those participants who describe themselves as trusting don't portray themselves as using any particular method for determining trustworthiness, unless that trust is somehow threatened. Those who describe themselves as less trusting portray themselves as providing a limited amount of initial trust, observing what people choose to do, how they treat others, who their friends are, how they use the trust given, and whether their behaviors are predictable and competent, before extending more trust.

#### Reflecting Upon Trusted and Untrusted Leaders

After listening to participants talk generally about their concepts of trust and determining trustworthiness, I was eager as a researcher to hear whether their concepts would be borne out through their stories. And perhaps not surprisingly, they were. After considering the many stories shared and analyzing the similarities and powerful experiences, five areas of comparison between trusted and untrusted leaders emerged: ethics, valuing others, communication, competence, and consistency. These categories closely mirror the categories that emerged from the participants' definitions of trust with the exception of communication, which I added to bring together a cluster of stories that might have tangentially related to the others but seemed worthy of a category of their own. The categories are not cleanly discrete and occasionally are brought together

through a story in such a way as to make them overlap. It might be helpful to think of the categories more as spotlights that will be used to focus emphasis on a particular cluster of related stories, as opposed to a box into which all stories will be neatly fit.

By the category term ethics, I am referring to the philosophy of right and wrong that governs individual or group conduct. By valuing others, I mean appreciation, support, and regard for the importance of others. By communication, I am referring to methods and content of communications between leaders and followers. Competence refers to professional capability or one's ability to successfully do a job, and by consistency, I mean the level of harmony and stability of behaviors that make one predictable to others. In the following sections, I will share participants' contrasting stories of trusted and untrusted leaders as they relate to these five areas.

### *Ethics*

#### *Ethics-Related Behaviors of Trusted Leaders*

As a group, participants indicated that according to their experiences, trusted leaders exhibit the following behaviors. Trusted leaders demonstrate integrity and hold to their principles, even when it isn't convenient or popular to do so. Ultimately, they do the right thing and honor their commitments. They are fair and distribute work evenly. Trusted leaders are honest and tell the truth. They hold confidences.

Roberto shared two stories of trusted leaders, who demonstrated integrity and held to their principles, even when it isn't convenient or popular to do so. Roberto recounted how a campus leader had stood his ground during the tense time prior to an accreditation

reaffirmation, when a well-meaning group wanted to improperly use data to force needed change in the financial aid area.

We were going through SACS accreditation and . . . everybody here knew that the Financial Aid Department was a mess. Everybody knew. Everybody knew it. And I was on the, I was on the steering committee. And everybody wanted to use SACS to fix Financial Aid. We had a report from Noel-Levitz . . . . And the evidence on Noel-Levitz was contrary to what I knew. And we didn't have any evidence that there was a problem with Financial Aid. We all knew it, but there wasn't any evidence there. And the discussion was rather heated. This was a desperate attempt on the part of people within certain elements of the college to fix this problem. And this individual said, um, "No we don't have the evidence." And I think that engendered trust . . . . And you've got to admire that. And you've got a person in that situation, who goes out on a limb and says—and he's not taking a risk just to be risky, it's taking a risk with the truth and accepting the consequences. That's a person you can trust. That's a leader that you can trust. And, um...sometimes not popular, but doing the right thing.

Roberto emphasized that this leader also wanted to make changes in Financial Aid, but he was not willing to compromise the integrity of the institution or his own integrity as a member of the group by misusing the data. By standing up to other leaders from across campus, this leader was risking his political standing within the college community. Fortunately, he did not suffer negative repercussions. In the end, the group was persuaded to do the right thing, and the leader actually gained standing with the group for maintaining a strong ethical stance.

Roberto also shared a story of another ethical leader, who earned his trust by remaining true to her word. He had been recruited from another college by this leader with the promise of a 12 month contract.

Uh, she was the department chair, and I came here with a—uh, I thought it was a better opportunity here, but it was a nine month contract, and where I was, was a

12 month contract. She told me that it would be a...12 month contract by the time that the contract was up and that I would be extended through the summer, and I would have benefits and full pay and all those sorts of things. And she gave me her word.

But then an unexpected financial issue that put the 12-month contract in question.

However, the supervisor was committed to fulfilling her promise, and worked hard to be sure that the 12 month contract came forward. “There was a problem. And she fixed it . . . . You could take her at her word.” Her integrity set the tone for their future relationship and reinforced Roberto’s respect and loyalty to her.

Bill shared a story about another ethical leader, whom he described as “fair across the board, distributed work evenly, didn’t ask anybody to do something that he wouldn’t do. If you needed help, he was there.” Bill emphasized his valuing of distributing work evenly as an aspect of fairness, using his own leadership experience story as a foil to his story about his trusted leader.

When I was in a supervisory position, I had a young lady tell me, “Why are you getting me to do this [tough job] all the time?” And that just sorta made me take a step back and look and say why do I ask this particular person to do some of the harder work? And then I realized it’s because I could count on them to get it done. Whereas I ask someone else, then it may or may not get done. So, I seen that I wasn’t treating this person fairly because they did their job, so I wanted them to do more then their share because I knew it would get done.

He indicated that this was a very important leadership lesson for him, and that his actions were not in keeping with his value of fairness. His mentor “came down on everybody the same way,” even though it might have been easier not to do so. “So I had to go back and ride the other people just to get them to do their jobs which I didn’t like doing it,” but

ultimately, that is what had to happen in order to maintain alignment with his strongly held value of fairness.

Jackie told the story of a trusted leader, who also happened to be her father, whose commitment to the truth earned the respect of his work team and his patients. Prior to working as a faculty member, Jackie had worked as the office manager of her father's medical practice.

You know, a lot of what I know, the physician's office that I worked in, I worked for my father. So I learned it the hard way, because he would tell you like it was. But he took care of us, and I, I feel that's the way it is, and sometimes you don't want to hear the truth, but a lot of times, it's what you need to hear.

For patients and coworkers alike, this leader's insistence on the truth, above all other things, reinforced their trust in him. Jackie perceived that, in spite of what others might have initially perceived as bluntness, the leader's honesty was born out of caring for others. In order to seek real solutions, one must be dealing with the facts of the matter, not an appeasing view of how we would like for things to be.

Jackie also told the story of another ethical leader in whom she placed her trust because of the leader's commitment to holding confidences. Jackie focused on the importance of being able to use the leader as a sounding board without fear of unintended, negative consequences.

I trust him. I trust that I can talk to him and he talk to me. I know that he is gonna do the most of what he can do within his realm . . . . Um, but just, just being there. And, and, and sometimes it's just as simple as being a sounding board. You know and to trust that I can go up there and say, "I have had it, and it's a bad day," and say what I want to say, and know that it's not going out of those four walls. Um, you know, that what I tell him doesn't go anywhere, unless

I want it to go anywhere else. And he can tell me things, and it doesn't go anywhere else. Cause you've got to have somebody to sound off to . . . . Um, you know, so sometimes you need someone in that setting, who understands that setting. But you've got to be sure that they are not going to go—especially when you are talking about someone that's above you—you don't want, you have to be sure that what you are saying doesn't go to the people above them and get you in trouble. And you know, like with my boss, he's going to retire in the next two years . . . . So, you know, what I tell him I have to trust that he's not going to say over there . . . . Because there are some people you can talk to and you know that five minutes later, it's all over the county [laughs].

Jackie fully acknowledged the risk in trusting this leader, understanding what a breach of her trust might mean to her career aspirations, but her previous experience with the leader had established a history of trust. As she had explained when describing her technique for determining trustworthiness, Jackie and her supervisor had shared sensitive information previously and that confidence was honored, thus building a deeper sense of trust between Jackie and her leader.

#### *Ethics-Related Behaviors of Untrusted Leaders*

In contrast to the previous personal experience stories of trusted leaders, whose ethical behaviors have built a sense of trust with their followership, participants also shared personal experience stories of untrusted leaders, whose unethical behaviors have diminished the trust of their followers. As a collective, participants described their untrusted leaders as those who not only would do unscrupulous or illegal things, but they may also ask others to do unscrupulous or illegal things as well. They are manipulative, play games, and enjoy stirring things up. They fail to hold confidences and tattle to leaders above them. They lie. They may even encourage spying on colleagues. They



misplace blame on others, instead of accepting responsibility for their own mistakes.

They are unfair and may display prejudice or favoritism.

Vicki shared a story of her experience with a leader whose behaviors she perceived to be unethical. As a listener, I noticed that her speech became choppy with self-interruptions, which suggested a level of agitation that she termed “agonizing” as the story unfolded.

He ran the clinic, even though I ran the children’s unit . . . . He was very into himself. He was incredibly narcissistic—I mean, I have a really hard time—I can smell him a mile away. So, he was very narcissistic by na-by personality, and as long as he wasn’t in my face—and he also, um, I think, disliked me because I had the highest—I kept the clinic going. And he would say that. He would say, “Vicki, you walk out...”—and it was almost unethical. I was worked to death. Worked 50-60 hours per week and paid only for 40 . . . . And I ran ADHD clinics at night. I, I, you know, drove an hour and a half to the place. Um, I had over a 188 clients sometimes—and that’s SO dangerous and I don’t like that. But they wouldn’t stop. And I worked there about two and a half years, just even, even some of my colleagues were like, “Just go back to private practice.” It’s like, this is crazy. You know, I felt like I was aging . . . .

This leader, in contrast to Bill’s story of the trusted leader who was fair and distributed work evenly, overburdened Vicki to levels she described as “mentally unhealthy” for herself and “dangerous” to patients, an element that carries an additional level of ethical consideration.

Beyond her own experiences, Vicki also recounted having been given negative feedback from others that increased her lack of trust and apprehension regarding working with this leader, whom she referred to as “a back stabber.” She was told by colleagues to “be careful of him” and as a result was very cautious around him. “So, you know, I was friendly to him and respectful, you know . . . . I was on edge. I felt like it was not very—

for mental health, it was not very mentally healthy.” Vicki shared she drew a line when began asking her to do unethical things.

I knew, you know, that he was looking at my numbers and not, you know—and he then asked me to do some unethical things and I refused! I refused to sign some things. I refused to do some things, um, . . . . He was asking us to defraud in order to get mental health funds released. But I wasn’t going to change numbers, as far as, or make kids look sicker for insurance. So...it was Medicaid fraud—it was borderline on that . . . . Um...I was NOT going to Xerox test materials, violating copyright laws. So, I went behind his back, because I knew, well I’d already sent in my resignation. I mean, I gave them like a month and I said I just can’t handle this anymore. And I’m not going to do what you ask me to do. And I’m just going to move on. And from that point on, he treated me like crap, basically. But I avoided him as much as possible. So I just tried to get my records in shape, which was impossible. But, um, I wasn’t going to be a part of any downfall. I wasn’t going to be part of a Medicaid fraud or a scam or copyright law. And I even contacted, I ordered every single test that I had to do a Xerox and attached every single protocol from the company, and he had hidden them from me in his office. So, I went into his office and I, because we all had keys, and I took them and I stapled them to every single one, just in case. And it wasn’t to help me so much because I would be gone, but to [have] one less bad mark on that company . . . . So, I left.

Vicki recognized that this leader would eventually cause harm to herself or others through his unethical behaviors: assigning unsafe work levels, encouraging exaggerated diagnoses, and promoting the violation of copyright law. Her feelings of trust and safety in the workplace were destroyed.

Anne shared her experience with another untrusted leader, whom she described as a manipulative game-player.

He definitely liked to play people off of each other, you know, like get you all stirred up by telling you somebody else said this, and when you went and talked to that person, it’s not exactly how it happened—and he especially liked stir you up against someone higher than he was. And so sometimes you just had to sit

down and find out what the truth was before you reacted. He liked those kinds of games.

She went on to explain that in spite of the lack of trust, she still maintained a congenial relationship with this leader by knowing his tendencies and verifying the facts before reacting to anything that he reported from others. “I discovered that if he did stir me up by telling me that the vice president said such-and-such, it was best for me to just talk to the vice president.” By manipulating the perceptions of others by distorting the truth, he tried to cast himself as the good guy and the “peace maker” to each side.

You could see how he wanted us not to like each other. He wanted to be the person who was the peace maker. Just little games. . . . When you have people that you like and some that you don’t and there were clearly some people that he didn’t like and that’s just not a good environment to work in. And you feel like, some people felt like, no matter what they did, they weren’t going to get recognition or fair treatment because he had his games. That’s not a very good situation.

Anne also shared the story of another unethical and untrusted leader who failed to maintain confidences and would use the information to his own benefit. He too liked to instigate discord.

It was pretty obvious. We would meet as a department and then things would get reported back—so, you know, this was a leader but he was reporting to somebody else. He would tell them everything single thing that was said just discussion or in confidence—I don’t like that. He would tattle or try to stir up trouble. The way it was presented just made the other person mad, and it just didn’t have to be that way. [Pause] That’s dredging up a long time ago. [Laughter] But that kind of thing doesn’t make you trust much, like you can’t say anything in confidence to someone who, you know, you are speaking in confidence and it gets to somebody else and it all gets stirred up, you just wonder...you just don’t feel like you can trust somebody. Um...yeah, when people play games, I don’t like that...I don’t like that. I like for someone to be straight forward.

For Sarah, the untrusted leader with whom she had worked, also varied from the truth. When describing her trusting relationships, Sarah repeated emphasized the importance of truth; “ just tell me the truth!”

The lying . . . is the biggest thing for me though. I just, I have a real problem with that. I, I just like people just, just to tell me. And so the lying and sitting in meetings and knowing this person was lying was very difficult.

Because honesty is a deep personal value for Sarah, working with this leader was markedly difficult. She also expressed discomfort and incredulity when the leader tried to involve her in spying on colleagues.

You know, sometimes four of them [fellow faculty members would] get into an office and share lunch . . . . That leader would come to me and say, “Why are the four of them in that office? I want them out there. What are they talking about? Go find out what they are talking about.”

While Sarah did not consent to the leader’s request, her image of the depths to which this leader would sink to maintain control over the group plummeted, and her trust was further diminished.

Mark told a story of an untrusted leader who allowed him to take the blame for something that he had done upon her request. He was working as a Foster Care and Adoption social worker at the time, and his case load had been expanded when a colleague, who was a Child Protective Services worker, had resigned. He recounted that his leader had directed him to make his new child abuse and neglect cases his top priority.

“CPS takes priority over your other job . . . so if you must let something else slide, you let that slide and you do this CPS work first, because it is more important.” So, I took her at her word. And that’s what I did. I let something else slide for that and then they came back and hung me out to dry for that. Uh, and I didn’t like that, because I was just like, “I did what you told me to do.” And then she came back and said, “I didn’t say that.” I was like, “Okay, fine.” So then, then I left. I was like I wasn’t going to work in an environment like this.

Rather than accepting responsibility for her role in the gaff, Mark’s leader blamed him, leaving him to feel betrayed and vulnerable. Stunned, Mark came away with a new perception of the unchecked scope of her power and her willingness to change the facts to suit her needs.

They could do whatever they wanted to do. They could, you know, give me written reprimands, if they wanted to. They didn’t do that. They didn’t give me any written reprimands. They just basically chewed me out, but I figured if they were going to chew me out for that then what could be next.

This breach of his trust left Mark shaken and ready to seek employment elsewhere.

While this incident had not been of a very serious nature, he now considered it more likely that he might also be wrongly implicated or blamed in the event of a serious problem. Given the gravity of his work, he regarded that risk as one he was unwilling to take. Twice during his story, he used the phrase “hung me out to dry” to express his feelings of abandonment and vulnerability.

When sharing this part of the story about her untrusted leader, Sarah lowered her voice and began with, “Is this, is this *totally* confidential?” thus denoting her level of anxiety about even discussing this behavior. Her leader had exhibited prejudicial behaviors regarding students of color.

There was some prejudice there, clear open prejudice, and so I would hear comments and the faculty would hear comments about certain students. And I think that if certain students crossed what they [the leader] thought was the line where there was kind of a hierarchy, I don't think, I don't think they were heard. Because other students who were not of that ethnicity did the same thing [without consequence]. And so I know for a fact that some students were hurt [not allowed to continue in a selective admissions program], and that was very, very difficult. So that was a very difficult situation, because never in my life have ever spoken to a supervisor the way that I had to speak to that supervisor, and so that to me spoke volumes, because I have always respected my supervisors . . . . But I've always had such great leaders, great leadership and mentorship, and it was not there. And so I think the worst part for me—and even now, I bump into those people . . . and in my heart, I know what happened to those students. And unfortunately, some of their dreams, they were handled so badly here, that they have not progressed.

In Sarah's personal experience, this leader's unethical behavior of acting out of prejudice, treating students differently on the basis of race, permanently damaged her feelings of respect and trust for this leader and eventually spurred her to action. In order to protect herself and other program faculty, as well as students, she strived to become director of the program, a role that was the next career goal of this leader that would have given her a larger scope of power. While she had never been interested in a leadership role before, Sarah put herself forward as a contender for the position, "because I knew that the person wanted in this role [and] would bring this department down . . . and we have awesome faculty and I knew that if I didn't throw my name into the hat that this was going to happen." In the end, Sarah received the promotion and set about the work of undoing the damage done by the untrusted leader.

Evelyn recounted the story of another leader who diminished her trust by displaying favoritism for certain faculty members. While this behavior seems more innocuous than prejudice, the two seem related as they both suggest a propensity to treat

people differently on the basis of some criteria, whether race, gender, age, friendship, or personal style. From Evelyn's perspective, this behavior might not have even been intentional, however the impact was still damaging to her trust.

Um, I think, um, sometimes people in, in, in different positions, they have, um, people, other people in their area that they feel close to. And that they work really well together, and sometimes it appears to other people in the department that there's some favoritism going on, you know. Um, so that can also impede a trust relationship.

She emphasized that this is particularly true for her in the case when faculty were treated differently in the application of departmental rules. "Um, I think that sometimes when policies and procedures are not administered across the board the same way . . . that can also, you know, cause people to question." The leadership behavior of giving preferential treatment to favorites may cause faculty to question whether they will be treated fairly, and whether they will be given equal protection and equal opportunity.

As a group, participants expressed through their personal experience stories that, for them, trusted leaders exhibit ethical behaviors. They demonstrate integrity and hold to their principles. Trusted leaders honor their commitments. They are fair and distribute work evenly. Trusted leaders are honest and tell the truth. They hold confidences. In contrast, untrusted leaders exhibit unethical behaviors. They do unscrupulous or illegal things, and may also ask others to do unscrupulous or illegal things as well. They are manipulative, play games, and may enjoy stirring things up. They fail to hold confidences and may tattle to leaders above them. They lie and may encourage spying on

colleagues. They misplace blame on others, instead of accepting responsibility for their mistakes. They are unfair and may display prejudice or favoritism.

### *Valuing Others*

#### *Behaviors of Trusted Leaders Related to Valuing Others*

As a group, participants indicated that according to their experiences with trusted and untrusted leaders, trusted leaders exhibit the following behaviors that could be categorized as valuing others. Trusted leaders take a personal interest in employees, valuing them as people as well as employees. They support the professional development of individuals on their team. They trust the members of their team to do a good job, and they share confidences with them. They value and seek input for decision making. They back their faculty, and when redirections need to be made, they do so in such a way that protects the dignity of the faculty member. They are approachable, and display compassion. They demonstrate their appreciation. They make decisions in the best interest of the group.

Evelyn shared the story of a trusted leader whose behaviors embodied many of these valuing behaviors, particularly supporting her professional growth and development. He not only valued her as an employee of the college, he valued her as a person.

They [the leader] had a great regard for other people, and that was always evident in everything they did. And um, of course, treated me very good, very fairly, um even beyond that, really went out of their way to make sure that I had what I needed to work with, to make sure that salaries were commensurate with what others were getting, and those kinds of things. All was cared about my family, my personal family, and that kind of thing—a very caring person.



When she began working with this individual, she was filling a position that had been vacated by a death. From the beginning, he actively laid the groundwork for her success.

So I came in immediately after that [the death]. And she had held that position and worked with this gentleman for a long, long time. They had *many* years, uh, together. So, I'm sure that transition was very difficult for the VP I worked for, but um, he just made that whole process so smooth. And he wanted me to be successful, and he made sure that I had people who came and helped me learn that position, and just took me under his wing. And I know I made many, many, many mistakes and many, many blunders, but that was never pointed out to me in that way. It was just corrected and fixed and we went on. We learned from that, and um, it was, it was just an atmosphere that we are just going to work together, we're going to do the job, we are going to do it well, and we are going to enjoy, you know, what we're, what we're doing. Um, but it was never any sort of gotcha situation or anything like that. It was always me, wanting me to be successful, and he encouraged me all along the way to better myself. Training, more education, he always encouraged me to do that, and um, made every provision for me to do that. I took some courses here on campus during my work hours. And um, I think I, I still feel that way today. I could go to that person and talk to them about anything. They would advise me, if I asked for advice, listen, and you know, do the very best they could for me. And I knew that person always had my best interest at heart.

His constant encouragement and support helped build her self confidence, not only to do her best in that position, but he also encouraged her to continue to stretch and grow when other opportunities became available, a path that took her out of an office and into the classroom, eventually filling the role of associate dean.

Beverly also shared the story of a trusted leader who took a genuine personal interest in her. She explained that this leader would frequently ask, "How are you? You know...How is your husband? How are your children?" and really care about her response. He also displayed a real interest in what she was doing professionally and how he could help, if help was needed. He was what she would call "a real person."

I *really* respect and enjoy and feel warm with people who will go a little bit beyond. You know, and if I call in if I'm sick or late or am going to miss a day, and that person comes back in a day or two and asks, "how is your mother?" or "are you feeling better," or "I had a bug one time," you know, and being a real person. [laughter] Being a real person, I guess . . . . I can trust them to be myself—I can be myself and not be afraid of being judged to the point, or uh, to even present that person with problems that intimidate me to the point where I thought I should be able to solve this and this is my turf and if I can't figure this out and I go to my supervisor, I want somebody not to come across saying, "Well, I can't believe that *you* don't know how to do that." You know, "What do *you* do?"—not that. I want, "I have similar problems; let's talk about it." You know...working together, yeah, team work .

Beverly seems to connect someone "being real" to being genuine, approachable, and compassionate as well as being supportive. Both Beverly and Evelyn comment on the approachability of their leaders. Beverly noted, "It's *really, really* nice to know that I can go directly to the source, that I can go to my direct supervisor and ask a question, no matter how stupid I think it might be . . . ." Like Evelyn, she referenced being directed or redirected with dignity, not made to feel stupid, rather to feel supported.

Beverly also expressed appreciation that her leader respected her ability to do things well and his tendency to assume that she had a logical, caring reason behind her actions. "I missed a meeting . . . I feel like he knows that there's a reason, you know, that I would have been there [otherwise]." This personal experience is in sharp contrast to her experience with another leader, who assumed the worst until she could prove otherwise. Helena told a related story of another valuing leader who trusted her to do her job well. As with Evelyn and Beverly's experiences, Helena's trusted leader also gave supportive redirection.

[My leader] was the type person who gave you your guidelines. You knew what was expected, and they stepped back and let you do it. And if they saw you straying off the path, they would bring you back into the path, and they do it in a way that like I like to tell people, I was just reprimanded and I just now realized it . . . . This person he gave us lots and lots of latitude, and because he did that, I felt like I knew where my boundaries were, and I could not let this person down.

Helen felt valued when her leader trusted and respected her ability to figure out the best ways to do her job. Helen's leader provided constructive redirections, bringing her "back into the path," if he felt that she was heading off in the wrong direction. Having that sort of gentle support gave her confidence to move forward without fear of negative repercussions, because she trusted that she would not be humiliated or officially reprimanded for mistakes. The combination of trust and constructive guidance made her feel determined to "not let this person down."

Tina recounted a similar story:

She knows when she needs to manage me more, and then she allows me to be autonomous. So that's important that you, that you, let adults work--and do their job! You know? But in the same respect, she is cognizant of what I am doing, and if there is something that she disagrees with or something that she thinks that I could do differently or better, she's going to let me know that in a tactful way, never in a demeaning way or where I see it as punitive. I always see it as constructive criticism, because that's the way she presents it to me.

As with Helen's leader, Tina's leader also demonstrated her trust and respect for Tina's capabilities by allowing her to work without being micromanaged but still monitoring her overall progress and giving "constructive" redirections.

With this same trusted leader, Tina also appreciated being asked for input and having her authority over her program being backed up.

She always makes sure to get our input, and she respects that. So if I wanted, you know, say a change in my program or let's say someone were to come to here and say, "I want to change something in the Early Childhood program," which I lead, she's going to say, "Have you talked with Tina about that?" And if they say, "No," then she'd say, "You need to talk with Tina, and if Tina approves or if this needs further conversation, she will come to me." So, um, she doesn't allow people to circumvent the chain of command. She very much believes in the chain of command, and I appreciate that because I don't want my people jumping my head, just like I would not jump her and go straight to the president. So, um, I think all those things add to my trust in her

Within her story, Tina alluded to the reciprocal nature of this valuing and respect. She commented that not only did she appreciate her leader's protection of her authority, not allowing people to break the chain of command, but she herself observed the same protocol of respect, not breaking the chain of command to go above her leader.

Beverly provided another example of a trusted leader backing up the faculty member with students. In contrast to her previous experience, Beverly no longer needed to worry when a student went to her supervisor to complain. Based upon her experience with her trusted leader, she felt confident that both parties would be treated with respect and given appropriate guidance for resolving the issue.

Because I know that he will be respectful to that student, listen to what that student has to say, and I know that he is going to tell me what that student had to say, and I know that we are going to discuss that. And I know that he is probably going to have some really healthy suggestions on things I could do to improve, but I'm not going to walk out of there feeling like I've done something wrong.

She also noted that the trusted leader would "defend his loyal employees against [unwarranted] attack." She described this leader in a somewhat paternal way, indicating that if she needed to ask for support he would be there in force. "I know that he would

come in all of his--he would come, he would resolve it, and he would take care of me . . . back me up . . . . I won't have to face that by myself." She emphatically used the words "tremendously comforting," and "really, really nice" to describe the difference in the level of support she felt with this trusted leader as opposed to a previous untrusted leader.

Jackie also referred to a paternal-like support when describing the level of support given to her and her colleagues by a trusted leader. While this person actually was Jackie's father, she was referring to her role as an employee and colleague, not her role as daughter.

There were many people who did not even know, because I mean, I mean, I didn't call him Dad at work, you know? I called him Doctor. And even the other people who worked there would say, "I'd trust him with my life" . . . . He took care of you. You know, he, he truly cared for the people that he--who worked with him.

He considered them "an extension of his family," and as such, deserving of his paternal protection and wisdom. As a result, staff retention was solid. When he retired and the practice closed, the most junior member of his staff had been with the organization seven years.

Another valuing leadership behavior that emerged from participants' stories was acknowledging appreciation for faculty and their contributions. Beverly describes herself as one who likes to have her contributions acknowledged. She shared the story of being recruited by the president of her college to lead a professional development taskforce.

I got kind of rooked into—I did get rooked into [chuckles] the professional development for faculty committee, and I ended up in a leadership role by accident, but it was something that I would never have really, really, really ever volunteered for, but I just kind of ended up there. And um, but it worked out

pretty good, because I felt like the energy and effort that I put forth into it was acknowledged and I'm not—I guess I am a person, Crystal, that kind of needs acknowledgement for certain things. I like the pat on the back and the hey you did a nice job, or thanks, and um [clears throat], there was a whole lot of that in abundance.

While she was initially hesitant about her new leadership role, through the president's acknowledgement of her good work, her confidence increased, and she made an important discovery about herself.

One of those ahha moments for me in my career was when I found myself in that position, and uh, I realized the best thing for me to do was for me to just put on my big girl panties and just do it. Just do the best I could. And I had a lot of help and a lot of support from other leaders in that, on that, outside, other faculty, who were heavily involved in it . . . Dr. Gregory got really tickled with me about that, because he, uh, he knew that I was very introverted, very quiet, very behind the scenes . . . I will do anything you want me to do, but just don't make me stand up in front of everybody and do . . . and all of a sudden, there I was front and center and that was a very uncomfortable place, but because of the way they led that, I was able, I guess, I was able to perform on a level I never thought I would and to feel good about it.

Beverly was able to overcome her own feelings of self-doubt and introversion in order to fulfill the charge given to her by the president. In doing so, she exceeded her own expectations. For Beverly, the fact that her leader had asked her to assume the role, given her the full resources to support the project, and directly acknowledged her contribution signaled his complete confidence in her, a confidence for which she wanted to be found worthy.

Mark also spoke to the importance of acknowledgement when discussing his anxiety related to the impending retirement of his trusted leader.

So any time you have a change over in a key position like that, there's a little bit of, um, concern, um, that they might not value . . . what I do as much. Um, not necessarily valuing me as a person to where I have to be held up, but everybody likes to be told you do a good job, what you do is important. . . . Anyway, you know, a lot of times people will send out praises over the email, you know, "Congratulations, So-in-so! They did this. Congratulations." To me, or in a meeting, and those things are fine. Those things are good, and I'm not saying they don't need to be done. But for me personally, you know, that doesn't carry as much weight, as if the associate dean or VP or president . . . if they were to come in, shut the door and say, "I just wanted to say thank you. You are doing a good job, and I appreciate it." That would mean more to me...than standing up in front of everybody . . . because I know that they mean it. Because a lot of time, people will get up and praise somebody in public, when they really don't mean what they say, just because that's what they are supposed to do if somebody does something. . . .it may not be as sincere. And I guess that's the thing that it comes down to.

Mark emphasized the need for sincere, not necessarily public praise as a way of building trust, noting that most people are "smart enough" to recognize the difference. He regards false or obligatory praise as damaging to faculty trust of leaders.

Another valuing behavior identified through participants' stories as building faculty trust in leaders is making decisions in the best interest of the group. Anne shared a story of a trusted leader whose choices reflected her commitment to the good of the whole. "I am thinking about someone who I did trust very much . . . . She was totally honest and upfront about everything, and definitely had the best interests of both her faculty—and, and the school, you know, at heart." The leader understood the need to balance care for the individual needs of her faculty with the needs of the institution, and her decisions reflected that. Roberto referred this type of leader whose focus was on the best interests of the group as being an "organization-based leader."

### *Behaviors of Untrusted Leaders Related to Valuing Others*

In contrast to these personal experience stories of trusted leaders, whose behaviors of valuing others has built a sense of trust with those whom they lead, participants also shared personal experience stories of untrusted leaders, whose behaviors of not valuing others have diminished trust. As a collective, participants described their untrusted leaders as those who do not genuinely care for or have interest in their faculty. They may not initiate relationships with faculty. Their behaviors might be threatening or passive aggressive. They fail to back up their followers, and trust them to do a good job. They may be disrespectfully paternal, not trusting in the faculty's own abilities or motivations. Their focus is on themselves and their careers, rather than on the group or the institution, and their decisions reflect that.

Tina shared the story of an apathetic leader who had no interest in her whatsoever. She and her supervisor worked at different locations in different towns, so distance alone made building a relationship challenging. However, her leader showed no interest in building a relationship, in coming to know who she was personally or what she was doing professionally. In essence, he was a non-leader, providing no contact, communication, or direction.

It was hard to establish trust with him, because we had no communication. There was very much a lack of communication with him. And um, he wouldn't give guidance. So I'm like, why are you in that position if you won't provide guidance to someone who needs it? Or if we are asking for direction or help, why not give us that help?



The leaders' lack of interest and attention left Tina feeling unvalued, unsupported, and possibly discriminated against. "And so with me, it was definitely him, and just his general attitude. He was also sexist too, which didn't help anything. Yeah, that was tough. I was a female first and a probation officer second." From her perspective, her gender negated the obligatory respect her leader would normally have afforded a male probation officer. Being ignored signaled his disrespect as well as his disregard.

I had nothing. I had nothing to base our relationship of trust on—not that he ever did anything that made me distrust him, but we never formed a relationship of trust . . . but he didn't—I felt like it was his role as a leader to make himself visible, to show up once a week, or once every two weeks, or once a month, or a quarter would have been good. You know, to show up, to say, "How are things going?" You know, "Let's talk about some cases." You know, "Let's go out to lunch." Anything. But, so when you don't physically see someone or even talk to them, you know? . . . I think if you are leading people, you need to have that relationship. It's your job to make that happen. It's not their job.

Tina found herself relying heavily on the support of knowledgeable coworkers in whom she held a high degree of trust, which was extremely important given their dangerous line of work. "[I trusted them with] literally my life, a lot of times," she mused. For Tina, these trusting relationships further highlighted the lack of a trusting relationship with the leader.

Mark shared the story of another leader whose behavior did not demonstrate a valuing of others. This leader engaged in subtly threatening, passive-aggressive behaviors.

They were really out for doing what they wanted to do and really didn't have any interest in me as a person . . . just stirring the pot. That's, that's what they *really* enjoyed. Uh, making people sweat...and that wasn't just subordinates at the time,

that was just other people. They would just enjoy—they kind of had a passive-aggressive personality. If you ever work with someone who is passive-aggressive, it's really tough. But um, that is, pretty much what led to that is they would say one thing, "Oh yes, we have the money to give you this," and then come to find out, it's like, "Oh no, we don't," but then it comes out they really did. It's just they didn't want you to have it.

Mark's leader liked to keep him off balance as a way of maintaining control and exerting dominance over him. He felt that she liked to do little things out of spitefulness like make unnecessary changes to the schedule.

And a lot of the things that they were doing, and they were manipulating and making my life more difficult. For example, schedules—schedules are one of those things that faculty get very, "Don't change the schedule!"—and they would take the schedule and change things and give me a really cruddy schedule in the sense of I would have an eight o'clock class in the morning and then they would give me an eight o'clock class at night on the same day . . . but at the time, I worked about 30 minutes away. So it was—I had a long enough break that it didn't—it wasn't worth driving home, but at the same time, it was—I felt like I was wasting time by driving home and it took up my entire day . . . Um, and at least, this is just my perspective, I feel like that was done just out of spite. But then you ask them that and, "Oh no, no, no, no. It's just—we had to do it this way." But then you come to find out later . . . that's when my eyes were opened. Because I was just, "Well, she told me this, and that was a lie, because...." And I wasn't privy to that until after the fact.

The leader liked to give the impression that she had more power than she actually had and to imply that things had to be done a certain way, again as a way of maintaining control. Mark speculated that he would have preferred for the leader to have just been more direct, rather than proceed in a cloaked manner, but he acknowledged that passive-aggression does not work that way.

So, those are some of the types of things that made it difficult in the sense of the manipulation with that and some of the statements of, of—well not necessarily

holding your job over your head—but to some degree throwing comments like out there to be more manipulative in trying to control me to do what needed to be done as opposed to just asking, “This is what we need to do,” because I probably would have responded much better if she would have said, “We’ve got you down for this eight o’clock class in the morning and we’ve got this eight o’clock class at night, and um, I really don’t have any other reason except I think this is the best that we should do, and this is what I want to do.” That would have come across a lot better to me as opposed to saying, “Well we can’t do it, because of this, this, this, and this” . . . . Um, that doesn’t come across to me as well, as just being upfront and honest. Say, “We’re going to do it this way, because I want to do it this way. I’m going to make your life miserable.”

These sorts of behaviors not only make faculty members feel undervalued, rather they feel punished and distrustful.

Another devaluing leadership behavior that was revealed through story was failing to back up faculty. As Jackie commented, having a leader not back you up can be quite embarrassing.

If you are talking about a boss, you also want to know that you can trust them to back you up, because if you talk with that person, and they say, “Oh yeah, I agree with you,” and then you go and step off that, that diving board and say, “We’re going to do this,” and you boss doesn’t back you up, then you’re the one that looks like the fool.

In this situation, the faculty member is made to appear that she has not done the necessary preliminary work and that perhaps her ideas are not well thought out. The impact for the faculty member is somewhere between feeling tricked and feeling let down.

For Beverly, she felt abandoned when her leader failed to back her up. In this case, she was directly blamed for a series of incidents involving her students. Her supervisor was uninterested in hearing her side of the story, and after he had finished

upbraiding her, he sent her on alone to face additional reprimands from the academic vice president. A number of Beverly's students had been discovered to have been misusing college property after hours.

They figured out they could unlock the windows and take the screen out, and they would come over here at night and crawl in the window and hang out, cause it was fun place to be. And the way that the classrooms were situated, they figured out that they could have a party—sex and drugs. And alcohol and that nobody could see them. Security [chuckling] eventually did find them.

In perfect storm fashion, three other minor incidents occurred with this same group around the same time, which prompted serious discussions about her role in the matter.

I told them what happened, and so my supervisor talked to the Vice President at the time. And the Vice President called me down to his office, and he pretty much blessed me out. But he did it in so such a way that I still had respect for him when I walked out. You know, you can do that. You can still chew someone's rear end out and still have their respect and some dignity when you leave. And he did. And what he, what he said to me was—and of course, *immediately* I was defensive. Why am *I* being fussed at? I wasn't even *here* when this happened, you know. But what had happened—and I could see his point—that particular group of students had taken ownership of the building. And I had allowed that to happen through not addressing the issues sooner, not seeing that would lead to problems, and also I had allowed them to bring in personal things, in like they had established a desk, each one of them had their space . . . . They had taken ownership of the building and the facility, and I had failed to remind them enough to where this belongs to the state of North Carolina and we just allow you to use it. So, um, I came out of there understanding what had happened, and what I could have done to prevent it, and with some rules and suggestions, strong suggestions not to let it happen again.

While Beverly left the conversation retaining respect for the Vice President who dealt with the situation directly, honestly, and constructively, she felt “abandoned” by her direct supervisor, who was more punitive in his approach. “During the course of that

time, it really broke me in terms of feeling like I had the support of my people, that I felt like I was standing alone.” She used the words “resentful,” “not appreciated,” and “mad” to describe how she felt. While these events had occurred many years earlier, the volume and passion of Beverly’s voice suggested that she these events still own a very strong emotional charge for her.

He started fussing at me and then turned me over, you know. “Boy, you are going to get it.” And you know, that’s the way I felt. Now whether or not that’s how he intended, or if that’s what really happened, you know, I don’t know. But that’s how I felt . . . . I work off feeling, off intuition very strongly, and uh, when I look back on that, that’s the feeling that I get. And I resent [present tense] him for that. And I think that he has good qualities as a human being, you know. He has good qualities, so it’s not that . . .but he broke my trust. I would have *never*—that took me so off guard. I mean, I expected there to be a meeting of the minds. I expected everyone to come together and say, “bluh.” You know, I expected than that. But I certainly never expected for it to be said, “This is your fault. You let this happen. I am putting, this is going in your file.” You know?

From this experience, Beverly said that she learned to document everything carefully to protect herself from possible future blame, if something were to go wrong. “When something really did--something major really happened, I didn’t feel like I had the support, so I thought I’d better figure, I’d better cover my own rear end.” She had learned that she could not trust her leader to back her up, to listen and advocate for her.

Interestingly, just as Beverly described her trusted leader in a paternal way, ready to “defend his loyal employees against [unwarranted] attack,” she also described her untrusted leader in a paternal way as well, although not in a positive light. In describing how powerless she felt in their relationship, she evoked a memory of her own father to

frame a story of when the untrusted leader had denied her equipment request without seriously considering the need.

When I was a kid, I can remember going through the house and say, “Daddy could I...” and before I could even get I out of my mouth, he would say, “No.” So when I had one of the first experiences with the person that I didn’t trust too much, that was the reason why. It was because he reminded me of my daddy. He would say—I had an idea and I can remember specifically the one time that kind of shocked me out of the saddle per se, but I had a grand idea—this was twenty-something years ago—that if I video recorded all of these critiques that I have with my students on a regular basis . . . . There’s nothing better. It’s a peer, it’s a self assessment, instr--teacher assessment. You’re, you’re, everybody is commenting and talking, and it’s just wonderful, and um, I had the idea to record all this--and also to record the finished artwork and to archive it. So, um, I approached my supervisor . . . for a video camera. He said, “Oh, you don’t need that” . . . before I could even finish my thought—“No”—you know, and so I said, “Well okay,” you know, and I went on and I didn’t do it [record the critiques], and I didn’t push it. I should have. I should have gone back and said, “but, but, but, but.... You know this is really important; there is learning and I want to record this!” Oh God, it just makes [present tense] me mad.

More than 20 years later, she continues to lament having backed down like a rebuked child, still using the present tense to describe her anger. Beverly also recounted how this leader, in an unwelcomed paternalistic manner, would chastise her for smoking and for eating unhealthy foods, as if she were too young or too unwise to realize that those things were bad for her. She felt his objections were born, not out of concern for her health and a valuing of her as a person, but out of a desire to pass judgment and to humiliate. Not only did she not trust him, she actively tried to avoid contact with him, seeking information and support from colleagues.

Another trust destroying leadership behavior that has featured in several of participants’ personal experience stories is acting in the best interest of self, not the team

or the organization. Carol told the story of a leader who was initially quite impressive, but whose real agenda quickly became apparent.

My first impressions: a very learned person, a very learned man, very well read, very well spoken—and I like that in a person—able to quote meaningful literature.... I just saw him as a very cultured, knowledgeable person, which again, I equate with competence. But very quickly I saw the other side. And the other side was revealed, rather than having a clear sense of purpose for the mission of the job, I knew that his mission was personal. I knew from a very early time that the things that he was doing as an administrator were to further his own career—that we might benefit on the side, but we were not the reason for it.

Carol felt let down and jaded. Whatever institutional victories that came through this leader were rendered hollow and suspect, a means to his desired end. She recounted that she did not like the way it made her feel: “awkward” and always wondering about the subtext of his actions.

Roberto used the term “career leader” to describe the sort of leader from Carol’s story. Career leaders’ goals are focused on resume-building, rather than what Roberto calls “the legitimate goals of the organization.” As he explained, “I’m very big on having legitimate goals, on having a legitimate focus that’s based on evidence,” so given that, he has little patience for career leaders.

I think that there are some people in our organization—in all organizations. I worked in three community colleges, and this is true of all three. That they see an opportunity to make a career, that may be very much a flavor of the day sort of thing that, that, that may not be in the best interest of the organization, but they have this skill to do—they sell it, and then they do it, and then they move on to the next thing or a better thing, based on that. The followers are the people who are rallied. It’s *their* time that is, that is expended, *their* effort that is expended. It appears that the reward goes to the person that created this thing, and then there is this vacuum.

Roberto strongly emphasized that it was through the work of the followers that the career leader's goals are achieved. The people do all of the work, the positive outcomes go to the leader, and in the end, the followers and the organization are left empty-handed and possibly jaded.

In our case, it was TQM [designed for the classroom]. . . . Everybody had to do it. There were several people that--one in particular--that this became sort of their mantra. As they left here, they sold that as their uh ticket to be Teacher of the Year of the state . . . but there were people going, "My gosh, that was a joke." But . . . that person had the ear of the Vice President. The Vice President forced—I'm using quotes—"forced" everybody to go. And, and I also want to say that there might have been a legitimate reason for that. Okay, maybe we needed something. We didn't need *that*. But we needed something, and this person sort of parleyed this into something else. Well, that's a career-oriented uh goal, as opposed to an organization-oriented goal, in my opinion . . . . Um, that became a two year sort of thing. There was no follow-up on it, no evaluation of it. There was no...it just sort of went to the next thing.

From Roberto's perspective, the legitimate need of the institution went unmet.

The career leader used the need as an opportunity to sell an idea and to gain an impressive bullet point for a resume. Lots of work went into the mandatory training, but because it did not meet a legitimate need, very little came out of it for the organization. The career leader went on to win a statewide award and moved on to a more prestigious position elsewhere, while the organization is left with a "vacuum."

Charles indicated that he has seen this sort of thing happen more than once. His story also focused the cost to the organization and to the followers when career leaders place their career goals above the legitimate goals and needs of the organization.



I've probably had a couple or I could probably think of two or three situations, where new management, new supervisors came in, and they went through the process of changing and screwed things up, and reorganizing, things like that, maybe too quickly for the organization from the standpoint of, uh...you, you got the sense that they were building their resume at your expense or at the organization's expense. And you could sense that.

He noted that there is a natural animosity between those who Roberto would call, "organization leaders" and "career leaders," due to their lack of caring about the long-term health and well-being of the organization and the people within it.

And uh, so often that happens, uh, and they get a lot of resistance, because the people that, the other leaders that they share leadership for the management of the group know that they are there for the long-term and they have got to live with the long term ramifications.

He gave the specific example of a time when a career leader proposed a change in contract periods, a topic that gave faculty pause in spite of the plan's reputed benefits.

One of our administrators came through and were looking at the 10 month, 9 month, 12 month thing that all of the colleges are looking at. And uh, [clears throat], the initial push there was to try to change everybody's contract to a 10 month. And of course to do that, to encourage that, to discourage the resistance to that, was to take the annual [12 month] contract and just annualize it to 10 months. Sounds very . . . enticing looking, but I sensed that a couple of things had already happened before then, and I sensed that this person was just building a resume . . . . This person is moving on. This person is resume building. This resume stuff is what he's doing. And uh, a lot of it. And a lot of other stuff I saw, so I have built mistrust about that. And I like what's on the table now, but when that emphasis goes away, then all of a sudden, you know, we are stuck with 10 month contracts at 10 month salary . . . . Of course the person moved on before it ever materialized any further . . . .

Charles' feelings of distrust toward the leader caused him to distrust the plan, regardless of its seemingly clear potential benefits. His mind was preoccupied with the leader's true

motivation, whether the leader values his own career over the future compensation of the faculty whose contracts will be impacted or over the long-term welfare of the organization. Without the trust of the group, the proposal stalled and eventually disappeared along with the career leader who had championed it.

In summary, participants' experience stories portrayed trusted leaders exhibiting the following behaviors related to valuing others. Trusted leaders value their faculty as individuals as well as professionals, and they take a personal interest in them. They support the professional growth and development of their faculty. They trust their team members to do a good job, and they step back and allow them to do just that. They share confidences with their faculty when appropriate, and they appreciate and seek faculty input for decision making. They support their faculty and back them up when appropriate. When faculty members make mistakes, trusted leaders provide redirections in a respectful and constructive manner. Trusted leaders behave in an approachable and compassionate manner. They show their appreciation for a job well done, and they protect and make decisions in the best interest of the group. On the other end of the leadership behaviors spectrum, participant stories of untrusted leaders feature behaviors counter to valuing others. These leaders are described as not genuinely caring for or having an interest in their faculty. Often the untrusted leader's focus was identified as being on themselves or on their careers, with little regard for anyone or anything else. Stories included leaders who failed to establish relationships with faculty or who failed to back up their faculty during a time of challenge. Untrusted leaders were described as

behaving in a threatening or passive aggressive manner. They were disrespectfully paternal and did not trust in faculty's ability and motivation to do a good job.

### *Communication*

#### *Communication-Related Behaviors of Trusted Leaders*

As a group, study participants' stories of trusted and untrusted leaders frequently related to communication. Trusted leaders have been described as communicating openly, speaking candidly, and answering questions directly. They are upfront and straightforward. They listen well and explain why. They are responsive and provide honest, constructive feedback—even when it is not what others want to hear. They alert followers when plans have changed or promises cannot be kept, and they establish regular contact so that communication and relationship building can take place. Repeatedly story tellers expressed that they don't expect leaders to tell them everything, acknowledging a legitimate need for discretion or confidentiality, but they wanted to have all of the necessary information to do their jobs and to understand the big picture of what is going on within the organization.

In her personal experience story, Tina described her trusted leader's communication style as "transparent," without a hidden agenda.

She is very open with us. I don't ever feel like she is trying to hide anything or, you know, she gives all of her direct reports all the information she can. Unless there is just something that the president says, "This is something that needs to stay in confidence," for whatever reason. Other than those matters, it is very transparent. You know, I don't ever feel like there's going to be some surprise that I don't know about . . . . The fact that she's transparent with everything that's going on, she's not hiding anything . . . and that has a lot to do with trust.

Tina's leader shares all relevant information, therefore, those who report to her can relax and focus on their work without fear of sudden negative surprises.

Five of the participants made the point that they did not feel that they needed to know everything. They understood that there would be times when a leader cannot and should not share certain sensitive information. However, they were okay with that, especially in relation to their trusted leaders. Anne shared of one trusted leader,

Well, the person doesn't have to tell me everything [that] is going on, but they don't LIE to me. [Laughs] They try to be as honest as possible about what the situation is, if...uh...it's going to be something that I won't LIKE, if they will be upfront about that and give me reasons for that, I mean you know, not just you do it because I say so, but here's why this is the best alternative we have . . . . But just to be as upfront as possible, would make me have more trust . . . .

She noted that her trust in the leader allowed her to be comfortable in not knowing everything. She pointed out, "but they don't LIE to me," implying that if the leader did lie to her, then her response might be different. She might feel more of a need to know. Moreover, she has an expectation of no surprises, that if something is going to come forward that she will not like that her leader will be considerate enough to let her know about it and explain why, rather than stonewalling her like a parent to a child, "because I say so."

Sarah shared a similar perspective of another trusted leader. She felt that she was given all of the information necessary to do her job well, and even though there are some things that she is not privy to, she spoke to the freedom that it provides to her to be able to relax and not worry about the unknown information, rather she trusts that when she needs it, it will be provided to her.

Having the information and also respecting that sometimes I don't have to have the information, so also telling me sometimes, you don't—my dean will tell me sometimes, "You don't need to know that right now." And so I trust that I don't need to know that right now. And the same [is true] with the faculty, which is wonderful, because as nurses we do tend to want to know everything, get involved in everything and fix everything. And so it's wonderful when—I think that trust is very important with the dean and the president and other people. It helps you to understand also that you can let some things go, which makes things a little easier.

Not having to be burdened with unnecessary information kept her energy free to focus on immediate issues that are critical to her team and her students. Between the stories, the communication lesson for leaders is to be open and honest, providing as much information as possible for faculty to be able to do their jobs well, but not so much that they are burdened or distracted by things beyond their interest or control.

Another aspect of communication that was mentioned repeatedly in relation to building trust was listening well. Helena told the story of a leader who gave her great help and comfort just by listening.

If I needed to vent, which I needed from time to time—I just need to vent, and sometimes just saying it out loud makes me see things. And uh, this one particular person one time I was just ranting and raving, and when I got through he says, "What did you need me for again?" He said, "You've already solved your own problem."

Understanding Helena's need to process externally, the leader listened patiently and reaffirmed her own power to solve her problems, rather than hurrying to speak and offer his own solutions. By listening, the leader fostered Helena's self-confidence, not a dependence on him as the source for all answers.

Another important element of communication brought out through participant stories was the need for giving and receiving honest feedback between the leader and the team members. Beverly noted the difference it made to her to know that she could call her leader with her honest thoughts about an issue and have her thoughts received with openness and respect. “I love the sensation of knowing that I can pick up the phone or I can drop in an office and be honest and candid and get a good response out of that,” she explained. Tina stressed the importance of leaders not being intimidated by faculty feedback, but trusting their perspective and using their ideas to make improvements.

You’ve got to have communication, and I think that the leader has to accept that sometimes—I don’t think that they just need to listen to their reports, but if there’s an idea or they are seeing things differently, that they don’t go, “Well I’m in charge, so this is the way it’s going to be.” They actually accept the feedback and go with that and try to grow themselves as a leader.

She emphasized that faculty feedback can be an asset to a confident leader, not an affront to authority.

Jackie spoke to the benefits of leaders providing honest feedback, even when it is not what others want to hear.

When he said something, we trusted him . . . . He didn’t lie to you. He told you the facts, even if it wasn’t what you wanted to hear. He told you the way it was. Okay, and that’s not only the way he treated his employees, as a doctor, he told his patients the same thing. You know, whether you wanted to hear it or not—just the facts.

Jackie regarded working with the facts as the first step to seeking solutions. Neither she nor her colleagues had to wonder what their leader really thought; he was honest and direct with his feedback.

Helena's story of two trusted leaders was similar, also focused on appreciating constructive feedback. She emphasized how honest feedback did not have to be blunt or unkind.

[I]f they saw you straying off the path, they would bring you back into the path, and they do it in a way that like I like to tell people, "I was just reprimanded and I just now realized it." I felt similar for the hospital administrator that I worked for. He, uh, pretty much operated in the same way. And I felt like if I went to them with anything, they would tell me not what I wanted to hear but what I needed to hear.

From her perspective, reprimands were handled as helpful redirections, as she was gently brought back into alignment, sometimes without even realizing it until later, but her leader was honest and constructive in communicating his feedback to her.

Another behavior of trusted leaders revealed through participant stories was communicating to faculty when plans have changed or promises cannot be kept. By communicating, even negative information, trusted leaders demonstrated respect for the faculty who might be impacted by the change. Helena shared a story about a trusted leader who not only honored his commitments; he was clear with her throughout the process of trying to locate money for a much needed classroom expansion.

Um, by doing what they said they would do. Like if they said, "If you can do..."—like I go up to them with a problem, and they say, "Well"—let's say it's a financial thing. They'll say, "Well, if you can do such and such and such, I'll see if I can find the money in the budget to help you with so and so." And they

would. Or if they couldn't, they would say, "I know I promised you I would do this. There's just not money there. I'll give you what I can." That sort of thing. One of the things was just getting this classroom. Because when I first came here, I had 30 students in a little small room in there, which was my lab and everything. And this person told me, if I can work it out, I will get you the room and the classroom and all this. And it took several years, but he did it. So, just by following through with what they say, whether they can do it immediately or not, just eventually, you know. They do what they say or they tell you why they can't  
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By being forthright about the situation, the leader avoided giving Helena false hope but still left her feeling supported and understood as a faculty member teaching in a cramped space. He kept her apprised of the situation along the way until their goal of expanding classroom space was realized.

As Mark explained from his perspective, it is reasonable to expect that there will be times when plans will change, but like Helena, he appreciates being updated and with a logical explanation.

Now, I realize that, you know, a person could come in and make a plan or a promise, and then have to deviate from that plan, but there will be a good explanation as to this is, this is why we are going to do this, and there is a reason for that and it makes sense.

He wanted be assured that changes to the plan were well thought out, not capricious or whimsical. Communicating the logic behind the change in plans, also demonstrated respect for the team and ultimately reinforced Mark's trust in the leader.

Similarly, Evelyn observed that to fail to communicate changes in the plan and logic behind them hinders trust,



So sometimes things do have to be changed from what you originally told someone was going to happen. Um, I think in those situations, it is really important for you to go back to the person and say, “Well, I thought it was going to go down like this, and this is what happened, and because....” And I think that people can pretty much accept that. Um, but I think, um, not sharing that kind of information can get in the way of progress and, and can hinder the trust aspect.

Knowing when changes occur helps build understanding and acceptance. Not knowing creates questions, hurt feelings, and distrust, which ultimately “can get in the way of progress” as faculty might feel uncertain of the desired outcomes and become disengaged or apathetic.

Another communication-related behavior of trusted leaders revealed through participant stories was initiating regular contact. Mark emphasized the need to develop relationships in order to develop trust, and he identified establishing regular contact and communication as essential for developing relationships and breaking down the stereotypical us-them barriers between faculty and administrators.

People will oftentimes tend to trust people that they have a relationship, more so than somebody they don't have a relationship with. And a lot of time that happens in the administrative sense. It's us against them, the administrators and the faculty. You know, you sometimes have those types of barriers that exist, because they are different worlds, uh, because of different roles, uh, in that sense. So, with, with that in mind, sometimes I think that's one of the things that leads to that. When you don't have a barrier, in, in regards to the relationship side of things, that's going to create an environment that helps to develop trust.

By regularly communicating and having contact, leaders create an opportunity for both sides to get to know and better understand one another's interests, concerns, challenges, and perspectives. From this understanding, there is an opportunity for developing respect, caring, and cooperation between and among the individuals in these roles.

Mark stressed that if he does not have contact with a leader, it is difficult for him to trust the leader, because he is cut off from much of the information he would normally use to form an opinion about whether or not the leader is trustworthy.

Because if, um, you've got a president, or VP, or even a department chair that's in their office on the other side of the building, and you never see them and you never hear from them, it's hard to develop—at least in my sense—a sense of trust, because I rely on—and maybe this goes back to the previous question—is part of their behavior but reading the body language. And you can tell a lot of times, it's not what they say, it's how they say it. And you can get an idea of is this person really telling the truth or not. That's not to say that I'm always right . . . . But if you have that barrier, you don't have the opportunity to do that as much. So that's one of the things in my experience is, is that there was an opportunity to have an environment to where you had some type of consistent contact with that person, and again, not necessarily every day, but uh, contact with that person to where you can, uh, see them. You see them under stress, you see how they handle that stress, and then you see their behavior and whether their behavior lines up with what they are saying. And when someone's behavior is lining up with what they are saying, then those are the pieces that help build trust. Uh, so I think that's one of the key pieces to build that.

Regular contact with the leader provided Mark with what Roberto might call “evidence” of character, as Mark was able to see the leader's reactions and choices in a variety of situations over time, which helped him to anticipate future behaviors.

Mark also conveyed that during this time of regular contact and communication, conversations with his trusted leader were both of a professional and personal nature.

At least in my experience, and the individual that I'm thinking about, there was an opportunity on a consistent basis to sit down and talk, and it wasn't always about work-related stuff, um, but it's not like you are just sitting there getting into your deepest, darkest secrets. It's just more or less just general conversation-type things and again maybe just for a few minutes, but it wasn't just somebody who was just business as usual and, um, that's all that they care about.

Through regular informal conversations, they got to know one another as professionals and as individuals, and built a mutual appreciation and understanding.

### *Communication-Related Behaviors of Untrusted Leaders*

Participants' stories of untrusted leaders included leaders who failed to communicate, often withholding critical information needed by faculty to do their work or understand what is going on within the organization. Participants also shared accounts of leaders who refused to explain decisions or changes in plans beyond the parental refrain, "Because I told you so." Other stories dealt with leaders who provided punitive, rather than constructive, feedback.

Tina's story of her absentee leader is an example of failing to communicate. She rarely received communications from him and nearly never saw him, with him visiting her facility less than one time per quarter. He relegated her training and orientation to her colleagues, and communicated little to no direction or guidance. "My supervisor . . . was very hands-off. And it was hard to establish trust with him, because we had no communication. There was very much a lack of communication with him." For Tina, his lack of communication signaled his lack of regard for her, which left her feeling frustrated, undervalued, and unsupported by her leader. Establishing trust with him was simply not possible for her given the lack of regular contact and communication.

In an interesting twist on the theme, Anne shared a story of trusted leaders who were failing to communicate when plans changed, which was counter to their normal behaviors.

I don't know what's going on right now because of um...budget cuts and...heavy enrollment and yet worry, people are worried about not having enough, that they might have to cut positions and that sort of thing, and I am looking at my own enrollment for the fall. They've gone over my caps and nobody talked with me about that—and usually if they go over your caps they, they ask you for permission or let you know why it's got to be done, but nobody said anything to me and that's, that's unusual. But I guess that's just part of what is going on with worries about how the next year will be, the next year and a half, if they have all of the cuts they are talking about . . . . But I don't like to think that people are keeping critical information from us or, or not letting us know why things need to be done. I think that's important.

Because the behavior was “unusual,” she was trying to give them the benefit of the doubt that in a time of crisis sometimes normal protocol will be abandoned, but clearly she will be watching to see if this is the beginning of a pattern of behavior that will damage her trust.

Another communication-related behavior associated with an untrusted leader was failing to communicate changes to plans and the logic behind them. Helena recounted her experience with a leader who would describe a plan to his team and then go with something completely different and offer no real explanation for the change in course.

I didn't have faith in anything they said, because they would say one thing and do another. It's one of those empty promises sort of things, with *no* explanation. Now I understand that administrators do not have to give us explanations for why they do things. And sometimes they can't give us explanations because of confidentiality or for whatever reason. But this person would look you right in the face and say, “It's going to be x, y, and z. And then when time came, it would be a, b, c.” And if you said, “Why?” or “Is there a reason? Did I do something wrong to cause this to go a different way or something?” It was, “Because I said so.”

Changes would come as a surprise, and his refusal to discuss them beyond presenting the posture of I am the boss and make the decisions therefore you do not need to know

seemed disrespectfully paternal and inconsiderate. From Helena's perspective, his attention was more focused on climbing the ladder and pleasing his superiors, than on worrying about what his team thought or felt, so plans could change in a moment's notice without regard for the team.

Another leadership behavior related to communication demonstrated in stories of untrusted leaders was providing punitive rather than constructive feedback. Beverly's story of her experience resulting from the discovery that her students were using her lab area for parties at night provides an interesting example. Her direct supervisor scolded her like a child, blaming her for the incidents and intimidating her by sending her to the vice president for further punishment. "He started fussing at me and then turned me over, you know. 'Boy, you are going to get it.' And you know, that's the way I felt." He did not offer constructive suggestions for how she could try to prevent further problems. Instead, he informed her that this would be going into her personnel file, leaving her feeling stunned, betrayed, and vulnerable. "[H]e broke my trust. I would have *never*—that took me so off guard." In contrast, her vice president provided constructive feedback. He helped her understand some of the errors that she had made in the handling of the group of students and offered wise counsel on how to make sure that these problems did not occur again.

And the vice president called me down to his office, and he pretty much blessed me out. But he did it in so such a way that I still had respect for him when I walked out. You know, you can do that. You can still chew someone's rear end out and still have their respect and some dignity when you leave. And he did. . . . So, um, I came out of there understanding what had happened, and what I could have done to prevent it, and with some rules and suggestions, strong suggestions not to let it happen again.

Beverly described herself as coming away from the experience feeling wiser as a result of her interaction with vice president, who provided constructive feedback. In contrast, she came away from her experience with her direct supervisor feeling shamed and betrayed, their relationship permanently damaged by his punitive feedback. Her response was to “avoid him at all costs.” Even though they continued to work together for many years, he never regained her trust.

Study participants’ stories of trusted and untrusted leaders often touched upon communication. Trusted leaders have been described as communicating openly and directly. They listen well. They provide respectful, honest, constructive feedback. They let faculty know when plans have changed and why. They initiate regular contact and communication, which helps them build relationships with faculty. While they do not tell their faculty members everything, they do keep them informed, providing them with the information necessary to do their jobs and with the big picture of what is going on within the organization.

In contrast, participants’ stories of untrusted leaders were peopled with leaders who failed to communicate, often withholding critical information needed by faculty members to do their work or understand things going on within the organization. These leaders were described as failing to alert faculty when plans changed and not offering explanations of why things had changed or the logic behind the final decisions. Untrusted leaders also described as providing punitive, rather than constructive, feedback, which was damaging to their relationships with faculty.

## *Competence*

### *Behaviors of Trusted Leaders Related to Competence*

Collectively, study participants' stories of trusted and untrusted leaders also frequently related to the theme of competence. Through their stories, participants have described trusted leaders acting with knowledge and experience. They produce results, not just talk about ideas. They present a clear purpose and vision, and define goals appropriate to the purpose. They hold themselves and their team members to a high standard. They are aware of what is going on in their areas, and they provide their team members with the resources needed to be successful.

Carol shared a story of a trusted leader, whom she regarded as very competent, based upon his many years of experience, his vast knowledge of his subject area, and his confident presence in the classroom. His purpose in the classroom was clear and unwavering as he pushed himself and his students to perform at the very best of their abilities.

And I entered ECU and investigated the Child Development department, and met a man named Dr. Lords. He was the chairman of the department, and he was a, a large imposing man, nearly bald, very gruff in his demeanor, and I'm a little nervous about coming back to school after all those years with two kids, a husband, a house, you know, all kinds of things. How am I going to do this? I really needed someone to be nurturing and reassuring—well, that wasn't Samuel Lords. He didn't have much time for this frole-drole--just get to it! But from the minute I met him, there was just a sense to me that he was just a rock, in that he only had the best intentions and that he ran his program in a way that was good. So it was not his personality, his reaching out to me, just a sense of stability and purpose that he had and vision, that he knew what he wanted to do, and that he would treat everybody fairly. I just had that sense about him. He's not going to cut me any slack because I'm a mom with two kids. He is going to have the same standards for me as he has for this right out of high school kid who has no responsibilities. We are all going to be in the same boat, and I just better learn to

paddle. And from that first meeting with him, I had that sense. And I was never disappointed. Over time his other side was revealed to me, that he really is a very nurturing and kind, gentle man, but that was not what attracted me to him. It was his sense of purpose and vision and fairness . . . . He was extremely organized and answered questions directly. When I had questions, he answered them very straight, direct, and I had the clear sense that that was not the first time that he'd heard that question. So he had a real wealth of experience behind him. He just spoke with conviction about everything.

While he held high standards, Dr. Lords treated students fairly and with a deep caring and commitment to their development. Carol knew that in spite of her additional life duties as a mother, wife, and worker, she would not be treated any differently than a traditional student. Relaxing the standards for her would have been counter to Dr. Lords' commitment to her intellectual development. His stability, expertise, and confidence gave her confidence that meeting the standard was possible and desirable. Long after graduating from the program in which Dr. Lords taught, Carol continued a mentoring friendship with him, so strong was their bond.

Sarah shared the story of a leader, whose competence and commitment to excellence, earned her trust, respect, and enduring admiration.

I think that she set it [an ideal expectation for trustworthy leadership] for me for the rest of my career. And her name was Marilyn Carmichael. She was my first director of nursing, when I worked in—I was a brand new graduate and went to a hospital that I had heard from nursing school was a very difficult place to work, because the standards were very high. And most of the people who went there—if they accepted ten new grads, only two would be left standing. But I wanted to try it. And from day one, I realized that there was such a high level, such a high standard, that it was really sometimes difficult to maintain . . . . Marilyn was a six foot tall beautiful blonde lady, um, Director of Nursing, a very wealthy person. Everybody looked at her. She always came in suits...just beautiful. And she would come around the unit. She would always say good morning, you know. I always liked her though. There was something about her, and she set that standard. But a lot of nurses, I think, looked at her like she's not, like you



couldn't approach her. I thought that she was very approachable, very friendly. One Mother's Day, we had horrible weather in Chicago, and I was on the oncology unit and we had a lot of sick patients that needed chemo, blood, and platelets. There were two of us that showed up for work. Actually, they sent the firemen out to get us, if we lived close enough. . . . There were two of us for like thirty-some patients. We were the only chemo-certified nurses. Couldn't keep the other nurses there, because they had been there a long time. So we decided well we're just going to do it. We're just going to jump in, and we're going to do it. We divided the work. We were doing great. The patients all understood, you know. About 10 o'clock in the morning, I look up and there's Norma, in her beautiful Mother's Day suit. And I see her just as she is tying on a hospital gown, over her beautiful suit. She walks over and says, "Honey"—she was very southern, she was, I, I don't know where she was from, but this was Chicago, and she was definitely the southern person. "Honey, where can you find me some shoes? I wear a size 8." Well, in those days, all the nurses, you had to keep your shoes at work. So I took her into the locker room, and she went through those lockers until she found a pair of size 8 nursing shoes, and she helped us bathe every person on that unit. She fed them—now she couldn't do the chemo or any of that, but she was a nurse and so she was licensed, so she knew how to give meds. She knew how to do blood pressures, assessment. And she was there with us from probably 10 or 10:30 til maybe 3 o'clock, until that next 3 o'clock group could come in for that shift. So when I think about that situation, I think it's also not just saying that you could do it, but also understand it. . . . I think it's having those leaders that will get in there and do it with you. And so that level of respect and that level of trust—one thing Marilyn always talked about was we are in it together. She would come around and say, "We're in it together. We're in it together!" So I think that some of the faculty—the nurses—would look at her and go, "Yeah, right." But here she was on Mother's Day. She was a mom, so I know that she wanted to be at home, and here she was this administrator that really did not have to come in. But I think that she proved a lot, and when she left our unit, she went then to another unit, so I know that she was there for a very long time that day. I think that she was on the way to some gathering, based upon what she was wearing and how she was dressed, and decided I'm coming in. So, I've never forgotten that.

Marilyn was more than just a pretty blonde; she was a skilled nurse, still competent to provide patient care. Her commitment to the patients and to her team were of a higher priority than her holiday social activities. Instead, she was focused on the highest

purpose of her field, to provide the highest possible care, both for her radically understaffed team and for her patients. As a leader, she was able to walk the talk.

This experience left a lasting impression on Sarah, who now leads a group of faculty as a director of nursing. She learned that competence is an important part of leadership, especially in a technical field, and this understanding has pushed her to maintain her clinical skills so that she remains capable of filling in during clinicals when needed. She, like Marilyn, stays in touch with what is going on with her team, so that she will know when help or redirection are needed.

Competence as a leader goes beyond technical skills, there must be competence in the skills of leadership. Beverly shared the story of a pair of trusted leaders who understood the leadership principle of giving a talented team member a charge and a direction, the necessary resources to bring the vision to life, and then stepping back and letting them use their skills to make it happen. She was asked by her president and academic vice president to lead a professional development committee, which provides campus wide professional development for faculty.

I ended up in a leadership role by accident, but it was something that I would never have really, really, really ever volunteered for . . . but it worked out pretty good, because I felt like the energy and effort that I put forth into it was acknowledged and . . . I like the pat on the back and the hey you did a nice job, or thanks, and um [clears throat], there was a whole lot of that in abundance. Plus, like I said, if I was asked to perform a task, I was given the resources and the authority to make decisions and to execute those things to the best of my ability and then so back me up and I'll do it all day. . . . There were little just little things, little things that just made a huge difference, make you feel like you were a part, make you feel like you were involved and that your opinions mattered, and if you had a question, it wasn't stupid, and [clears throat] that you weren't on your own, and um, I kind of, Dr. Gregory got really tickled with me about that, because he, uh, he knew that I was very introverted, very quiet, very behind the scenes. . . .

. Because I'll do what needs to be done, but I don't want to be in the front, and all of a sudden, there I was front and center and that was a very uncomfortable place, but because of the way they led that, I was able, I guess, I was able to perform on a level I never thought I would and to feel good about it.

While accepting this challenge took Beverly outside of her comfort zone, her trusted leaders supplied support, encouragement, acknowledgement, and the necessary resources for her to be successful in leading the effort to organize meaningful professional development experiences for her colleagues. Their competence in guiding and supporting her as she grew in her confidence with the new role, encouraged her to do things that she never envisioned herself as capable of doing, which reinforced her trust and admiration for them.

#### *Behaviors of Untrusted Leaders Related to Competence*

Several faculty participant personal experience stories of untrusted leaders related incompetence. Participants described these leaders as failing to lead or provide guidance. They were portrayed as demonstrating little knowledge or interest in what their team members do. Their behaviors do not appear to be in alignment with the mission of the department or the institution. Rather than supporting and facilitating the success of their faculty, and providing needed resources, untrusted leaders were described as acting as obstacles to progress that distracted from the true purpose of their work.

Tina shared the story of an untrusted leader who refused to lead or provide guidance to her. Instead, she was summarily ignored.

And um, he wouldn't give guidance. So I'm like, why are you in that position if you won't provide guidance to someone who needs it? Or if we are asking for direction or help, why not give us that help? If a leader is not going to step up to

the plate and say, “Okay, here’s what I think you need to do,” then why are they a leader?

From her perspective, her leader had no knowledge or interest in what she did on the job or how she did it, leaving her to seek out assistance and guidance elsewhere, which left her to question why he wanted to be a leader at all, if he did not want to lead.

Roberto drew a correlation between trustworthy, competent leadership behaviors and alignment with legitimate goals that support the mission of the institution. For him, one cannot be a good leader and be leading in a direction contrary to the mission or without legitimate goals. Those leaders he labels as “career leaders” make their focus advancing their own careers; while those he labels as “organization leaders” focus on advancing the mission and goals of the institution.

There are leaders within the organization that again are career oriented as opposed to what are the legitimate goals of the organization. And obviously, you can tell I’m very big on that, on having legitimate goals, on having a legitimate focus that’s based on evidence . . . . And organization leaders, obviously, are about the goals of the organization. And as long as those two things are consistent or congruent, then that’s okay. The problem with trust is when there is a feeling or a disconnect between what the leader says are the goals and what you perhaps see that there’s a disconnect or an incongruity between that.

In his experience, when an incongruity or misalignment occurs, career leaders may get what they want, their careers are boosted and they leave the organization, but the institution is not advanced. Instead, the followers are left with a “vacuum.”

Carol shared a similar experience of working with a leader whom she regarded as competent in the beginning,

My first impressions . . . I just saw him as a very cultured, knowledgeable person, which again, I equate with competence. But very quickly I saw the other side. And the other side was revealed, rather than having a clear sense of purpose for the mission of the job, I knew that his mission was personal. I knew from a very early time that the things that he was doing as an administrator were to further his own career—that we might benefit on the side, but we were not the reason for it.

Quickly she discovered his mission was personal and that anything good that might come to the institution from his leadership would be incidental and secondary to his own self-focused mission. Therefore, she could not trust him to lead wisely and to protect the interests of his faculty and the institution.

Bill shared a different sort of experience with two untrusted leaders whom he regarded as incompetent. The first he described as having little leadership or technical skills. “First of all, the only tools that he had in his tool box as a lead person, not supervisor, was a hairbrush, mirror, and hairspray.” Instead, he used his smooth interpersonal skills and fabrication to advance his career within the organization. Bill indicated that this and other similar experience had left him feeling jaded about the prospect of career advancement.

It’s kinda like, “Oh, we can trust you to make your men do their jobs or the people in your department do their jobs, so we are going to leave you there, but this slacker over here that we can’t get to do nothing, we’re going to promote ‘em until we find something that they can do.” I’ve seen that *too* much.

Such was his disdain for this leader that he transferred to another area to get away from him and to work with a trust leader for whom he held a great deal of respect. In a similar story, Bill described his disappointment at the recent appointment of a new vice president.

Pretty much, they rode the coattails of other people and I haven't seen an honest day's work out of 'em no time at all. So, I'm just worried, am I the only one that sees this? Or does everybody outside the college see this? And what's the outside perception on the college now? That, "Hey, you don't have to open this job up for bids, you can just put anybody you want to in it." That, to me, has created an atmosphere of distrust right now.

The new leader's perceived lack of experience and competence coupled with the appointment process caused Bill to question his previously held positive beliefs about the organization, including the validity of other recruitment efforts. He worries that discord will grow if the new leader fails to meet faculty expectations for competent leadership. "So that has created bad atmosphere as of right now. I do hope. I do pray that that does change. Because I do like it here." Such doubts consume his energy and distract him from more positive and productive lines of thought.

Beverly described her untrusted leader as "an obstacle to work around." Rather than supporting and facilitating her success, and providing needed resources, Beverly's leader "drove [her] crazy."

I felt like I had to fight him on everything. I felt like I had to fight him to get equipment and fight him for supplies . . . . They say, okay well what do you need. Well, you spend time coming up with a list of your needs, and you present that to them and they say, "no, no, no, you don't need that." Okay, why did I do that [whispering]? Don't ask me—if you are going to ask me to do something, give me the authority to do something with it.

Rather than spending time on more productive activities, Beverly found herself coming up with ways to get the resources she needed either without the leader's help or by asking for more than she needed in anticipation that he would never fully approve her requests.

While her leader might have possessed technical competence and held the respect of many, his competence as a leader was not evidenced in his relationship with Beverly, whose productivity was challenged by his lack of support.

To summarize, frequently participants' personal experience stories of trusted and untrusted leaders involved the theme of competence. Participants have described trusted leaders demonstrating knowledge and experience in their actions and decisions. They produce results, not just talk. They present a clear purpose and vision, and maintain alignment with the institutional mission, defining goals appropriate to support that purpose. They hold high standards for themselves and their faculty. They are in touch with what is going on in their areas, and they work to provide their faculty with necessary resources to be successful. They are not only technically competent in their given field, they are competent in the skills of leadership.

Stories of untrusted leaders who lacked competence, included those of leaders as failing provide guidance and direction. These leaders were described as having limited knowledge and interest in their areas and in what their faculty members are doing. Their behaviors do not appear to be in alignment with the legitimate mission of the department or the institution. These untrusted leaders were described as acting as obstacles to progress and as distracting faculty from the true purpose of their work, instead of supporting and facilitating the work of their faculty and providing the resources necessary for success.

## *Consistency*

### *Behaviors of Trusted Leaders Related to Consistency*

When sharing stories of trusted leaders, participants spoke of behaviors related to consistency. Trusted leaders were perceived being stable and consistent. Their actions were predictable to their faculty and aligned with what they said with their words. They offered no unpleasant surprises.

Evelyn told the story of a deeply trusted leader, whom she described positively as “pretty much the same way every day.” While trust does not come easily for her, Evelyn felt very much at ease with this leader because of his consistency and caring.

They had a consistency of attitude and principles that they lived by, and you always knew where they were coming from. There were really no surprises. They had a great regard for other people, and that was always evident in everything they did.

His every day sameness did not cause her to question whether he would do what he said he would do or what his motivations were. As in Charles’ definition of trust, she was liberated to be “able to take certain things for granted, and go on with life, knowing how [her leader would] respond.” She felt confident to predict his responses and did not fear the unexpected.

Beverly described her trusted leader in a similar manner, which aligned with her definition of trust: “Confidence that I can predict an outcome or predict a behavior or response . . . that I could pretty much guess or know what to expect.” When describing her leader, she frequently used the word “know:” “I know they have confidence in me,” “it’s *tremendously* comforting to know,” “I love the sensation of knowing.” She was



very much comforted by being able to accurately predict his responses, and provided multiple prediction scenarios in relationship to him.

I know right now if I picked up the phone and said, “I need you to back me up on something,” I know that he would come in all of his, he would come, he would resolve it, and he would take care of me.

And in a separate scenario:

I know that he will be respectful to that student, listen to what that student has to say, and I know that he is going to tell me what that student had to say, and I know that we are going to discuss that. And I know that he is probably going to have some really healthy suggestions on things I could do to improve, but I’m not going to walk out of there feeling like I’ve done something wrong.

His predictable support reduced her anxiety about being caught in error, and she felt at liberty to ask for help and to give him a heads up if a potentially troublesome situation seemed to be brewing, without fearing a capricious response. Returning to Cummings and Bromily’s (1996) definition of trust being the belief that a person will not harm or take advantage of you, even if given the chance, Beverly trusts that no harm will come from this very solid and predictable leader.

#### *Behaviors of Untrusted Leaders Related to Consistency*

Participant stories of untrusted leaders featured leaders whose actions were unpredictable. Their decisions sometimes seemed illogical and capricious. They confused faculty when their actions did not follow their words. They said one thing and did another, leaving faculty unable to trust what they said or to predict what they would do.

Helena shared the story of a leader who defied prediction.

I just couldn't trust someone who would say one thing and then do something else—repeatedly. . . . Whether he told you something in a group or one-on-one, it wasn't no mistake that you misunderstood or something about what his intentions were or his plans were, when he sat there and said, "We will do this, this, this, and this." And then completely do something opposite when the time came. And a lot of times, it was with a surprise too. Like you would be in a meeting thinking he was going to say that we were going to start doing so and so, and it was completely opposite. . . . I could never really figure this guy out. Because when I saw his leadership abilities or disabilities if you will, um, I didn't stay with him long.

In the end, Helena chose to leave the organization, rather than deal with this leader's maddening capriciousness.

Carol expressed a similar distaste for unpredictability.

Well, I don't like feeling mistrustful of someone, so it puts an awkward—anything that happens after that, innocent or otherwise, is colored by that. Why did he say that? What is he really up to? That is unfamiliar to me, since I have not had to deal with it. There have been other administrators and leaders in my experience, because I have been around for a long time, who I did not agree with on many things, but I knew exactly where they were coming from. I could predict their response, you know. I am well versed in the good old boy network—I know it like the back of my hand, and I can work it [laughs]. I understand it. . . . Then I ran across this style, and I just can't, I just can't work with, because it is unpredictable...capricious.

Perhaps unpredictability played to the advantage of this leader whom Carol perceived as having a self-centered mission. Unlike Helena, Carol remained with the institution, retreating back to the sanctity of her classroom, happy not to be an administrator. "Administrators come and go," she mused, "and at the end of the day, teachers are teaching," fulfilling the true mission of the institution.

Mark relayed the story of another untrusted leader, whose unpredictable and illogical behavior was a method for her games of manipulation and passive-aggression to keep others off-balance.

This person would say one thing and then do something else. Or they would do something and say, “This is why I did that,” but then these two things never align. There was never a rational decision, uh, as to why things were done the way that they were done. . . . They didn’t lie to me about everything. But there was enough out there that I didn’t know, are they telling me the truth or not.

Without being able to predict whether or not the leader was telling the truth, Mark came to question everything, even the most mundane bits of information shared by the leader.

So then it was always in question, so I’d just have to wait and see. And you know, it might be something benign that might not have anything to do with anything. It might be a story about, “Yeah, you know, 20 years ago duh, duh, duh, duh...” And they are telling a story to try to illustrate a point, and I would think—prior to this I would think that this is the gospel when they said that was the truth, whereas after learning who the person really was...well, they may be telling the truth. They may not be telling the truth. I don’t know.

Such scrutiny, examining every detail and every action would seem distracting and an exhausting drain on time and energy. However, knowing that this leader’s retirement was impending, Mark was able to hunker down and outlast the leader’s unpredictable, manipulative reign.

## Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I introduced the faculty members who participated in the study. I presented their definitions of trust and their techniques for determining trustworthiness. Then I explored in depth their personal experience stories related to the leadership

behaviors of trusted and untrusted leaders. Excerpts from participant stories were clustered around the emerged themes of ethics, valuing others, communication, competence, and consistency to reveal participant perceptions of the behaviors of trusted and untrusted leaders. In the final chapter, I will present conclusions, implications of the study, recommendations for further research, and final words of wisdom from study participants regarding trust and leadership.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSIONS

The focus of this qualitative study was to examine how faculty members at three community colleges in North Carolina made meaning of the concept of trust and to explore the leadership behaviors or actions that they perceived as building or destroying feelings of trust. More understanding about the nature of trust in higher education and the roles played by leaders in shaping trust within their organizations is needed, especially now as colleges are experiencing large numbers of retirements in key leadership roles, a condition which could challenge organizational climates with diminished trust.

Trust is the cornerstone of a healthy, positive, productive organizational climate (Baker, 1992b; Likert, 1961; Shugart, 1999; Tarter, Sabo, & Hoy, 1995; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000). Without trust between leaders and those whom they lead, organizational progress is slowed, even simple processes can become politicized and approached with caution. Risk-taking, the birthplace of innovation, is reduced, and collaboration is rendered difficult. Within a low trust environment, change is often approached with fear, not curiosity (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000).

The actions or behaviors of leaders set the tone for trust within an organization (Duffy, Lafferty, and Lafferty, 2001; Kouzes & Posner, 1995). Gardner (1990) includes the capacity to build trust as one of the top five leadership skills, and McCall and

Lombardo (1983) found that “betrayal of trust” (p. 28) was one of the top ten traits that were found to stem a budding leader’s success, and it was noted to be the single “unforgivable sin” (p. 28) from which leaders could rarely rebound. Therefore, building trust would seem to be a worthy topic for the consideration of any current or aspiring leader. To that end, this study has explored faculty perceptions of trust and the leadership behaviors that build or destroy trust as expressed through participants’ personal experience stories.

Trust-related studies from the fields of organizational behavior, leadership theory, and the budding field of trust theory formed a context for this study. Mayo’s (1933) early 20<sup>th</sup> century Hawthorne Studies established the importance of leader-employee relations, specifically the major role that leader treatment of employees has on job performance. Leadership trait studies like the Ohio State Leadership Studies and the Michigan Studies and those by Bennis (1984), Gardner (1990), and McCall and Lombardo (1983) specifically pointed to the importance of trust within those leader-employee relationships. And the studies of Baker and the National Initiative for Leadership and Institutional Effectiveness (NILIE), which focus on trust within colleges and universities, and Hoy’s numerous studies of trust within the school environment, have further refined what is known about trust between leader and follower, and the specific impact of this relationship on the organizational climates of educational institutions.

### *Implications of the Findings*

*Defining Trust.* During one-on-one interviews, 13 faculty participants explored their concepts of trust and their methods for determining trustworthiness as well as sharing their personal experience stories of working with leaders in whom they held a high degree of trust and their stories of working with leaders in whom they held a low degree of trust. Participants defined trust as a byproduct or antecedent of acting with integrity or being ethical, valuing and protecting the interests of others, behaving with consistency or predictability, and having professional competence. From their perspectives, if one acts with integrity, one tells the truth, does what is considered good and right, then this person will garner the trust of others. If one values other people and does whatever is in one's control to take care of and protect those people from harm, then people will trust this person. If one behaves in a logical and predictable manner, then people know what to expect from this person and feel they can trust or rely upon that expectation. If one is capable, professionally competent, then people can trust this person to do a high quality job.

These initial explanations were further illustrated through participants' stories, which often offered a clear background for the definition based upon personal experience. For example, Vicki defined trust as "a step by step dialogue where there is discourse and it is held safe and it just keeps building. So there is that wonderful comfort level..." Her story of a leader in whom she held a high degree of trust amplified and illustrated that definition by describing in detail the buildup of their relationship, which

was anchored with rich, professional and personal dialogue and respect that formed the basis for a comfortable and comforting 21 year relationship.

Um, he was one of my mentors. We just developed. We just clicked...personality-wise...and um, just clinically, you know professionally, clinically, even though I was his student, and he was my supervisor. Trust in his judgment, his thinking process. There was, he was just a consistent person. And very responsible and very responsive. And I admired him very much. I could always count on him for feedback, you know, yea, ney, whatever. I trusted his word, even if it was negative. I took it as a learning experience.

In like fashion, Beverly's definition of trust being, "confidence that I can . . . predict an outcome or predict a behavior or response... [and] that person would, um, take action that would be . . . in my best interest," was amplified by her story of the leader, in whom she placed a great deal of confidence, often using the word "know" to describe his anticipated behaviors. She described him as willing to take action to "defend his employees against attack." Participants' personal experience stories provide a window into how their concepts of trust were constructed. Through their experiences, certain aspects of trust take on a more central focus, as in the case of Beverly, who had previously felt "abandoned" when her untrusted leader failed support her. Her definition of trust, influenced by her negative experience, included a reference to taking action in her best interest, to protect her interests.

As a collective, the participants' definitions of trust echo those identified in a number of other studies. Hoy and Tschannen-Moran (1999) identified five facets of trust that correlate to the categories that emerged from participants' stories: benevolence, honesty, openness, reliability, and competency. The element of benevolence was like the



category of valuing others, honesty was like ethics, openness was related to communication, reliability was like consistency, and competency was like competence. In another study, Elsbach (2004) uses the similar terms of “competence, benevolence, and integrity” (p. 276) to describe categories of trustworthy attributes and the terms “behavioral consistency; behavioral integrity; sharing control; accurate, open, and thorough communication; and demonstrating concern” (p. 277) to identify what she calls antecedent behaviors, which contribute to a perception of trustworthiness. Bryk and Schneider (2003) use the categories of “respect, personal regard, competence in core role responsibilities, and personal integrity” (p. 42). Respect and personal regard are similar to valuing others, integrity is like ethics, and the competence categories are the same.

*Determining Trustworthiness.* When describing their methods for determining the trustworthiness of others, some participants talked about observing leaders to see how they treat others, listening to feedback from others regarding the leaders, checking for congruence between what leaders say and do, and watching with whom they chose to make friends. Others indicated that they generally trust until given a reason not to trust. Some talked about gradually extending trust, offering more trust if that initial trust is not abused. Two participants described themselves as loaning a certain amount of additional initial trust on the basis of association with a person when they already trust or on the basis of the leadership role played by the person in question. Two others talked about going with their gut feelings about a person, coupled with their observations.

Calling upon a number of studies that have sought to explain why people trust, Kramer (1999) defined the following categories of bases for trust within organizations:

dispositional trust, history-based trust, third parties as conduits of trust, category-based trust, role-based trust, and rule-based trust. Examples of four of these bases for trust were featured in participants' stories. I will use those categories to frame further discussion of the implications of participants' methods for determining trustworthiness.

*Dispositional Trust.* Dispositional trust is related to an individual's predisposition or tendency to trust, based upon personal experiences, particularly those in infancy, that have shaped their expectations and beliefs about others. Interestingly, each of the participants, without my prompting, commented on their own trust levels at some point during the interview. Usually, these disclosures came as a part of their explanation of how they determine trustworthiness or as an explanation of why they had or had not trusted a leader. Their self descriptions ranged from Helena's "I trust everybody, until they give me a reason not to trust them" to Roberto's paraphrasing of Ronald Regan, "I think initially you trust, and then you try and verify," to Evelyn's "I'm not an open-book person . . . . It takes me a while to build up trust with someone." The significance of these predispositions to leaders is well illustrated through Carol's account of working with students who have a limited predisposition to trust.

At first, then, in infancy, trust comes from how other people treat you. And then you develop a certain mind set, I think, and approach people and situations in terms of that. . . . Later on, so I get to see that in my students. I get to see students who come in open to me, open to learning, open to authority in general, and a sense of themselves. And I have quite a few students who come to me with the opposite. They don't basically trust people in authority. Um, they are testing their limits all the time. And I have to earn their trust. And it makes it harder to teach them. Because you spend the first semester with first year students figuring out who is who, and which ones are already there and which ones have to get there—all the time while covering your course competencies [laughs] while trying to reach them.

Faculty members, like students, each bring with them their own predispositions toward trust, and these predispositions can create barriers that will challenge leaders who want to foster a climate of trust.

*History-based Trust.* Kramer's (1999) history-based trust is focused on experiences that shape and reshape feelings of trust beyond predisposition, where initial expectations of trustworthiness are adjusted in response to experiences that either confirm or contradict those expectations. Beverly's story of feeling abandoned is emotionally charged example of that.

But he let me down. He broke my trust. I would have *never*—that took me so off guard. I mean, I expected there to be a meeting of the minds. I expected everyone to come together and say, “bluh.” You know, I expected than that. But I certainly never expected for it to be said this is your fault. You let this happen. I am putting, this is going in your file.

When her expectations collided with what actually happened, Beverly adjusted her trust level and behaviors with this leader accordingly on the bases of her experience. She reduced her interaction with the leader and began keeping detailed documentation of anything that she thought might eventually need to defend herself, if ever her actions or decisions should be brought into question.

Of note with this example, these calibrations of trust level are not equally fluid, moving as easily from more trust to less trust and vice versa. Beverly's experience illustrates how once trust is diminished, it is very difficult to build again. In spite of having served many more years with this leader and assisting him with special projects,

professionally and personally, Beverly's trust level did not return to its previous level. From her perspective, the trust aspect of their relationship was permanently damaged.

*Third Parties as Conduits of Trust.* Kramer's (1999) category, third parties as conduits of trust, refers to trust assigned on the basis of information received through third party sources like colleagues who might relay positive or negative stories of their experiences or the experiences with others with particular leader. Sarah's example of loaning trust to me, based upon her trusting relationship with the institutional researcher at her college, illustrates this category.

If it is somebody that is introduced to me by someone that I respect, for example you, okay? I trust Dr. Thomas. I've worked with him now on committees—I've seen him, I know that he's a trustworthy person . . . . So, my—you already had built in trust coming in here this morning, because you came from Dr. Thomas.

In this case, I benefited from the phenomena of loaned trust; however, third party sources can also have a trust diminishing effect too, as suggested by Vicki as she discussed how she goes about determining trustworthiness.

And so, I listen. . . . If I hear somebody, somebody's been hurt unnecessarily or back-stabbed or let down or you know things like that, I would make a judgment, if I have to have a relationship with them of some variety, whether work or whatever, that kind of thing....

When she hears information that suggests that a person is not trustworthy, that they have hurt or let someone down, she takes that into consideration when thinking about how she will interact with that person in the future. If these stories came from multiple sources, the negative impact would be multiplied. This is notable as leaders reflect upon their

interactions with faculty, understanding how trust-damaging experiences with one faculty member could have a chilling effect on trust with others in the group, who might hear stories from or about their colleague, regardless of the facts of the matter.

While these sorts of stories are often shared to evoke sympathy and support from fellow faculty members and are skewed accordingly in favor of the faculty, their potential impact is real. Roberto expressed his frustration of not always being able to fully disclose information to his fellow faculty members to better help them understand some of the personnel decisions he has had to make.

I have had the opportunity to disappoint people, when there were times when things appeared to be right to them that I could not do. Um, and if you were to interview them, they might tell you, um, you know, that, that there are trust issues with me, and I think I'm a very trustworthy person . . . but sometimes there are no good choices.

Fairly or unfairly, faculty trust in leaders can be damaged by third party accounts, especially when situations cannot be openly discussed due to confidentiality.

*Role-based Trust.* Kramer's (1999) category, role-based trust, refers to the conferring of trust to someone on the basis of their role. When describing how he determines trustworthiness, Mark referred to extending role-based trust to leaders initially out of respect for their roles.

I'm a man of respect, and you do need to respect your supervisors. Uh, and the fact that they are in that position, says something in and of itself, so . . . they get a baseline sense of trust—and you know, I try not to quantify it too much—but you know a new person would come in, you know if I moved into a new position, and there's going to be a certain sense of trust with whoever my supervisor is, because they are in that position. And from that point, they are either going to build that

trust, or they are going to break that trust down, based off of what they do and what they say.

However, as Mark points out, this sort of depersonalized trust only goes so far, then the leaders actions will either confirm or deny the level of trust extended to them.

*Rule-based Trust.* Similar to role-based trust, rule-based trust is explained by Kramer (1999) as the general expectations and beliefs about the group norms and practices of an organization based upon shared understandings about the rules of behavior. As with role-based trust, rule-based trust is dependent upon the existence and adherence to standard of practice within the organization; therefore, when leaders' actions are not in keeping with the standard, trust is diminished. Anne shared one such example of how nonstandard actions lay the groundwork for doubt and suspicion, even in a typically trusting environment.

Now, we have plenty of stresses added here as well, um, but doesn't tend to be as much worried about somebody stabbing us in the back or or not thinking it through—they just expect everybody to do a lot of work [laughs]. I, I mean, I mean...usually we are involved with the process. I don't know what's going on right now because of um...budget cuts and...heavy enrollment and yet worry, people are worried about not having enough, that they might have to cut positions and that sort of thing, and I am looking at my own enrollment for the fall. They've gone over my caps and nobody talked with me about that—and usually if they go over your caps they, they ask you for permission or let you know why it's got to be done, but nobody said anything to me and that's, that's unusual.

Anne went on to speculate that the ongoing budget crisis was causing campus leaders to suspend their typical rules of engagement, but the tone of her voice was concerned.

Understanding how followers form an opinion of the trustworthiness of leaders is important for leaders to understand, especially if they want to avoid inadvertently having

a negative impact on those opinions or conversely if they want to positively impact those opinions. Elsbach (2004) developed a framework of image management tactics that can be used by leaders to shape follower perceptions of their trustworthiness. Tactics for creating a more trustworthy image included strategies like displaying a similarity to one's audience and a dissimilarity to known untrustworthy characters, presenting as one of the group, and displaying a "warm and engaging appearance" (Elsbach, 2004, p. 282). The notion of overtly manipulating the perceptions of others is counter to my own concept of trust, which has at its core genuineness; however, being aware of how our behaviors shape the perceptions of others seems like a helpful part of self-reflection and self-evaluation, particularly for current and aspiring leaders.

*Leadership behaviors of Trusted and Untrusted Leaders.* An examination of participant narratives revealed numerous behaviors or actions perceived to have increased or decreased faculty feelings of trust for their leader. These behaviors were clustered into five general and sometimes overlapping categories: ethics, valuing others, communication, competence, and consistency. These categories were defined a priori using the patterns within and among participants' stories.

The behaviors that participants identified as increasing or decreasing trust align those identified by Hoy and Tschannen-Moran (1999, 2000) in their comprehensive reviews of trust-related literature from across disciplines. Behaviors noted as building trust included as sharing information, following through, maintaining consistency, exhibiting competence, and demonstrating caring and ethical behaviors. Behaviors noted as damaging to trust included allowing personal issues to overshadow the needs of the

group, lying, cheating, verbally abusing subordinates, demonstrating incompetence, failing to follow through and acting unpredictably.

*Ethics.* In terms of ethics, trusted leaders were described by participants as demonstrating integrity, holding to their principles even when inconvenient or unpopular, doing the right thing, honoring their commitments, being fair, distributing work evenly, being honest, and holding confidences. Honesty has been frequently identified as a cornerstone to trust (Baier, 1986; Cummings & Bromily, 1996; Hoy & Tchannen-Moran, 1999; Tchannen-Moran, 2004). Untrusted leaders were described by participants as lying, doing unscrupulous or illegal things, prompting others to do so as well, manipulating others, playing games, stirring things up, failing to hold confidences, tattling to leaders above them, encouraging spying on others, misplacing blame, acting unfairly, and displaying prejudice or favoritism. Not surprisingly, these behaviors were regarded by participants as disruptive to the work environment.

*Valuing Others.* In terms of valuing others, trusted leaders were portrayed as appreciating faculty as people as well as professionals, connecting with them personally and taking an interest in them. Trusted leaders were described as supporting the professional growth and development of their faculty. They exhibited trust their team members to do good work, and they avoid micromanagement. They entrusted faculty with privileged information when needed, and they appreciated and sought faculty input for decision making. They were willing to back up their faculty, providing them with support and constructive redirection when needed. Trusted leaders were approachable and compassionate, and they demonstrated appreciation for a job well done. They made



decisions in the best interest of the group. These elements are in keeping with Hoy and Tschannen-Moran's (1999) facet of trust, benevolence, which was described as "confidence that one's well-being or something that one cares about will be protected by the trusted person or group" (p. 187).

In contrast, untrusted leaders were described as not valuing others. Focused on themselves and/or their careers, they were described as not demonstrating genuine caring for or interest in their faculty. Participant stories featured untrusted leaders who failed to support, back up, or build relationships with their faculty members. Some untrusted leaders were described as behaving in a threatening or passive-aggressive manner, being disrespectfully paternal, and not trusting in the faculty's ability and motivation to do good work.

*Communication.* In terms of communication, trusted leaders were featured as communicating openly and directly, and they listened well. They provided honest, constructive feedback. They initiated regular contact and communication, and were mindful to alert the faculty when agreed upon plans had changed. They kept faculty informed with the information they need to do their jobs, and shared the big picture of what is going on within the organization. In contrast, untrusted leaders were portrayed as failing to communicate openly, withholding critical information needed by faculty, not alerting faculty when plans had changed and not offering explanations of why beyond, "because I said so." Untrusted leaders also described as providing punitive, rather than constructive, feedback, which was damaging to their relationships with faculty.

Sweetland and Hoy (2001) examined the impact of deceptive communication on organizational climate in schools. Study results indicated that by spinning the truth to shape teacher perceptions, principals diminished teacher trust and increased feelings of teacher powerlessness. Feelings of powerlessness were connected to teacher spinning of the truth to protect themselves, and thus a perpetual cycle of principal to teacher to principal spinning of the truth. As anticipated, acts of principal spinning and teacher spinning of the truth were found to be strongly correlated. Open and honest communication, however, signaled both respect and “reciprocal trust” (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000, p. 558), which was described as a confidence that neither party would be harmed or exploited.

*Competence.* Frequently participants’ personal experience stories of trusted and untrusted leaders involved the theme of competence. Participants have described trusted leaders demonstrating knowledge and experience in their actions and decisions. They produced results, not just talk. They presented a clear purpose and vision, and maintained alignment with the institutional mission, defining goals appropriate to support that purpose. They held high standards for themselves and their faculty. They were in touch with what is going on in their areas, and they worked to provide their faculty with necessary resources to be successful. They were not only technically competent in their given field, they were competent in the skills of leadership.

Stories of untrusted leaders who lacked competence, included those of leaders who failed to provide guidance and direction. These leaders were described as having limited knowledge and interest in their areas and in what their faculty members are doing.

Their behaviors did not appear to be in alignment with the legitimate mission of the department or the institution. These untrusted leaders were described as acting as obstacles to progress and as distracting faculty from the true purpose of their work, instead of supporting and facilitating the work of their faculty and providing the resources necessary for success.

Competence is one of the facets of trust identified by Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2000). As they put it, “There are times when good intentions are not enough” (Hoy & Tschannen-Moran, 1999, p. 188; Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2000, p. 557). There are times when leaders must possess appropriate and effective skills in order to protect the interests of their team and, therefore, be trusted (Baier, 1986). Without the necessary skills, no matter how nice and caring the leader might be, this person is likely to let the team down.

*Consistency.* Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2000) made the point that just plain consistency alone is not an independent facet of trust. One could be very consistent in never following through or be quite predictable in telling braggadocious lies, but that would not make the person trustworthy. However, I intended in this category, as Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2000) intended in their category reliability, to twin consistency with a notion of benevolence.

When sharing stories of trusted leaders, participants spoke of behaviors related to consistency in terms of predictability. They offered no unpleasant surprises. Trusted leaders were perceived being stable and consistent with predictable actions that were in alignment with their stated goals. The untrusted leaders featured in participants’ stories

were perceived as being unpredictable, and their decisions could seem illogical and capricious. They confused faculty by not doing what they said they would do, which confounded faculty members' attempts to predict what they would do.

*In Sum.* Participants shared numerous stories of trusted and untrusted leaders, whose behaviors or actions increased or decreased the trust of their faculty members. Together these stories create a mosaic of experiences or thematic patterns that suggest something more than just a single experience; although, a single experience has an illustrative value and power all by itself. These stories are not a collection of objective facts sewn together in a chronological format. They are a series of interpretations, each “constructed, creatively authored, rhetorical, replete with assumptions, and interpretive” (Riessman, 1993, p. 5), and shaped by the presence of a particular audience and guided by an intended message. As Riessman explained, “To the sociologically oriented investigator, studying narratives is additionally useful for what they reveal about social life—culture `speaks itself’ through the individual’s story” (p. 5). The stories presented verbal snapshots of social life within high and low trust environments. The leadership behaviors featured in these stories have been grouped into the categories of ethics, valuing others, communication, competence, and consistency. These findings echo the categories used in a variety of trust-related studies, suggesting a level of face validity.

#### *Limitations of the Study*

To quote Roberto’s grandmother, “My mouth ain’t no prayer book.” This study presents the personal experiences of 13 North Carolina community college faculty members. By design, the study is not meant to be representative of the perceptions of all

faculty, or all faculty who teach at North Carolina community colleges, or even all faculty who teach at these individual institutions. However, this is not to say that the study is without value or meaning to others but to disclaim any notion that these stories represent The Truth, in a positivistic sense. Instead, these stories represent many little truths, as Lyotard (1984) might say; they are the micronarratives that together form a mosaic of experiences with the power of parable. While each story and each storyteller are unique and “once-occurrent” (Bakhtin, 1993, p. 40), together their little truths suggest a larger experience.

#### *Recommendations for Further Research*

The opportunity for research in the area of trust as related to leadership in higher education is very much open for exploration. Studies like this one could be repeated in different geographic areas and in different institution types to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the trust dynamics between faculty members and their leaders, and what these dynamics mean for institutions and for programs that are meant to prepare future college administrators. Using mixed methods approaches would be particularly powerful, bringing together the numbers with the word, which might give a better notion of scope and scale of the phenomena described by participants in their stories, with the quantitative data providing the outline and the qualitative data providing the rich details.

The numerous studies related to trust in schools would also be an excellent springboard for similar studies in post secondary settings. Hoy and others have explored a variety of school types and locations, and focused in on different aspects of school trust

dynamics, teacher to principal, teacher to teacher, student to teacher, and so on, a model which could be repeated at colleges and universities. After an indepth, multi-disciplinary review of the literature, Hoy and Tschannen-Moran (1999) have also noted the need for more qualitative research in this area; “the review of the literature suggests that trust is complex...hence qualitative analyses are in order, ones that examine the dynamics of the process of trusting . . .” (p. 205).

#### *Final Words of Wisdom from Participants*

At the conclusion of each interview, I found myself asking the simple follow-up question, is there anything else that you would like to add, and invariably participants did have something more to say. Their concluding remarks struck me as a sort of direct message to current and future leaders that I felt a duty to the participants to share. In fact, one participant demanded, “You put this in your paper!” when talking about the leadership behaviors that had destroyed her trust. What the participants chose to say or not seemed to summarize the points they deemed most important.

*Anne.* When asked what else she had to add to our discussion of faculty trust, Anne advocated for an open, honest sharing of necessary information but protection from a distracting overload of information.

I think that if you have honest communication with your employees that there will be a level of trust...you know, just keep them aware of what you are doing and why. Explain why and, and seek input because maybe, maybe, you know, maybe somebody's got a better idea of how to do it. They don't always have time to sit down and think about all that but just to be asked does create a level of trust and to just keep them aware. But I don't like to think that people are keeping critical information from us [the faculty] or, or not letting us know why things need to be done....I think that's important...but the current dean has said that the former dean filtered a lot out for us. She might not have used that word, but that's what

she meant. And I appreciate that [laughs], because you have enough to deal with and if it's not something that you absolutely have to know...but you don't like big surprises either, because you didn't want to be kept in the loop.

*Vicki.* Vicki summarized her thoughts on ideal trustworthy leadership.

I think fairness. A leader must have—and especially if you are looking at adult learning, higher learning, higher education—you have to have someone in a leadership role who is, who looks at all the sides before snapping to decisions. Hopefully, they are mentally healthy and they don't have ulterior, they don't have their own agendas. Um...good listeners, good speakers, um, especially good speaking, communication skills in order to say the right thing, um...and also to learn about their faculty or staff or whatever. Um...some sensitivity, vigilance, um...Um, I guess the same thing as observing, vigilance about the people you are dealing with, about whether they are having a bad day or whether they are struggling [with] something with an issue with a classroom or with a student or something like that or some kind of you know...Yeah, just how are you doing or just acknowledging you are a person, you know, even if the leader is not a chit-chatter. That kind of thing.

*Beverly.* Beverly talked about the fragility of trust. While she described herself as one who trusts easily, she also acknowledged that once a person loses her trust that it is extremely difficult to restore, “pretty much never.”

I trust until I am proved otherwise. But people, once I lose, once they lose, once I lose my trust they may never know that. It's a decision that I make internally. Um, and they never know it. And some people can gain it back, but pretty much never [laughs]. Once I'm kind of... it's done, you know. It's a done deal and I can't really retract that or go back, but I can still interact with people on what I consider that professional level and not, you know, let that get to me.

Interestingly, she noted that the person “may never know” that the damage to their relationship has been done, because she would continue to cordially interact with the

person on a professional level. This seems like an important point for current and future leaders that enduring damage to the relationship might not be visible.

*Bill.* Bill spoke of the importance of positive relationships as a source of job satisfaction.

It is all about the people that you work with. That is what makes the job to me. Whether it is easy or hard as far as manual work or brain work, it doesn't matter to me. It is who you are around.

*Roberto.* Roberto stressed that leadership is an obligation, not a privilege, and that the moment a leader forgets that, trust begins to crumble.

Leadership is not a privilege; it's an obligation. Uh...leadership, when it's not an obligation, when it's a perk, then that's when you lose trust. . . . My problem with a lot of leaders is that it seems like from the 80s that we got this kind of Me Generation, . . . this Reaganesque sort of "Greed Is Good" . . . but that's not what good leadership is, in my view. . . .

*Charles.* Charles emphasized the leader's responsibility for cultivating trust within a team, a duty which requires patience.

Definitely they [leaders] are instrumental in—whether they are trying to or not—they are instrumental in building trust in their people . . . . Trust, you know, trust is something...is something that you earn. It's not something you can snap your fingers and get. You can't demand trust. You may desire it, but it's something that you have to earn. And uh, so leaders need to be patient and uh, and uh, to allow time, to put in the work to earn trust. And followers need to be patient and allow the leader the opportunity to earn their trust.

*Sarah.* Sarah also spoke to leaders' roles in cultivating trust: "Leaders do it all. I think it is completely up to the leadership [to cultivate trust]. . . ." However, she also



pointed out that sometimes this very important work is taken up with the informal leaders of the group, who can have also have a powerful role to play.

*Carol.* Carol observed that, in her experience, when a leader earnestly wanted to create a positive and trusting environment that it would happen, in large part due to their earnest desire, but when a leader sought these things just because it seemed like the thing to do, the leader did more harm than good. Followers sensed and resented the lack of sincerity.

I think that the leaders that I have worked under or that I have been associated with over time, the ones that part of their vision was that sense of community and trust, and it was genuinely their role to do have been very effective in creating it—just, just by wanting it. That’s a very big part of it, because that tells you what the leader is all about. For other people, for whom according to a management manual somewhere, it’s important to establish a sense of trust, and they try to implement that, but it isn’t coming from their, their personal mission or their mission for the organization, it is for appearance, and so you have the illusion of activities and so forth based on mutual respect and trust, but in reality, it is not. And so that’s—once you figure that out, it’s gone. There is no potential. It’s just not going to be there. You can go through all the activities you want, but if in truth it’s not genuine, you, you—every time you participate, you have this sense of, “Did you think that was going to fool me?”

*Jackie.* Jackie concluded her thoughts on faculty trust by describing trust as a “blue sky” or fair weather thing for some, easy as long as things are going well. For her, however, trust is a more serious matter.

Trust is a, I don’t know, trust is sometimes like a blue sky thing. But to me, it’s kind of a gut feeling. I can feel like I can trust somebody, but once I get burned, I’m not going to, you know—I’ll back away. You know, and I don’t give it out lightly.

Like Beverly, when her trust is damaged, it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to repair.

*Tina.* Tina focused on the importance of respect and communication to building trust between leader and faculty.

I just think that you have to have that mutual respect. I think, um, a leader has to, has to listen to those who report to him or her. Um, I feel that if you have that communication, that's key. You've got to have communication . . . .

And listening is a vital part of communication and of demonstrating respect.

*Mark.* Honesty and sincerity were key points in building trust for Mark, his negative experiences shaping his view more than his positive experiences.

Honesty . . . I think that one is, is key. And I realize that administrators, they can't always tell you everything. . . . But whenever you do have an interchange with them, and you know that they are sincere and that they mean what they say. And I guess for me, those are the things that—those two experiences that I really noted in the negative sense, those are really the two things that shaped, that's probably shaped my opinion more than the positive experiences, uh, in the sense of what I see is trust and what I see is important in a supervisor.

*Helena.* Helena concluded her trust-related remarks by focusing on the importance of leaders providing open communication and a legitimate rationale for decisions, not just the insultingly paternal, "I told you so."

If you can explain it or talk it through instead of just saying, "We are doing this, because I said so" sort of thing, I, I think you gain a lot more trust and respect. There have been times in the classroom I'll tell my students we are doing this assignment. I always try to make my assignments relevant—I know we all do—but sometimes in healthcare it's like, "Is this busywork?" And I explain to them, "No, it's not busywork, because once you can do this, when we apply the next step, you can understand it better, and this is also how it falls in place when you get out there working and that sort of thing." So I think to get the trust you need

as an administrator or a leader of any kind, you have to let them know that what we are doing is necessary, and it can lead to other things or it may stop right here, but it's something necessary that we need to do. It's not just maybe my idea or because I said so. But I think there needs to be this idea that I can come talk to you at any time, you can explain it to me better, and that sort of thing, and that helps with the trust issues. Now on the other side of that, I have worked for people who said, "Because I said so," and that reminds me of my mom, "Because I said so." And it's like if you can tell me why I need to do this, um, maybe I can do it better or maybe have more enthusiasm about doing it or something. I don't know. But I hate being left in the dark. And I realize there are sometimes that we have to be left in the dark, because it's a need to know basis or something, but there are so many times when things could be explained better.

*Evelyn.* Evelyn wrapped up her comments by reflecting upon her role as a leader and a faculty member. Having taken on administrative duties, she now has a different perspective on developing trust between faculty and administrators.

I can say this, since I have been Associate Dean, it's a lot harder than I ever thought it would be. It is difficult to lead people and keep people encouraged and in an upbeat frame of mind to do the very best that they can. It's, it's challenging, and I'm, I am still fighting that. . . . And since I've been on that end of the leadership spectrum, I've seen things a little bit differently. It can be challenging, because sometimes they like to get into their little groups and, you know, their little cliques, and it seems like sometimes they can just feed of the negativity that might be circulating. And so that for me had been difficult. I try to be consistent with everyone. I think that is really important. Um, treat everybody the same and be as fair as you possibly can. And when you do, if there is any area that you can be, um, gray on, give them the benefit of the doubt . . . . We get so busy though, I think, especially in fall and spring. Um, sometimes we tend not to take care of each other as much as we could, simply because we are so busy. So we tend not to or tend to forget about or don't have time to do the little caring things that might make a difference. And I have to, I need to work on that.

While she acknowledged that things are not perfect, she expressed an earnest desire to create an atmosphere of trust. Encouraging faculty, combating negativity, being

consistent and fair, and taking the time to care of people are steps she has taken to try to get there.

### *Final Thoughts from the Researcher*

As Roberto said, “Leadership is not a privilege; it’s an obligation.” From my perspective as a leader, I would argue that part of that obligation for leaders is to promote the health of the organization by cultivating trusting relationships. I hope that this study will be food for thought for current and future academic leaders as they reflect upon their own behaviors and how those behaviors might either contribute to building or destroying trust with their own faculty members, and I hope that these findings will be fodder for further research, both qualitative and quantitative.

The reactions that I have encountered both from participants and from curious individuals along the way who have asked me about the study topic suggest that time for such introspection and reflection would be well invested. At the conclusion of one of the interviews, the participant exclaimed, “This was more like a therapy session than an interview!” He had not realized how much some of his negative trust-related experiences with leaders had affected him. For the curious souls who had inquired about the study, they would very often draw in a breath when hearing the premise and then in a lower voice say something like, “Ooo, I would like to read that when you get finished” or “You should have interviewed me; I could really tell you some stories,” which emphasized to me the universal nature of trust-related issues between leaders and followers.

“Wonderful,” “glad,” “try to emulate,” “relieved,” “helping,” “natural,” “work harder,” “valued,” “motivated,” “comfort,” “comradery,” “creative,” “appreciated,” and

“nurturing” were words used by participants when recounting their experiences with trusted leaders. In contrast, “icky,” “absolutely horrible,” “unhealthy,” “awful,” “stressful,” “avoided,” “dark cloud,” “unhappy,” “difficult,” and “discouraged” were words used by participants when recounting their experiences with untrusted leaders.

As many have observed before, trust is fragile, much more easily destroyed than created. Gambetta (1988), Hardin (1992/2006), Slovic (1993) and others have explored the asymmetric nature of trust. Gambetta (1988) noted the self-perpetuating nature of distrust, which builds upon itself as individuals trust less, risk less, and thereby cut off themselves off from opportunities to build trust again. This is problematic if trust is the cornerstone of a healthy organization. Given the importance and fragility of trust, protecting and building trust is a leadership imperative, especially for the many colleges in transition with record numbers of current and impending retirements.

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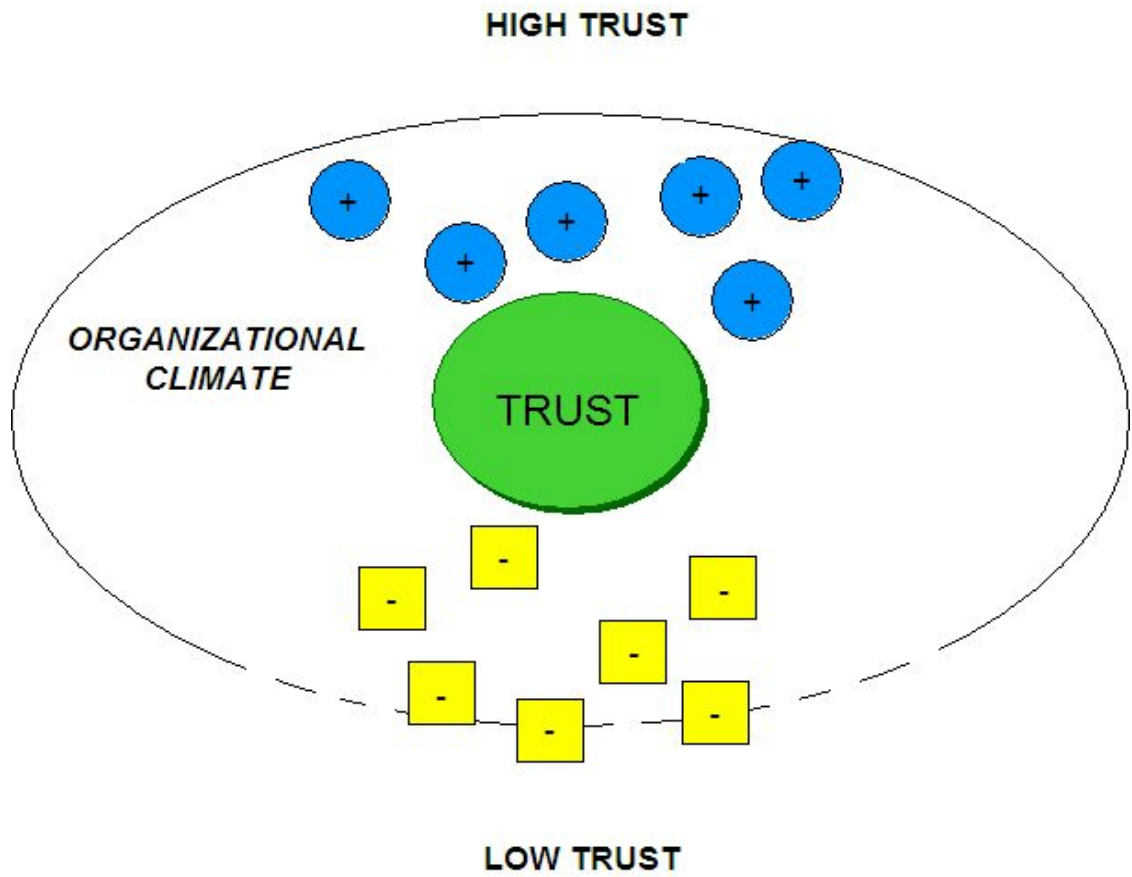
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APPENDIX A

Concept Map





APPENDIX B

Interview Protocol

<b>Project:</b> Building and Destroying Trust	
<b>Date:</b>	<b>Place:</b>
<b>Interviewee, Title:</b>	<b>Email Address:</b>
<b>Project &amp; Process Description:</b> <p>Thank you again for agreeing to participate in this study. Understanding your perspective is very important to me, and I want to assure you that anything that you say to me will be held in confidence and will only be used for the purposes of this study. Let me begin by telling you a little bit about myself and the study in order to give you a frame of reference.</p> <p>I am a doctoral student at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, working on my dissertation in the area of trust within the college environment. I have always been interested in organizational climates and as a staff member at Davidson County Community College, I have observed some very interesting dynamics around trust and how having it or not can impact climate or the way it feels to be at an institution.</p> <p>I will be audio-recording our conversation here today, so that I can transcribe and analyze it later. Hopefully, this will allow me to compare your responses to the responses of others and see patterns of commonality and difference.</p> <p>You will have an opportunity to review this transcript and make any corrections or clarifications within two weeks of the time of the interview. Within the transcripts, you will be identified as Respondent # ____, not by your name in order to protect your identity. Here is a copy of the consent form for you to read and sign before we begin. Do you have any questions before we get started?</p> <p><b>[Test audio recorder]</b></p>	
<b>Questions:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Would you tell me a little bit about yourself?</li><li>2. What does the word trust mean to you?</li><li>3. How do you decide whether someone in your life is trustworthy?</li></ol>	

4. Take a moment to think about the leaders with whom you have worked over your career. Tell me about a time when you have worked with a leader in whom you had a high degree of trust.
5. Why did you trust this person?
6. Without naming anyone, tell me about a time when you have worked with a leader in whom you had a low degree of trust.
7. Why didn't you trust this person?

**Thank you and Confidentiality:**

Thank you again for taking time to meet with me today and for sharing your perspective. I really appreciate it. Here is my card with all of my contact information. Please feel free to call or email me, if you have any questions or concerns later on, or if you think of something that you would like to add.

I will be emailing you in a few days to provide you with a copy of the transcript so that you can read it and make corrections, if needed. Do you feel comfortable with that? I am committed to protecting your privacy. Let's make a copy of the consent form so that you can have one for your records.

## APPENDIX C

### Informed Consent Form

#### **UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT GREENSBORO** ***CONSENT TO ACT AS A HUMAN PARTICIPANT: LONG FORM***

Project Title: Leadership Behaviors that Build or Destroy Trust: A Narrative Study

Project Director/Researcher: Crystal Baird, cabaird@uncg.edu

Participant's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **What is the study about?**

You are being asked to participate in a qualitative research study on faculty trust. The researcher is talking with faculty members at community colleges in North Carolina to collect their personal experience stories of leaders with whom they have worked. The purpose of this study is to achieve a greater understanding of how faculty members make meaning of the behaviors of leaders that might either increase or decrease feelings of trust.

#### **Why are you asking me?**

You were selected as part of a purposeful sampling of faculty members at this and two other colleges. Selected faculty members represent a variety of academic disciplines. The researcher is very interested in hearing your unique perspective.

#### **What will you ask me to do if I agree to be in the study?**

If you agree to participate in the study, you will be agreeing to talk with the researcher for approximately 30-90 minutes. She will be asking you a few open-ended questions regarding your experience with leaders. Shortly after the interview, you will be given an opportunity to review the conversation transcript and make corrections, if needed.

Your participation in this study will be confidential. All personally identifiable information will be kept in a locked fireproof box only accessible to the researcher. Within the transcripts, you and your institution will be referred to by pseudonyms. Your name will not be used in the published dissertation.

#### **Is there any audio/video recording?**

The researcher will be recording your conversation with a digital audio recorder and transcribing the conversation later for analysis. Because your voice will be potentially identifiable by anyone who hears the audio file, your confidentiality for things you say on the recording cannot be guaranteed, but the researcher will restrict access to audio file. At the conclusion of the interview, audio files will be transferred to the researcher's

private laptop, which is password protected. Audio files will then be deleted from the digital recorder to prevent unauthorized access to the interview data. All files will be backed up to an encrypted flash drive that will be locked in a fireproof box. After the study is completed, all backup audio files will be permanently erased, and any printed notes will be incinerated at the conclusion of the study. As required by federal law, consent forms will be kept for 3 years following the conclusion of this project.

**What are the dangers to me?**

The Institutional Review Board at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro has determined that participation in this study poses only minimal risks to participants. Your personal experience stories might include sensitive information that could be embarrassing or damaging to relationships with your current or former leaders; therefore, every caution will be taken to protect your confidentiality.

If you have any concerns about your rights or how you are being treated please contact Eric Allen in the Office of Research and Compliance at UNCG at (336) 256-1482. Questions about this project or your benefits or risks associated with being in this study can be answered by Crystal Baird, who may be contacted at (336) 240-1121.

**Are there any benefits to me for taking part in this research study?**

There are no direct benefits to participants in this study.

**Are there any benefits to society as a result of me taking part in this research?**

Repeatedly, trust has been described as one of the key contributing elements to a healthy organizational climate, high student achievement, and strong faculty commitment. Expanding the body of knowledge of trust theory as it particularly relates to community college leadership could have a positive impact on community college climates. Your participation in this study could contribute to this important body of research.

**Will I get paid for being in the study? Will it cost me anything?**

There are neither payments nor costs associated with participating in this study.

**How will you keep my information confidential?**

All hard copy information and backup audio files will be kept in a locked fireproof box, accessible only to the researcher. Pseudonyms will be used within the interview transcripts and all published documents in lieu of your name and that of your institution.

**All information obtained in this study is strictly confidential unless disclosure is required by law.** Absolute confidentiality of data provided through email cannot be guaranteed due to the limited protections of Internet access.

**What if I want to leave the study?**

You have the right to refuse to participate or to withdraw at any time, without penalty. If you do withdraw, you will not be negatively impacted in any way. If you choose to withdraw, you may request that any of your data which has been collected be destroyed,

unless it is in a de-identifiable state.

**What about new information/changes in the study?**

If significant new information relating to the study becomes available or if significant changes are proposed that might impact your willingness to continue to participate in the study, you will be notified and this information will be provided to you.

**Voluntary Consent by Participant:**

By signing this consent form you are agreeing that you have read and fully understand the contents of this document and are openly willing to consent to take part in this study. All of your questions concerning this study have been answered. By signing this form, you are agreeing that you are 18 years of age or older and are agreeing to participate in this study as described to you by Crystal Baird.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX D

### Research Crosswalk

What do I need to know?	Why do I need to know this?	Where will I find the data to answer these questions?
What does trust mean to faculty members?	To discover faculty members' meanings of trust	Interview questions 2 & 3
What leadership behaviors or actions build trust?	To discover what leadership behaviors community college faculty members attribute to increased trust in their leaders	Interview questions 4 & 5
What leadership behaviors or actions destroy trust?	To discover what leadership behaviors community college faculty attribute to decreased trust in their leaders	Interview questions 6 & 7

## APPENDIX E

### Telephone Recruitment Script

Hello [potential faculty member's name],

My name is Crystal Baird. [Local Institutional Researcher's name] provided me with your name as a possible participant in a study that I am currently conducting as part of a purposeful random sampling of all of the full-time faculty teaching at your college this semester. Do you have a few minutes to talk? [If yes, continue; if no, ask to schedule a phone appointment at a more convenient time.]

Again, my name is Crystal Baird, and I am a doctoral student at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, working on my dissertation in the area of trust within the college environment. I am particularly interested in faculty perceptions leadership behaviors and trust, and I would really value your input. I will be coming to your campus on [days, dates] and would like to schedule some time to talk with you about your experiences with leaders. A typical interview for this study usually lasts about 30-90 minutes, depending upon the participant. We would meet in [place] where it is quiet, so that we can talk without interruption.

Anything that you say to me will be held in confidence and will only be used for the purposes of this study and not shared with your institution. You would have an opportunity to review the transcript of our interview and make any corrections or clarifications, if needed. Within the transcripts, you will be identified by a respondent #, not by your name in order to protect your identity. . All personally identifiable information will be kept in a locked fireproof box only accessible me. Within the transcripts and the final documents, you and your institution will be referred to by pseudonyms. Your name will not be used in the published dissertation.

I would like to email a list of frequently asked questions to you that might be helpful to you in making your decision. [Email list.]

Would you feel comfortable participating in this study? Are there any questions that you have for me?

Your participation in this study will be confidential. All personally identifiable information will be kept in a locked fireproof box only accessible to the researcher. Within the transcripts, you and your institution will be referred to by pseudonyms. Your name will not be used in the published dissertation.

**Is there any audio/video recording?**

The researcher will be recording your conversation with a digital audio recorder and transcribing the conversation later for analysis. Because your voice will be potentially identifiable by anyone who hears the audio file, your confidentiality for things you say on the recording cannot be guaranteed, but the researcher will restrict access to audio file. At the conclusion of the interview, audio files will be transferred to the researcher's private laptop, which is password protected. Audio files will then be deleted from the digital recorder to prevent unauthorized access to the interview data. All files will be backed up to an encrypted flash drive that will be locked in a fireproof box. After the study is completed, all backup audio files will be permanently erased, and any printed notes will be incinerated at the conclusion of the study. As required by federal law, consent forms will be kept for 3 years following the conclusion of this project.

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If you have any concerns about your rights or how you are being treated please contact Eric Allen in the Office of Research and Compliance at UNCG at (336) 256-1482. Questions about this project or your benefits or risks associated with being in this study can be answered by Crystal Baird, who may be contacted at (336) 240-1121.

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Repeatedly, trust has been described as one of the key contributing elements to a healthy organizational climate, high student achievement, and strong faculty commitment. Expanding the body of knowledge of trust theory as it particularly relates to community college leadership could have a positive impact on community college climates. Your participation in this study could contribute to this important body of research.

**Will I get paid for being in the study? Will it cost me anything?**

There are neither payments nor costs associated with participating in this study.

**How will you keep my information confidential?**

All hard copy information and backup audio files will be kept in a locked fireproof box, accessible only to the researcher. Pseudonyms will be used within the interview transcripts and all published documents in lieu of your name and that of your institution. **All information obtained in this study is strictly confidential unless disclosure is**



**required by law.** Absolute confidentiality of data provided through email cannot be guaranteed due to the limited protections of Internet access.

**What if I want to leave the study?**

You have the right to refuse to participate or to withdraw at any time, without penalty. If you do withdraw, you will not be negatively impacted in any way. If you choose to withdraw, you may request that any of your data which has been collected be destroyed unless it is in a de-identifiable state.

**What about new information/changes in the study?**

If significant new information relating to the study becomes available or if significant changes are proposed that might impact your willingness to continue to participate in the study, you will be notified and this information will be provided to you.

**Voluntary Consent by Participant:**

By signing this consent form you are agreeing that you have read and fully understand the contents of this document and are openly willing to consent to take part in this study. All of your questions concerning this study have been answered. By signing this form, you are agreeing that you are 18 years of age or older and are agreeing to participate in this study as described to you by Crystal Baird.

The student researcher will call or email these individuals to introduce herself, explain the study, and invite them to participate. She will make them aware of the time commitment, how the data will be collected and used, and how their confidentiality will be maintained, if they should choose to participate.