

Journey to Academic Leadership: Experiences of Women Business Deans

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Dedication

“I want to be in the arena. I want to be brave with my life. And when we make the choice to dare greatly, we sign up to get our butts kicked. We can choose courage or we can choose comfort, but we can’t have both. Not at the same time.” – Brené Brown

This work is dedicated to everyone who has questioned whether they are brave enough to get through a PhD program, especially a little later in life. You Are!

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To future dissertation writers and scholars, “You are brave; You got this!”

Abstract

Business schools have a responsibility to set a good example by ensuring diversity in their leadership positions (Council of Economic Advisors, 2015). Despite this, the top leadership position within these schools is still overwhelmingly held by men; women occupy 22.9% of deanships at U.S., AACSB-accredited, four-year colleges of business. This underrepresentation is problematic, in that it results in the waste of administrative talent at a time when higher education and colleges of business face serious challenges that will be met only with diversity of thought and experience; and strong, effective leadership (Dunn et al., 2014; Lennon, 2013; O'Connor, 2015; Peterson, 2014; Spender, 2016).

The purpose of this qualitative, phenomenological study was to explore the academic leadership journeys of women business deans. In particular, this study sought to develop a more enhanced understanding of the common experiences that prepared women to become business deans and influenced role attainment. To capture the essence of their academic leadership journey experiences, in-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted with nine women business deans leading at U.S., AACSB-accredited, doctoral-granting, four-year colleges of business.

Data analysis resulted in five overarching themes and 14 sub-themes. Findings indicated that although the initial path to academic leadership was incidental and non-aspirational, with the recognition and encouragement of others, participants assumed academic leadership roles and their career goals became more intentional. Because little formal preparation for the deanship exists, they took a self-directed approach to training and development and relied most on previous experience to prepare for the role. Despite certain sacrifices and demands, the deanship has been a rewarding position in which they could have a broader influence.

The findings expand current understandings of how women business deans prepare for and attain their roles. Implications suggest the importance of business school administrators and organizations to increase awareness of the opportunities and advantages of academic leadership roles early in female faculty careers and support women through the tenure and promotion timeline. In addition, leadership development specifically geared towards this subset of women is recommended to prepare them to successfully pursue, attain, and perform academic leadership roles, including the business deanship.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

The primary goal of this research was to explore the academic leadership journeys of women business deans in U.S. colleges of business. In particular, this study sought to develop an enhanced understanding of the common experiences that prepared women to become business deans and influenced attainment of their role. The ways in which participants utilized the tenants of human agency (Bandura, 1997) in their journey to becoming dean was also explored and served as the theoretical framework guiding this study. Universities, like all other educational systems, have the opportunity to make a significant difference in the effectiveness of women leaders through the development of resources and programs that directly support current leaders and those aspiring to take on a leadership role (Redmond et al., 2017). Exploring the academic leadership journeys of women business deans can provide insights useful for the development and strengthening of programs that train and prepare women to succeed in the role. Further insights garnered from this study can provide strategies for advancement to aspiring women business deans and inform business school leaders on implementation of resources and programs that support those endeavors.

This research employed a qualitative, phenomenological methodology (Giorgi, 2009; Moustakas, 1994) to illustrate the common, lived experiences among a sample of U.S. women business deans' journeys to academic leadership. Participants in this study comprised of a purposeful sample (Patton, 2002) of nine women currently serving in the role of dean at an Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB)-accredited, doctoral-granting, four-year college of business in the United States. In-depth interviews (Bevan, 2014; Moustakas, 1994) were the primary method of data collection and participants were asked to write life-world

descriptions (van Manen, 1997) regarding their academic leadership journey experiences. To provide background and context before interviews were conducted, participant curriculum vitae (CVs) and background/demographic information were collected and reviewed. Transcripts from the interviews and written life-world descriptions served as the data for analysis, noting emergent patterns, categories, and themes until the common essence of the women's experiences regarding their academic leadership journeys was revealed (Moustakas, 1994; Patton, 2002).

This chapter provides context for the study and outlines the study's problem statement, statement of purpose, and central research question. Also included in this chapter is a brief discussion of the theoretical framework and research approach that guided the study. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the study's significance followed by limitations and definitions of key terminology.

Background and Context

While women represent almost half of the student body across U.S. postsecondary business education disciplines, where they are awarded 47% of both bachelor's and master's degrees and 44% of doctoral degrees (National Center for Education Statistics, 2018), the number of women occupying the top leadership position within those same business schools fails to reflect a similar progress. Although women have been increasingly occupying the role of dean at AACSB-accredited colleges of business globally, they still hold just over a quarter (25.2%) of all deanships (AACSB, 2018). Through a personal review of all 533 AACSB-accredited, four-year college of business websites in the United States, it was found that this percentage decreased to 22.9% (n=122). In other academic leadership positions across colleges of business globally, women fare slightly better where they comprise 33.7% of associate deans and 63% of assistant deans, but fill only 26.2% of academic department chair positions (AACSB, 2018;

Bartel, 2018). Across faculty positions in colleges of business, only 22% of those at the professor level – which has the largest gender gap – are women, 38.3% of women occupy assistant professor roles, while the smallest gender gap is at the instructor level, where women occupy 40.3% of positions (AACSB, 2018; Bartel, 2018). Although women’s representation in faculty roles varies widely by discipline, these numbers are consistent with the overrepresentation of women in the contingent faculty workforce across higher education (AAUP, 2019). These trends, which some have referred to as “the higher the fewer” (see Johnson, 2016) emulate the representation of women in corporate America where only 4.8% (n = 24) of women are CEOs of both S&P 500 companies (Catalyst, 2019a) and Fortune 500 companies (Zarya, 2018), while women comprise 26.5% of senior-level managers, 36.9% of mid-level managers and nearly half (44.7%) of the entire workforce (Catalyst, 2019b).

Business schools can and should help mitigate the underrepresentation of women in management and leadership positions in the corporate world (Flynn, 2017). However, instead of being part of the solution, business schools are often part of the problem, as major gaps continue to exist within these organizations (Flynn et al., 2015). This lack of diversity can be off-putting for many female aspirants to academic leadership positions and can add to confusion in how to act or behave as a female leader (Bisoux, 2017; Glazer-Raymo, 2008; Liu, 2014). Increasing female representation in leadership, especially elite positions such as business deans, can create change in organizations by sending a message to other women that advancement is possible and encouraged (Lyness & Grotto, 2018). Furthermore, a scarcity of women leaders within business schools may discourage enrollment and hamper degree completion for women students (Davis & Geyfman, 2015; Morgan, 2017).

Women in leadership positions within both business organizations and business schools can serve as powerful mentors and role models for the next generation of women business leaders (Lapovsky & Slaner Larkin, 2009; Longman & Madsen, 2014; Treviño et al., 2017). It is important to provide female students with opportunities to interact with successful female mentors and role models especially since mentees find mentor relationships more productive when mentors are female (Council of Economic Advisors, 2015; Davis & Geyfman, 2015). Without this guidance, female business students who aspire to top jobs may drop out at the mid-manager level due to a lack of support that would better position them for more senior roles (Morgan, 2017).

The White House Report (Lapovsky & Slaner Larkin, 2009), a report focused on women leaders in higher education institutions, identified that successful women leaders working with students, faculty, and staff provide positive experiences that can help change people's perspectives towards women in leadership positions. When successful women leaders work with male and/or female students, faculty, staff and administrators, those individuals are likely to have different and hopefully positive, transformational experiences they could not have had under gender-homogenous leadership (Madsen, 2012).

Colleges and universities that have diverse leadership teams are more likely to benefit in numerous ways, including increased productivity through better decision making and the retention of students and valued employees (Madsen, 2015). Greater diversity among business deans can lead to more heterogeneous faculty and academic research that can, in turn, foster multicultural education and competencies among students (Avery & Thomas, 2004). An expanded presence of women business deans may also promote greater attention to educational content, such as course materials and case studies that have historically been male-centric

(McTiernan & Flynn, 2011; Symons, 2016). Furthermore, women in the business deanship are likely to be sensitized to issues of unsupportive organizational cultures; and subtle, and not-so-subtle, forms of discrimination in the advancement of women in business while encouraging new approaches to recruitment and equity in promotion and tenure (Dominici et al., 2009; McTiernan & Flynn, 2011). Additional research confirms that women leaders typically help to ensure that more women are hired and in the pipeline for future leadership (Duke, 2017; Madsen, 2015). As Lapovsky and Slaner Larkin (2009) purported, “the presence – or absence – of female academic leaders can have far-reaching influences not only on the institutions themselves, but ... on the scope of research and knowledge that affects us all” (p. 16).

The position of college dean is a key pathway to the role of the university presidency, where 30% of women occupy the role across all institutional types (Gagliardi et al., 2017). Of current women presidents, 46% held a previous position of either chief academic officer, provost, dean, or other academic affairs officer (Gagliardi et al., 2017). Because of the needed understanding of return on investment (ROI) and the ability to make a business model work, more presidents and provosts are being chosen from the ranks of business school deans (Shinn, 2016). Thus, women’s underrepresentation among business deans and senior faculty may contribute to continuing disparities at the highest levels of higher education executive leadership.

Although an increasing number of women appear to be positioned to take on the deanship within U.S. colleges of business, the question remains as to why less than 25% ascend into this senior academic leadership role (AACSB, 2018). A few insights from the literature attempt to explain this phenomenon. First, several studies indicate that female leaders in higher education typically do not intentionally look for administrative positions or have formal career plans (see Madsen, 2007; Redmond et al., 2017); and others acknowledge that most deans never plan to

become deans, but rather are asked to take on the role (Davies, 2015; Davies & Thomas, 2009; McTiernan & Flynn, 2011). Other research describes reticence towards, or disenchantment with, leadership, indicating that these roles can be viewed as ethically fraught and constrained in terms of the extent to which change can be undertaken and being more about management than leadership (Blackmore, 2014; Macfarlane, 2012; Moss & Richter, 2011).

Many potential women academic leaders have further been turned off by formal leadership positions due to the double requirement to conform to corporate rather than academic values, to be loyal to the university rather than to a disciplinary field, and the influence of work-life demands (Blackmore, 2014; Blackmore & Sachs, 2007; Chesterman et al., 2005; Glass & Cook, 2016; Sandberg, 2014; Ward & Eddy, 2013). These factors lead some women to forego academic promotion and leadership due to a perception that advanced positions in academe are not open to women, particularly women who hope to make time for a family or life beyond work (Ward & Eddy, 2013; Sandberg, 2014).

In the broader literature on women in higher education, research tends to focus on the barriers faced by women seeking advancement into leadership roles, and it can be argued that little research exists on the experiences of, and facilitators for, women attaining senior academic leadership positions in higher education (Airini et al., 2011; Glass & Cook, 2016). However, barriers and facilitators coexist and interact in most organizations and the lack of comprehensive approaches to both barriers and facilitators hampers insight into the leadership gender gap (Lyness & Grotto, 2018). To prepare women and those supporting them in the journey to senior leadership, it is important to identify the barriers women leaders are likely to face so that they can be anticipated, reduced, and surmounted (Hannum et al., 2014). It is equally critical to understand the sources of support, so that support can be sought and maximized (Hannum et al.,

2014). Both barriers and facilitators will therefore be explored in this study to provide a more robust description of how they interact to influence the leadership journeys of women business deans.

Another important consideration in exploring women business deans' journey to academic leadership is the ways in which they were prepared and developed the knowledge, skills, and leadership characteristics necessary for the role. The relatively high turnover rates of deans, provosts, and presidents suggest that leaders are not groomed in ways that promote longevity, success, and effectiveness in higher education leadership (Bradshaw, 2015; Gmelch & Buller, 2015b; Korschgen et al., 2001). Academic deans play a key role in the development and functioning of colleges and universities; and for this reason, it is important for them to have the preparation necessary to be effective in the role (Gigliotti, 2017; Gigliotti & Ruben, 2017).

However, deans usually come to their positions without leadership training, without prior executive experience, without a clear understanding of the ambiguity of their new roles, without recognition of the metamorphic changes that occur, and without an awareness of the toll their new position may take on their academic and personal lives (Gmelch, 2013). How academics, particularly those with leadership potential, are prepared for the leadership challenges inherent in the decanal role remains an issue in higher education (Davies, 2016; Del Favero, 2006). As Thomas and Thomas (2011) stressed, the role of training for leadership within an academic environment remains under-researched and it is an area that could benefit from further study.

To better understand and appreciate the nature of leadership in business education, the development of leaders, the qualities of leaders, and the conditions necessary for leaders to emerge must be examined within their complexities (Romkema, 2014). Understanding the influences, backgrounds, and career paths of women who have succeeded in obtaining and

maintaining powerful positions of influence within higher education is essential in providing a deeper understanding of leadership development as a whole as well as factors that enabled women to obtain and sustain leadership positions in nontraditional career fields (Kleihauer et al., 2012; Madsen, 2007, 2010). With the increasing number of women in the business school leadership pipeline, it is important to examine the experiences and perspectives of those who have successfully advanced through the ranks and attained the top leadership role within those schools. Focusing on leaders provides a lens to better understand the multiple factors that influence career choices of male and female academics, as well as opportunities for advancement and retention in managerial leadership (Blackmore, 2014).

Problem Statement

Business schools have a responsibility to set a good example by ensuring diversity in their leadership positions (Council of Economic Advisors, 2015). Despite this, the top leadership position within these schools is still overwhelmingly held by men (AACSB, 2019). The underrepresentation of women in senior administrative positions in academe, including in the business deanship, is problematic, in that it results in the waste of administrative talent at a time when higher education faces serious challenges that will only be met with diversity of thought and experience, along with strong, effective leadership (Dunn et al., 2014; Lennon, 2013; O'Connor, 2015; Peterson, 2014). During this critical period of heightened questioned legitimacy of business schools (Pettigrew & Starkey, 2016; Spender, 2016; Thomas & Cornuel, 2012) and higher education transformation, the expertise and capabilities of all those in leadership should be fully utilized, both male and female (Redmond et al., 2017).

Given the unprecedented change and complex circumstances surrounding higher education, including issues of adaptation, accessibility, assessment, and accountability, there is a

pressing need for better prepared leaders and increased scholarly attention to academic leadership training and development within colleges and universities (Bolman & Gallos, 2011; Buller, 2015a; Gigliotti, 2017; Gmelch & Buller, 2015; O'Connor, 2015, Ruben, 2004; Ruben et al., 2017). The growing pressures facing academic leaders, coupled with the trend of recruiting senior leaders from outside of the academy, point to the importance of exploring the perceived lack of preparation for those in formal academic leadership roles (Gigliotti, 2017).

Leadership development programs for women continue to be a critical element in teaching and supporting women in higher education to prepare for, attain, and maintain positions of influence within their institutions (Madsen, 2012). Despite this, studies focused on understanding the development of leadership knowledge, skills and abilities through in-depth insights into women's perspectives and experiences are rare (Bierma, 2017; Madsen 2010, 2012; Madsen & Andrade, 2018). Preparing women for these positions is a serious challenge for human resource development and leadership practitioners in postsecondary institutions throughout the world, and there is a need for scholarly work that can provide information on challenges, barriers, programs, initiatives, and strategies that will be helpful in this endeavor (Madsen, 2012).

To examine the true value of a woman's experiences, her development and journey must be reflected upon and understood (Inman, 2011; Madsen, 2007). Knowing what leaders do is a useful starting point; but without a rich understanding of how and why leaders become leaders, an understanding of leadership is incomplete (Inman, 2011). To contribute to the solution, and provide future assistance for emerging female academic leaders, a deeper understanding of how women successfully reached leadership positions should be gained (Budworth & Mann, 2010; Dahlvig & Longman, 2010; Davies, 2015). Davies (2015) recommended future research that

would collect vignettes of deans' journeys and explore issues related to gender and diversity to promote more evidence-based leadership development. As Davies (2015) purported, "It seems timely that first-order perspectives from the lived experiences of business school deans are given a voice. We need to understand their experiences in different contexts, individuals' motivations, and future prospects for this cadre of individuals" (p. 5). Gmelch et al. (2000) agreed that dean's voices should be heard and that scholars need to fully explore their personal stories to enrich knowledge beyond the statistics.

Current challenges and criticisms of U.S. business schools, along with the high turnover, short tenures and sudden exits from the business school dean's critical leadership position suggest that the role merits serious attention (Bradshaw, 2015; Davies, 2015; Del Favero, 2006; Spender, 2016; Thomas & Cornuel, 2012). However, with few exceptions (see Davies & Thomas, 2009; Fragueiro & Thomas, 2011; Thomas & Thomas, 2011), the business school deanship remains empirically unexplored even though business and management studies represent the most popular subject in universities (Davies, 2015). The literature is replete with research that examines and considers the experiences and dearth of women's representation in senior-level corporate roles (see Allen et al., 2016; Catalyst, 2019b; Ibarra et al., 2013; Korn Ferry, 2017). However, missing from the literature is the same consideration of the experiences and continued underrepresentation of women in the top leadership role within the business schools that often educate and produce these corporate leaders.

Purpose Statement and Research Question

The purpose of this qualitative, phenomenological study was to explore the academic leadership journeys of women business deans. In particular, this study sought to develop a more enhanced understanding of the common experiences that prepared women to become business

deans and influenced attainment of their role. This study was guided by the following research question: “What are women business deans’ experiences with academic leadership preparation and role attainment?”

Theoretical Framework

The role of a theoretical framework is to provide a foundation for building a system of theories, assumptions, beliefs, and expectations that guides and supports a research study (Maxwell, 2013). The theoretical framework that guided and supported this study was human agency, a tenant of social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986, 2001). The individualistic nature of an academic career puts academics under pressure to manage their career advancement and reinforces the belief that they are personally responsible for making it happen (Dean et al., 2009; Kandiko Howson et al., 2017). The human agency framework was chosen due to the study’s lens towards individual role preparation and attainment during women business deans’ academic leadership journeys.

Social cognitive theory explains that people learn by acting and interacting with themselves, their experiences, and their environments (Bandura, 2001). This intentional acting and interacting defines what it means to be “an agent” (Bandura, 2001, p. 2). Human agency is defined as the “capacity to exercise control over the nature and quality of one’s life” (Bandura, 2001, p. 1), which has at its heart, self-efficacy (Bandura 1997). The core features of human agency (intentionality, forethought, self-reactiveness, and self-reflectiveness) enable people to play a part in their self-development, adaptation, and self-renewal (Bandura, 2001). Findings are framed through these four core features to determine what role, if any, they played in participants’ role preparation and attainment.

Advancing more women into, and preparing more women for, academic leadership roles within universities and colleges of business requires efforts at both the organizational and institutional levels; simultaneously, women must pursue individual strategies to position themselves well and advance within these organizational and institutional structures (Dean et al., 2009; Ford, 2016). According to Ford (2016), when women pursue individual-level strategies, such as developing and exercising personal agency, social modeling, and mentoring, they acquire the requisite leadership skills and experience that will enable them to claim positions of influence in departments and universities where they can act as transformational change agents. Role models, mentoring relationships, and effective networks accelerate professional advancement, but self-efficacy (agency) and support from university leaders are required for women to demonstrate leadership potential and intentionally plan for a leadership career (Ford, 2016).

Methods

This study employed a qualitative, phenomenological research design to explore the experiences of women business deans' journeys to academic leadership. Phenomenological approaches seek to capture and describe how people experience a phenomenon – “how they perceive it, describe it, feel about it, judge it, remember it, make sense of it, and talk about it with others” (Patton, 2002, p. 104). The type of problem best suited for phenomenological research is one in which it is important to understand several individuals' common or shared experiences with a phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). Phenomenology attempts to determine the essence of a shared experience and works particularly well when studying phenomena that are difficult to quantify, such as leadership (Käuter & Chemero, 2015). Given this study's focus on understanding women business deans' common experiences regarding their academic leadership journeys, phenomenology was the most appropriate research design.

Participants comprised of a purposeful sample (Patton, 2002) of nine women currently serving in the role of full dean (no assistant, associate, or interim deans) at an AACSB-accredited, doctoral-granting, four-year college of business in the United States. The primary data collection method was in-depth interviews, while life-world descriptions (Finlay, 2012; van Manen, 1997) served as a secondary data source to increase the study's trustworthiness. Document analysis of participants' CVs, Linked-In profiles, and background questionnaires was also conducted prior to the interviews allowing for more time to be spent on substantive issues during the interview process.

A semi-structured interview protocol was utilized to elicit data regarding the influences and preparation women business deans experienced on their academic leadership journeys. Through significant statements, representing textural and structural descriptions, gleaned from the interview transcripts and life-world descriptions, a synthesized, composite description presenting the common experiences, the essence, of the phenomenon of the academic leadership journeys of women business deans was derived (Moustakas, 1994).

The process of designing good qualitative research is a very iterative one, involving a back and forth between possible research questions, framing ideas, potential data sources, and an evolving "sense of the problem" at hand (Knapp, 2017, p. 32). As this study progressed, its design components remained flexible, allowing for iterations and refinement throughout the research process (Klenke, 2016; Knapp, 2017).

Significance of the Study

Exploring and understanding women business deans' journeys to academic leadership is significant for several reasons. First-person views of women currently serving in a business deanship can provide necessary insight into the experiences, obstacles, and supports that

influenced their attainment of the deanship, as well as their leadership preparation for the role. This insight can provide strategies to aspiring women academic business leaders on navigating the leadership journey. In order to keep women engaged on the path to academic leadership, it is important for those already in leadership roles to understand and reflect upon how they got there since “experiences are not truly yours until you think about them, analyze them...question them, reflect on them and finally understand them” (Bennis, 1989, p. 92). The phenomenologist knows that one’s own experiences are also the possible experiences of others (van Manen 1997).

Acquainting current and aspiring women leaders with strategies learned from women who have already achieved success in top leadership positions within institutions of higher education can further help to eliminate gender-based challenges (Chamberlain, 2001). Data gathered from this study may also inform research-based recommendations on how colleges of business and professional organizations can develop and support women on a path towards academic leadership. As women are encouraged to pursue and attain top-tier academic leadership positions, their underrepresentation in business school leadership may lessen, which can further empower aspiring women leaders and lead to business schools that better reflect the diversity of their student population.

Educators, researchers, and practitioners focusing on the development, training, and preparation of academic women leaders may utilize findings from this study to inform the design and development of customized, women’s-specific leadership development programming for women in, aspiring to, and/or preparing for the business deanship. Fulfilling the demands and expectations of the dean’s role can be stressful, and research suggests it often leads to burnout and ineffectiveness (Montez et al., 2003; Rosser et al., 2003). The intentional design of leadership training and preparation for women business deans could serve to reduce the learning

curve coming into the role and, in turn, potentially reduce the stress that can lead to burnout and ineffectiveness in the position.

By framing the findings through the theoretical lens of human agency, further insight into individual-level strategies that helped women pursue, maintain, and achieve the path to academic leadership in a U.S. college of business context can be gained. This insight may inform frameworks for future training and education and ensure that leadership development geared towards this group of women leaders is customized, useful, and relevant. The findings may contribute to the study of women in higher education leadership in general because understanding the importance of cultivating and actualizing agency may help other women prepare for and navigate a professional path leading to academic leadership.

The topic of academic leadership journeys of women business deans in higher education was a new area of inquiry. However, some research has been published on the leadership journeys of women academic leaders of architecture (Woosnam, 2007) and nursing (Blass, 2011); as well as women in other senior leadership positions across higher education institutions, such as presidents (Madsen 2007; 2008). Research has also examined the experiences of women academic leaders in other male-dominated departmental units such as athletics (Samble, 2017), agriculture (Kleihauer et al., 2012) and medicine (Ruger, 2015), yet a paucity of research on women business school leaders remains (Davies, 2016).

Limitations

This study focused solely on women academic leaders currently serving in the role of dean at a U.S, AACSB-accredited, doctoral-granting, four-year college of business. The number of participants in the study was small due to a purposeful sample drawn from this specific subset of women higher education leaders who have a common experience with the particular

phenomenon (Patton, 2002). This small sample size was sufficient since the primary goal of qualitative, phenomenological research is not to generalize to a larger population but rather to provide an in-depth description and essence of the phenomenon under study (Moustakas, 1998; Patton, 2002).

Phenomenology as a research approach requires researcher interpretation, making phenomenological reduction an important component to reduce biases, assumptions, and pre-conceived ideas about a phenomenon (Giorgi, 2012; Moustakas, 1994). Although phenomenological reduction techniques were employed throughout the research process, researcher bias remained difficult to determine and may have influenced the study's findings.

Other researchers have employed phenomenological methods to explore the leadership journeys of academic women deans. For example, Keilhauer, et al. (2013) explored how six women deans of agriculture attained their leadership roles utilizing phenomenological research methods, allowing for interpretation and description of the meaning of participant experiences in attaining leadership roles in a predominately male field. In a more recent study, Fought and Misawa (2019) explored the career and leadership journeys of academic health sciences library directors utilizing a phenomenological approach to better understand participant perceptions of their leadership development and preparedness during their career journeys to becoming library directors.

Definitions of Key Terminology

AACSB – The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) is the global accrediting body for colleges of business. AACSB connects educators, students, and business to create the next generation of leaders and provides quality assurance, business education intelligence, and professional development services (AACSB, 2019).

Academic Dean – The individual who oversees the operations of an academic college or school within a university/college and empowers members of the faculty and staff by working with them collegially to achieve common goals (Gmelch & Buller, 2015).

Academic Leadership – The act of building a community of scholars to set direction and achieve common purposes through the empowerment of faculty and staff (Wolverton & Gmelch, 2002).

Human Agency – The capacity to exercise control over the nature and quality of one's life (Bandura, 2001). Individuals accepting the responsibility and claiming the authority to be the means through which they accomplish their desired goals (Dean et al., 2009).

Leadership – A process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal including four components: (1) leadership is a process, (2) leadership involves influence, (3) leadership occurs in groups, and (4) leadership includes attention to common goals (Northouse, 2019).

Leader Development – The expansion of a person's capacity to be effective in leadership roles and processes (McCauley et al., 2010). Leader development builds on the human capital of individuals (Day, 2000).

Leadership Development – Expanding the collective capacity of organizational members to engage effectively in leadership roles and processes (McCauley et al. 2010).

Male-dominated College – A college within the university system with greater than 50% male faculty (Isaac, 2007).

Organization of the Study

This study is organized into five chapters. The first chapter provided context and discussed the need for, and significance of, research exploring women business deans' academic leadership journeys, as well as the purpose, research questions, theoretical framework, and key

terminology. Chapter 2 will examine and discuss the relevant literature on the deanship, the business school context, academic women leaders and the barriers and facilitators to their advancement, academic leadership preparation, as well as the theoretical framework of human agency. Chapter 3 details the study's research design, sampling strategy, data collection and analysis procedures, trustworthiness, and my researcher positionality. Chapter 4 will present and synthesize the findings from the study. Finally, Chapter 5 will discuss these findings and their implications, conclusions, and areas for future research.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

The purpose of this qualitative, phenomenological study was to explore the academic leadership journeys of women business deans. In this chapter, related literature was reviewed and synthesized to provide context and background that informed the study. First, this review explored the relevant literature on the role of the academic dean, leading within a business school context, and the current status of women in academic leadership, and in the business deanship specifically. Second, the review examined the literature on preparation for the deanship, including academic leadership development and leadership development for women.

Next, a review of relevant literature on role attainment of the deanship, including career paths and barriers/facilitators was conducted. Finally, I examined the literature on human agency, a tenant of social cognitive theory, the theoretical framework guiding the study. As Kohler (2016) noted, researchers often learn crucial information about their phenomenon as they research it and as such, the literature review of the phenomenon changes. New areas of literature that emerged were reviewed and addressed as the study progressed.

Role of the Academic Dean

The role of the academic dean has changed over time from being almost exclusively faculty, student, and curricula oriented to include a multifaceted array of activities, such as budgeting and fundraising, personnel and environment management, program oversight, and external public relations (Arntzen, 2016; Wolverson et al., 2001). As universities have grown in size and complexity, the original scholar-dean has made way for the manager-dean who is a

full-time administrator with a highly complex and powerful job, liaising between central administration and academic faculty, while also taking care of staff, students, and external stakeholders (de Boer & Goedegebuure, 2009; Wolverton et al., 2001).

The position's uniqueness lies in its routine contact with a broad range of institutional constituents – the president or chancellor, the senior academic affairs officer, faculty, students, external stakeholders such as donors and corporate supporters, and in some cases the boards that provide institutional or unit oversight (Buller, 2015b). Unlike other types of leadership that are directed downward in a strict hierarchy, academic leadership flows in multiple directions at once and empowers others, providing them not merely direction but also responsibility and the authority needed to fulfill that responsibility (Gmelch & Buller, 2015b).

Few other aspects of the dean's role are as important, and create a bigger challenge, as the ability to see the needs of the institution from the middle and to address those needs adequately (Buller, 2015b). In elucidating the nature of this multi-directional and multi-faceted role, Tucker and Bryan (1991, p. ix) metaphorically described deans as “doves of peace” intervening among warring factions that cause destructive turbulence in the college, “dragons” driving away internal or external forces that threaten the college and “diplomats” guiding, inspiring and encouraging people who live and work in the college. A dean's central role is that of strategic leader with responsibilities that cross four dimensions: school visibility, fund raising, intellectual guidance, and operations management (Thomas & Fraguero, 2011).

In the 2002 National Deans Survey, to which 800 deans from 360 U.S., four-year academic institutions responded, Wolverton & Gmelch (2002) found that deans regarded the following responsibilities as encompassing most of what they do: (a) promoting internal productivity; (b) managing academic personnel; (c) maintaining good external and political

relations; (d) providing leadership to their colleges; (e) managing resources; and (f) remaining active in personal scholarship. In addition to these responsibilities, diminishing state support of higher education and increased operational costs have made the need to identify new sources of revenue a primary function of academic deans in most institutions (Buller, 2015b; Gmelch et al., 2011; Meek et al., 2010).

Individuals who assume a deanship must also be prepared to handle challenges such as demands for relevant curricula and programs, advanced technology for educational delivery, faculty under pressure to meet student and system demands, diversity, and professional and personal imbalance (Wolverton et al., 2001). de Boer and Goedegeburre (2009) purported that an academic dean's core activities encompass strategic management, operational management, human resource management, academic management and external stakeholder relationship management. Given this comprehensiveness of responsibility, it is not uncommon for the role of academic deans in larger, more complex institutions to resemble that of a corporate executive officer (CEO) of a moderately sized business enterprise (Wolverton & Gmelch, 2002).

Due to the influence deans have on the direction and management of their institutions as well as the relationships they create and maintain with government officials, industry and community leaders, and their faculty, staff, and students, their leadership abilities are of particular importance (Kleihauer et al., 2012). The most effective deans are skilled in influencing outcomes and negotiating for resources in an increasingly scarce environment, while possessing skills in collaboration and integration that facilitate development of new academic programs and cultivation of new opportunities for research and student learning (Buller, 2015b; Del Favero, 2013).

In addition, it is critical for deans to hone skills associated with listening, integrating, communicating, and building consensus, which hinge on personal credibility, consistency, and the ability to deliver results (Buller, 2015b; Thomas & Fraguiero, 2011). Successful academic leadership involves collegiality and working to sustain morale, treating people as partners in a common enterprise and engaging others in a community with shared purpose, common goals, and mutual respect (Gmelch & Buller, 2015). As Bolton's (1997) interviews with ten U.S. and seven European business deans revealed, the difficult blend of energy and vision with facilitating others' interests is the key requirement to successful academic leadership.

Given their middle-management positioning, deans are in a unique position to have a significant influence on their colleges and universities. Deans have the opportunity to communicate the mission and vision of their disciplines, act as mentors and role models, and demonstrate leadership by knowing when to advocate for the needs of their stakeholders and when to put the needs of the entire institution first (Wolverton et al., 2001). As Buller (2015b) stressed, being at the middle of a hierarchy does not restrict opportunities for leadership; it multiplies the number of directions in which leadership can be demonstrated. Providing this delicate but crucial backbone of university decision making positions deans at the forefront of institutional change (Arntzen, 2016; Buller, 2015b; Del Favero, 2006).

Leadership in the Business School Context

There is a widely accepted notion that leadership skills will vary by context, such as moving from one academic apartment to another (Kalargyrou et al., 2012). Day and O'Connor (2003) characterized leadership as a highly contextual construct that emerges through a complex interaction of leaders, followers, and situations; with Madsen (2012) concurring that context influences the development of leadership. As a former business school dean, Gallos (2002)

asserted that leadership in academia is likely to fall into the wrong trajectory for two primary reasons – the leader’s insensitivity to the cues and clues of the environment or the leader’s failure to respect the culture, norms, and traditions of the people within that environment. Building on several studies and personal experiences of business school leaders primarily in Europe, North America, Asia, and the Middle East, Alajoutsijarvi and Kettunen (2016) further concluded that the match between the dean’s worldview and the university context ultimately determines the appropriateness, survival, and success of the deanship.

Although similarities in responsibilities exist in deans’ roles across academic disciplines (Del Favero, 2006; Fragueiro & Thomas, 2011; Kambil & Budnik, 2013), business schools are unique in that they have expanded globally, more rapidly and more profitably than any other discipline (Morsing & Sauquet, 2011). As a result, business schools have been good for the university, though they often engender tensions, jealousies, and misunderstandings sometimes exacerbated by business school’s successful fund-raising leading to named buildings (Morsing & Sauquet, 2011). As the business school industry has matured and become more externally directed, deans are increasingly subjected to media rankings, accreditation bodies, and government regulations despite reductions in state funding (Davies, 2016). Business school rankings exacerbate tensions due to their significant influence on student recruitment, yet are arbitrary, disputed, and largely a student-generated source of influence over which the administration, the faculty, and their disciplines have little control (Bachrach et al., 2017; Davidson, 2017).

Another unique aspect of business schools is that as professional schools, they continue to lack an external, guiding professional code. Other schools and programs have either an established discipline, as in the liberal arts, or guiding professional codes and processes, as in

medicine and engineering (Davies, 2016; Khurana, 2007; Spender, 2016). Furthermore, university administrators have considerable problems judging the business school's quality, whether its work is aligned with the university's aesthetic and policies, if the school is competitive against other business schools, or whether it is delivering real value to students and the business community; these risks are unmatched by any other school (Spender, 2016).

Criticisms about the legitimacy and value of U.S. business schools, as well as the education they provide, add further pressure to business school leaders and have been the topic of much research and debate in recent years. Critiques from the business community, and society in general, exist regarding the relevance of business curriculums, the preparation of ethical business leaders and an over-emphasis on the career-enhancing, salary-increasing aspects of business education (Chia, 2014; Davies, 2016; Pettigrew & Starkey, 2016; Pfeffer & Fong, 2004; Spender, 2016; Thomas & Cornuel, 2012). A number of external factors such as new learning technologies, an increase in business schools globally leading to increased competition, budgetary cutbacks, a decline in public funding, and a shortage of faculty members with doctoral degrees coupled with a concomitant rise in faculty salaries also pose threats to business schools (Thomas et al., 2014).

The business school culture has also been a topic of debate and criticism. Morgan (2016) contends that in efforts to emulate the world of business, many schools have created work environments which encourage and reward long hours and frequent international travel, practices that are often incompatible with maintaining a healthy work-life balance. Furthermore, the culture embedded in business schools promotes an ecosystem in which administrators, faculty, case study protagonists, guest speakers, and textbook authors are predominately male, giving students the impression that intellect and leadership are male-driven (Flynn et al., 2015; Morgan,

2017; Symons, 2016). Business schools are nodes of power and influence that disseminate knowledge about diversity and change in organizations, but which often fail to embody the ideals and practices they teach (Ford et al., 2012).

In addition, concern has been expressed about a leadership deficit in business schools with increasingly high levels of turnover of deans (Bradshaw, 2015; Thomas & Cornuel, 2012; Spender, 2016). A business school dean spends, on average, only five years in office before accepting another position – and 25% spend only three years as dean (Bradshaw, 2015).

According to the most recent AACSB Dean's Survey (AACSB, 2018), the business dean's average time in the role is 5.9 years (these numbers include both male and female deans as well as business schools outside of the United States).

Through a survey of 350 business deans at AACSB-member schools globally, McTiernan and Flynn (2011) discovered that improving the school's reputation was a dean's top priority, followed by improving educational programs and keeping accreditation, increasing external funding, and improving faculty teaching. Similar results were found through survey and interview research with 326 U.S. business school deans in which participants indicated increasing pressure by their university to grow and generate revenues and enhance rankings and reputations (Davies, 2015). Budget issues, fundraising, faculty recruitment and retention, increasing competition, and accreditation issues were identified as the most critical pressures business deans faced in their role (Davies, 2015). Due to external facing requirements and increasing interdependencies within the university, deans in the study commented that the role of dean in many business schools closely resembles that of a CEO (Davies, 2015).

In the increasingly challenging educational environment, business education depends on quality leadership for articulating new vision and directing goal attainment (Meggison &

Mitchell, 2014). To be successful, business school deans need to possess CEO-style breadth and organizational expertise over more narrow academic mastery while demonstrating strategic skills, enterprise management, innovation, and people and relationship effectiveness (Kring & Kaplan, 2011). This requires business school leaders who are adaptive, collaborative, connective, creative, and resilient (Davies, 2015; Kring & Kaplan, 2011; Thomas et al., 2013).

Women in Academic Leadership

Women have earned more than half of all doctoral degrees since 2006, more than half of all master's degree since 1987 and more than half of all bachelor's degrees since 1982 (Johnson, 2016). Despite these gains in degree achievement, the number of tenured women faculty and senior-level administrators in higher education, and the business schools within them, fails to reflect a similar progress (AACSB, 2012; AACSB, 2018; AAUP, 2019; Catalyst, 2017; Ford, 2016; Gagliardi et al., 2017; Johnson, 2016).

Across U.S. institutions of higher education, a mere 30% of presidents, 38% of provosts and 36% of academic deans are female and although the percentage of women serving as deans across academic disciplines varies, most remain fewer in number than their male counterparts (Ford, 2016; Gagliardi et al., 2017). For example, in U.S. medical schools, 16% of deans are women, up only one percentage point from 2006 (Paturel, 2019; White et al., 2012). In U.S. accredited law schools, women hold 31% of deanships, an increase from 21% in 2008 (American Bar Association, 2017). Colleges of arts and sciences women deans fare only slightly better, where one-third of the deans are women among more than 500 four-year member institutions of the Council of Colleges of Arts and Sciences (Behr & Schneider, 2015). In U.S. AACSB-accredited business schools, the percentage of women deans has steadily increased, but remains under one-fourth (22.9%) of the total deanships.

Obtaining the rank of full professor affords opportunities for leadership in faculty governance, extends national influence on the disciplines, and is a traditional prerequisite for advancement to leadership (Ward & Eddy, 2013). However, while women represent over half (51.5%) of assistant professors and are near parity among associate professors (44.9%), they accounted for less than a third (32.4%) of full professors in 2015 (Catalyst, 2017), representing only a slight increase from 24.9% in 1993 (Finkelstein et al., 2016). Furthermore, women tend to be congregated in lower-ranking positions in academia, holding over half (57.0%) of all instructor positions (Catalyst, 2017). While women's representation in faculty roles varies widely by discipline, women continue to be overrepresented in the contingent faculty workforce (AAUP, 2019).

Women still lag significantly behind men not only in title and tenure, but also in salary (Gagliardi et al., 2017). According to the most recent Faculty Compensation Survey, which compiled data on more than 380,000 full-time faculty members at 952 colleges and universities in the United States, salaries for women full-time faculty members continue to lag behind those paid to men; on average, women were paid 81.6% of the salaries of men during academic year 2018-19 (AAUP, 2019). Progress in this area has stalled; in the 2015-2016 academic year, across all academic ranks, women made 82% of men's salaries (Gagliardi et al., 2017). Women across all ranks of business school faculty fare slightly better in comparison where they earn 87.3 cents for each U.S. dollar earned by men (Ellen et al., 2019). Although new women faculty hires are receiving more equitable pay, this makes the gap even greater for faculty who have been in the workforce for some time (Ellen et al., 2019).

Research that examines women in academic leadership in the United States and their career/leadership journeys tends to focus on the role of the presidency (see Klotz, 2014; Madsen,

2007, 2008; Oikelome, 2017) or senior-level roles such as chancellors, provosts, and deans combined (see Hannum et al., 2015; Johnson, 2016), as well as women deans and directors in other academic disciplines (see Blass, 2011; De Long, 2012; Fought & Misawa, 2019; Stephens et al., 2018; Woosnam, 2007). Other research is grounded in the experiences of women higher education leaders, and business deans in general, in colleges and universities globally (Davies, 2015; O'Connor, 2015). However, little research exists that examines the specific experiences and academic leadership journeys of women business deans in the United States.

Research that does exist indicates that women's academic leadership journeys are influenced by several factors. Through phenomenological interviews, Kleihauer et al. (2012) explored the experiences of six women on their journey to becoming deans of agriculture and found themes of birth order, family influence, mentor influence, and spousal support in the participant's stories. Findings through interviews with 14 women academic deans in Church of God institutions identified experiences in higher education, networking, personal agency and relationships as important influences during participants' leadership journeys (Contreras Flores, 2016).

In her exploration of the experiences of community college faculty advancing into the deanship, McManus (2013) discovered that for participants, leadership expectations did not correspond to leadership training opportunities, leadership development was informal, while mentoring and individual agency played a significant role in their career preparation and advancement. Similar themes of encouragement, leadership development experiences, role models and mentors, and early leadership experiences were found through interviews with 35 senior-level women leaders in higher education as influences during their leadership journeys (Hannum et al., 2015).

Women Business Deans

Although both graduate and undergraduate women in U.S. business schools comprise nearly half of the student body, the number of women leading those same schools has not achieved similar progress. McTiernan and Flynn (2011) speculated that a “perfect storm” (p. 323) may be on the horizon that would significantly change the gender mix of business deans; noting the confluence of changes in the nature of the dean’s job that play to the strengths of women alongside a growing number of qualified women for the position. Despite this assertion, the percentage of women business school deans has increased by only 6.5% over the last seven years (AACSB, 2012, 2019).

Through a personal review of U.S, AACSB-accredited, four-year, college of business websites, it was discovered that 122 women (22.9%) held the role of dean within those schools as of September 20, 2019. Another 15 women occupied the role of interim dean within those same colleges. However, the number leading at business schools within doctoral-granting institutions (n=30; 24.6%) was low in comparison to those at master’s-level institutions (n=80; 65.6%). The other 12 (9.8%) were leading at undergraduate-only institutions. Further personal research revealed that only four (16%) of the women deans were leading at a top-25 ranked U.S. business school based on Bloomberg Businessweek rankings, while three more were included (12%) when expanding to the top 50-ranked schools (Bloomberg Businessweek, 2018).

Flynn et al. (2015) conducted research on gender in business schools and found that many gender gaps can be traced back to the underrepresentation of women as full faculty and administrators. Women are less likely to become full professors than men and hold relatively few associate dean and academic department chair positions, both major stepping stones to the dean’s role (Flynn et al., 2015). There is a high demand for female deans which has allowed the

prospects that do exist to be selective in their career moves (Korn, 2012). Korn (2012) commented that schools are courting these current or up-and-coming deans aggressively, with some receiving inquiries from search firms while associate deans. However, some women turn down the position, fearing a blow to their work-life balance given the demands of the role (McTiernan & Flynn, 2011; Korn, 2012).

Certain initiatives have attempted to address the underrepresentation of women in business schools. For example, in 2015, The Council on Women and Girls and the Council of Economic Advisors hosted a convening at the White House to focus on opportunities for the business community and business schools to work together to encourage success for women in business (White House Press Secretary, 2015). In conjunction with this event, over 45 business schools committed to a set of best practices that offered concrete strategies for business schools to help women succeed. One strategy that emerged was for business schools to be model employers that lead by example by creating opportunities for all workers to succeed, ensuring diversity in leadership positions within the school and on advisory boards, recognizing the need for balance between work and family responsibilities, and creating a culture of inclusiveness.

Preparation for the Deanship

The role of an academic dean presents unique challenges and opportunities, and consists of a multi-faceted set of responsibilities that serve various internal and external constituents (Arntzen, 2016; Buller, 2015b; de Boer & Goedegebuure, 2009; Kleihauer et al., 2012; Thomas & Fraguero, 2011). While specific roles and responsibilities vary by university and academic unit, a dean's duties may be overwhelming unless the dean sets priorities and is both an effective leader and manager (Cassady, 2014). Despite the broadening of the deanship position, incoming deans often discover they are not adequately prepared to meet the responsibilities of overseeing a

broader range of issues and operations and realize that the expertise and behaviors they need to succeed as leaders must be acquired while they are on the job (Gmelch, 2002; Gmelch & Buller, 2015; Kambil & Budnik, 2013).

Developing leaders in the academy has often been left to chance or the individual mentoring efforts of a few, which leads deans' skills to develop gradually and haphazardly, the result of arbitrary training, inadequate feedback, and random mentoring (Gmelch & Buller, 2015; Gmelch et al., 2011). Even though department heads and long-term faculty are those most likely to consider advancement into academic administration, it is generally an evolutionary process rather than a career aspiration held during their years as college students (Land, 2003). This is demonstrated in colleges of business where, based on responses to the most recent AACSB business school dean's survey (of which 23% of the 585 respondents were female), 68% of deans reported being somewhat unprepared or not at all prepared to manage at least one of their role responsibilities (AACSB, 2018; Davis, 2018). Deans in the study were most prepared to manage academic and programmatic development, and strategic planning, while being least prepared for fundraising and accreditation management (AACSB, 2018; Davis, 2018).

Other leaders in the dean's suite are also underprepared for their roles. Sayler et al. (2017) surveyed a random sample of 527 associate deans in colleges of arts and sciences, business, and education at U.S. research universities and discovered little professional preparation for the role. Associate deans in the sample (consisting of a nearly equal number of men and women) were found to rely upon their personal and professional networks to learn more about administrative functioning (Sayler et al., 2017).

New academic leaders find themselves immersed in a transition that demands personal development and creates new learning settings (Wolverton & Gmelch, 2002). Through a

qualitative study on the initial challenges faced during the transition to academic leadership, Hacifazlioglu (2010) interviewed 24 women academic leaders in the United States and Turkey and discovered challenges such as time management, mental adaptation, institutional fit, overcoming resistance, and mediating between faculty and institution leadership. O'Neil et al. (2015) also found that women face key challenges when transitioning into leadership roles such as integrating their careers and family, work/life stage concerns, and navigating difficult organizational contexts. It is critical to the future of business schools that ample numbers of aspiring leaders can successfully make the transition to the deanship. An institutionally based leadership development initiative can be a key component in preparing deans to successfully make this transition and fulfill their leadership roles (Gmelch & Buller, 2015).

Academic Leadership Development

The need for leadership development initiatives has long been recognized in the military and business, with U.S. corporations spending over \$160 billion annually on leadership training and development programs (Association for Talent Development, 2013). Some scholars have commented on the similarities between the work of academic leaders and CEOs of companies, noting that higher education could benefit from a more concerted effort (Davies, 2015; Morris & Laipple, 2015; Wolverson & Poch, 2000). However, leadership development efforts have been slower to reach education, and colleges and universities in particular, due in part to the perception that subject matter expertise and experience are the primary qualifications necessary to provide effective leadership in higher education (Gigliotti & Ruben, 2017). Without support and access to leadership development opportunities, individuals may burnout and derail their administrative careers; whereas others may remain in place, but be ineffective in their roles (Morris & Laipple, 2015).

Given the generational turnover currently underway and the increasing demands and challenges placed on deans, institutions should implement a more focused and systematic process for developing future academic leaders (Gmelch & Buller, 2015; Wolverton & Gmelch, 2002). However, there is a scarcity of formal education programs available to those with academic or administrative leadership responsibilities and a pressing need for increased attention to leadership development within colleges and universities (Bolman & Gallos, 2011; Buller, 2015a; Gigliotti, 2017; Gmelch et al., 2011; Gmelch & Buller, 2015; Ruben et al., 2017).

In their landmark study of over 600 academic deans leading at U.S. colleges and universities, Wolverton and Gmelch (2002) found an absence of any formal professional preparation in the development of academic deans across all higher education institutions regardless of Carnegie classification. Similar findings emerged when Del Favero (2006) investigated the relationship between academic discipline and the leadership preparation of academic deans at U.S. research and doctoral institutions. Regardless of discipline, deans relied most on experience in past administrative posts and relationships with faculty leaders to prepare for their roles (Del Favero, 2006).

Through 16 interviews with academic deans and associate deans within the Association of American Universities (AAU), Gigliotti (2017) explored the current state of formal training and development initiatives within those institutions. The majority of participants indicated that more could be done to prepare leaders in higher education and nearly all participants responded negatively when asked to describe the current state of academic leadership development programs (Gigliotti, 2017). However, the deans and associate deans who had participated in formal leadership programs had overwhelmingly positive feedback (Gigliotti, 2017).

As a new dean, priorities shift from individual teaching, research, and service to broader administrative practices, such as personnel management, fundraising, strategic planning, and budgeting (Gigliotti, 2017). Gigliotti's (2017) findings revealed three themes related to the study and practice of academic leadership: (a) academic leadership as the art of cultivating relationships; (b) academic leadership as a direct response to "wicked problems" (p. 202); and (c) academic leadership as a mosaic of administrative competencies. Additionally, there are specific challenges and responsibilities associated with the role of dean that deserve attention in formal academic leadership development initiatives. These include time management, effective communication with diverse stakeholders, maintaining relationships with students, and making the transition from faculty member to administrator (Gigliotti, 2017). There are a number of other topical themes that can be incorporated into formal academic leadership training such as the higher education landscape, leadership theories, communication and influence strategies, self-assessment, leadership styles, and metric/assessment tools (Ruben et al., 2017).

Three spheres of influence have been suggested to create the conditions essential to develop academic leaders: (a) conceptual understanding of the unique roles and responsibilities encompassed in academic leadership (habits of mind); (b) the skills necessary to achieve results through working with faculty, staff, students, and other administrators (habits of practice); and (c) the practice of reflection to learn from past experiences and perfect the art of leadership (habits of heart) (Gmelch, 2013; Gmelch & Buller, 2015; Gmelch et al., 2011; Wolverson & Gmelch, 2002). Effective leadership programs in existence for college and university leaders attempt to integrate these three critical themes (Gigliotti, 2017; Ruben et al., 2017).

Developing faculty into academic leaders is both a privilege and responsibility of university administrators and institutions of higher education (Gmelch, 2013). Through campus

leadership programs, institutions can benefit from building academic leadership teams, creating leadership connections across campus, promoting purposeful leadership diversity, tapping hidden talent, maximizing individuals' potential, retaining campus talent and ensuring institutional renewal and effectiveness. The future of universities and colleges depends on answering "the call to leadership" (p. 34) with commitment, dedication and vision (Gmelch, 2013). By marshaling human talent, and placing a renewed emphasis on formal and informal leadership development, colleges and universities, and the business schools within them, can emerge as stronger institutions (Gigliotti, 2017).

Women's Leadership Development

Women's leadership development programming (WLDP) is an important strategy for preparing and equipping greater numbers of future women leaders in higher education to successfully take on leadership roles (Bilimoria et al., 2008; Ngunjiri & Gardiner, 2017; Selzer et al., 2017; Sulpizio, 2014). However, institutions globally are struggling with how to design effective programs to help their female faculty, staff, and administrators develop leadership skills, and successful examples of leadership training for female academic leaders are still scarce (Bierma, 2017; Madsen, 2012; Madsen & Andrade, 2018; Peus et al., 2015). The process of developing women leaders is particularly multifaceted and challenging and programming should not only prepare women for these challenges but also make clear the benefits and rewards of formal leadership positions (Hannum et al., 2015; Madsen, 2010).

In autoethnographic reflections about one U.S. institution's model program designed to identify and prepare mid-career faculty and staff for senior-level leadership roles, Selzer et al. (2017) found that in order to effectively develop women leaders, work must be done at the personal (vulnerability, reflection, finding voice), interpersonal (intersectionality, community,

networking), and institutional (authentic leadership and culture) levels and that women's multiple identities must be engaged. O'Neil et al. (2015) created a framework for WLDP that integrates the key factors affecting women's leadership development (challenging organizational contexts, work-life integration and career/life-stage concerns) and the characteristics of women's leadership presence (which includes a combination of a woman's unique voice, style of engagement, and positive contributions). By focusing on the whole-life and context-specific situations faced by women leaders, while concurrently acknowledging the gendered nature of the characteristics and behaviors expected of leaders, WLDP can facilitate women's transformational learning, performance, and advancement potential by strengthening self-confidence, self-efficacy, influence, and authenticity (O'Neil et al., 2015).

Through 16 interviews with emerging women leaders in Christian higher education who went through an institutional women-only leadership development program, Dahlvig and Longman (2010) discovered the power of "defining moments" (p. 238) in women's leadership journeys. A single conversation or even a single sentence, sometimes from decades prior, was cited by almost half of the participants as having been "the *most* defining moment within their leadership development journey" (Dahlvig & Longman, 2010, p. 245). Three patterns were identified of what participants perceived to be their most defining moment: (a) someone speaking potential into their lives; (b) encountering a person or situation that resulted in reframing the participant's understanding of leadership and their perception of themselves as leaders; and (c) experiencing a situation that led to feeling compelled to stand up for a conviction or strong belief.

Brue and Brue (2016) utilized the framework of social cognitive theory to explore the perceived experiences and outcomes for alumnae of a women-only leadership development

program in a U.S. career and technical education program. Findings revealed that participants gained an increased sense of preparedness for leadership, felt more equipped for advancement, grew in personal agency, validated desires to be in leadership and gained confidence to do well in their positions (Brue & Brue, 2016). Participants found connecting with other women, building networks, and the use of mentors deeply meaningful (Brue & Brue, 2016).

Women's capacity for leadership depends not only on their individual development of goals and identities, but also on the organizational contexts within which opportunities for leadership arise (Ely & Rhode, 2010). WLDP reinforces the need for attention to both structural and institutional change and creating agency in women as they construct and internalize a leader identity, establish their sense of purpose, and determine how to share that with others (Ely et al., 2011; Eddy & Ward, 2015). It is therefore imperative for leadership development programming for women academic leaders to address the specifics of the context within which they are leading (Knipfer et al., 2017). A lack of context specificity in leadership development limits its potential for the development of women's capacity to lead effectively in academia (Knipfer et al., 2017). In addition to context-specificity, the design, development, and content of effective WLDP must align with current literature and be based on current research and theory (Madsen & Andrade, 2018).

There are several institutes and professional opportunities targeted at enhancing leadership skills development for women in higher education, at the chair's level and above, that can enable women to prepare for, and successfully perform, their role (Ford, 2016). For example, the American Council of Education (ACE) offers a number of leadership development programs for new, aspiring, and experienced women leaders (Astin & Leland, 1991) and the Higher Education Resource Services (HERS) offers leadership and management training institutes for

academic women leaders (HERS, 2017). The AACSB Women Administrators in Management Education (WAME) affinity group has meetings, networking opportunities, and professional development programs, as well as an online archive of training and professional development materials. In addition, AACSB hosts annual regional conferences and seminars for aspiring deans, department chairs, associate, assistant, and new deans.

However, a need remains for continued focus on developing leadership skills and abilities in women through a host of leadership development efforts and interventions (Madsen & Andrade, 2018). Leadership development opportunities directed at female candidates for upper-level leadership roles in higher education should incorporate the voices of women who have been successful, advocate for women in leadership, and address both the costs involved and the supports needed in assuming a higher education leadership role (Hill et al., 2018; Madsen & Andrade, 2018). Through an enhanced sense of self-efficacy, agency, and empowerment about their influence in leading organizational change, participants in WLDP are enabled to overcome challenging workplace contexts, manage work-life responsibilities with recognition of their differing career-life stages, and perceive themselves as agents of change to lead in the development of more equitable workplaces for all (Debebe et al., 2016).

Role Attainment of the Deanship

For most women deans, as in other academic leadership roles, a move into the position was not a planned or aspirational move. In their interviews with 50 women deans and directors in Australian universities, Chesterman et al. (2005) found that many senior female academics were hesitant to apply for leadership roles without specific encouragement or endorsement of their credentials from others and had rarely put themselves forward for their roles. Similarly, Davies (2015) conducted survey and interview data with a broad spectrum of business school deans

across institution types in the United Kingdom and the United States and found that for most individuals, a move into the deanship was unintentional and serendipitous, but also a natural progression. The majority of respondents (30% of whom were women) indicated they had not planned to become dean and applied for the job only after they had been approached by a head hunter (Davies, 2015).

This trend is similar for deans in other colleges across campuses. Behr and Schneider (2013) conducted a survey of the Council of Arts and Sciences (CCAS) deans (of which 39% of the respondents were women) to examine gender-related patterns in academic administrative careers in the United States. The data indicated that women deans were less likely than men to have aspired to an academic leadership position and more likely to have been recruited rather than have volunteered (Behr & Schneider, 2013). The women respondents indicated less interest in ascending to the presidency than did men and were less likely to consider relocating for their career advancement (Behr & Schneider, 2013).

In other higher education leadership roles, as well as in corporate America, a similar trend emerges. In a qualitative study exploring the role of relational responsibility in shaping leadership aspirations and experiences, 15 mid-career faculty and administrative higher education women leaders in the United States indicated that leadership advancement was unrelated to personal aspirations to attain a senior-level role (Longman et al., 2018). Rather, participants had responded to a specific request from a key individual to consider or assume a particular responsibility (Longman et al., 2018).

Similarly, in her study of U.S. women university presidents, Madsen (2007; 2008) found that none had planned to end up in leadership positions and many had planned to be educators/professors throughout their careers. Each participant in the study had a different

informal career path based on opportunities and influential individuals' encouragement or invitation to consider a move into the presidency (Madsen 2007; 2008). Similarly, survey and interview data with 38 current and 19 former CEOs of Fortune 1000 companies found that few women set out to be CEO; more than half of respondents gave no thought to being CEO until someone explicitly told them they had it in them (Korn Ferry, 2017).

Career Paths

Many paths lead to the deanship and deans may enter the role from either inside or outside of academia. However, the positions of associate dean, interim dean, and department chair continue to be the most frequent jobs held by both male and female business deans prior to assuming their role (AACSB, 2018). Of first-time business deans, 89% of which still hold a faculty position, roles held immediately prior to becoming dean were: (a) associate dean (25%); (b) department chair (18%); (c) interim/acting dean (17%); and (d) faculty member (12%) (AACSB, 2018). One key difference found in the career paths of men and women business deans was that more women had occupied the role of interim dean immediately prior to becoming dean than men (17% vs. 8%) (McTiernan & Flynn, 2011).

This is consistent with deans across other academic disciplines where most have served in the role of department chair or as a faculty member who had demonstrated capable leadership (Cassady, 2014). A survey of 1,300 deans of the colleges of business, education, liberal arts, and allied health professions at 360 U.S. universities revealed dean's administrative experience prior to their current deanship included experience as a dean, as an associate dean, administrative experience outside of academia and the largest percentage (60%) had served as department chairs (Gmelch et al., 1996). Fewer women than men surveyed had prior experience as a dean or associate dean and 56% had experience as a department chair or in another academic position

(35%) (Gmelch et al., 1996). Hargrove (2015) surveyed 120 engineering deans regarding their career paths, 10.8% (n=13) of whom were women, and found the most common pathway to the deanship was typically through the department chair (64.7%).

Barriers and Facilitators

Both barriers and facilitators influence the career path and role attainment for women in academic leadership; as well as co-exist, and interact in most organizations (Lyness & Grotto, 2018). However, research tends to focus on barriers and offers a narrower scope on facilitators.

Hannum et al. (2015) explored 35 women's journeys into senior leadership roles within U.S. higher education institutions and discovered barriers such as the lack of a leadership identity, lack of opportunity and support, discouragement and sabotage, and different expectations for men and women; facilitators that emerged were formal leadership development, early leadership experiences, and having a role model. In a more recent effort to examine the influence, coexistence, and interactions of barriers and facilitators in female leader advancement, Lyness and Grotto (2018) synthesized the U.S. literature on both and developed a multilevel organization model of barriers and facilitators of female leader empowerment, which highlights the complexities and limited success in solving the U.S. leadership gender gap.

Women deans outside of the United States experience similar influences. In a qualitative study of the leadership journeys of six female deans in Vietnam, Nguyen (2013) found multiple barriers and facilitators in participants' stories of becoming dean. The main barriers were family obligations, stereotypes regarding females as leaders, and female academics' unwillingness to take management positions; facilitators included self-effort (agency), strong family support, and a favorable selection context (Nguyen, 2013).

Barriers to women's advancement into academic leadership roles tend to fall into two categories: individual and structural (Oikelome, 2017; Selzer et al., 2017). Studies have indicated that women on the pathway to academic leadership, including the business deanship, do not automatically aspire to, or put themselves forward for, administrative leadership positions (Chesterman et al., 2005; McTiernan & Flynn, 2011). This hesitation, combined with a lack of self-confidence and ambivalence towards these roles, is one individual factor contributing to women's avoidance of senior-level jobs (Chesterman et al., 2005; Madsen, 2007).

Early-career women academics may prefer research-only career paths as they see the full load of academic teaching, research and service as undoable and unbearable (Blackmore, 2014). Anticipating the challenges they may face in leadership positions or the promotion process, some women choose to remain associate professors or as faculty members not interested in formal leadership roles; hesitant to forgo their scholarly freedom and teaching, which is what initially drew them to the professorship (McTiernan & Flynn, 2011; Ward & Eddy, 2013).

Both Gigliotti's (2017) interviews with eleven academic deans and associate deans in the AAU and O'Connor's (2015) interviews with senior-level academic leaders in Irish universities found that many faculty began an academic career for the independence of the position, the scholarship, and to inspire students; and yet, much of that independence was lost when becoming an academic leader. Other women choose part-time or non-tenure track positions as a way to avoid potential conflicts between academic work and family life, long hours, messy politics, a lack of internal opportunities for advancement, or a desire to avoid the spotlight and public scrutiny placed on top campus leaders (Chesterman et al., 2005; Glass & Cook, 2016; Keohane, 2014; Morley, 2014; Ward & Eddy, 2013). This leads some women to forego the ladder of academic progress, promotion, and leadership due to a perception that advanced positions in

academe are not open to women, particularly women who hope to make time for a family or life beyond work (Ward & Eddy, 2013; Sandberg, 2014).

Structural/systemic barriers exist within academic institutions that may impede the advancement of women's career trajectories and create a burden of having to prove themselves. These barriers include (a) questioning a woman's competence as a scholar on a co-authored publication by seeking verification of her contribution to the scholarly work; (b) assigning burdensome teaching and service tasks to women that hamper their efforts to conduct research; and (c) placing less value on certain research domains and scholarly journals that are attractive to female scholars (Gutierrez y Muhs et al., 2012; Selzar et al., 2015; Smith, 2015). Structural dynamics can create challenges for women in addition to the problem of wage inequities, lack of supportive workplace priorities, policies, and reward structures, second-generation bias embedded in stereotypes or organizational practices, and the need for more targeted mentoring (Bisoux, 2017; Ibarra et al., 2013; Kellerman & Rhode, 2014; Keohane, 2014; Sturm, 2001).

In contrast, research globally has discovered that some men and women view academic leadership as a positive and aspirational move. Shepherd (2017) found that both male and female senior leaders from U.K. universities relished in their jobs and viewed an academic leadership career as an attractive option and an opportunity to make a difference. These sentiments are further reflected in O'Connor's (2015) study of women deans, vice-presidents, and presidents in Irish universities, where women showed little ambivalence towards assuming positional power and found the advantages of these roles outweighed the disadvantages.

Gender-based barriers exist that may further impede women's advancement to academic leadership. Through a cross-sector analysis of gender-based barriers in higher education and interviews with 26 women presidents, provosts, and vice-presidents, Diehl and Dubinski (2016)

identified 27 macro (societal), meso (organizational), and micro (individual) barriers that prevented women from succeeding or advancing into leadership positions. These barriers influenced women's ability to see themselves as leaders, as well as others' ability to consider them for leadership roles (Diehl & Dubinski, 2016). Existing gender schemas have been found to influence gatekeepers to undervalue female faculty performance and to overvalue male faculty performance when faculty vie for promotion to higher ranking positions in business schools (Van den Brink & Benschop, 2014). Within business schools, the gender imbalance in the upper ranks of leadership may act as a self-fulfilling prophecy, creating a set of masculinized social and organizational practices, and norms that perpetuate the uneven playing field (Treviño et al., 2017).

There is evidence in the broader management literature that much of the development of managers' skills takes place through developmental job assignments, which are more often given to men than to women, and result in women being less prepared due to deficits in prior learning opportunities and critical job experiences (Ibarra et al., 2010; Kaiser & Wallace, 2016; Lyness & Grotto, 2018). This pattern exists in business schools where administrators often ask female faculty members to take on ancillary assignments in service to the school, but turn to male faculty with more career-building, high-visibility assignments (Bartel, 2018; Bisoux, 2017). In organizations with male-dominated leadership, such as business schools, men are more likely than women to be perceived as future leaders, and thus men are more likely than women to receive leadership development, advice, and career-related support to prepare and sponsor them for future leadership positions (Diehl & Dubinski, 2016). Additionally, women may receive less overall feedback related to their leadership behaviors from their managers (Ely et al., 2011).

While barriers for women have become more permeable (Eagly & Carli, 2007), exiting the leadership pipeline is still a choice some female academics make, opting to forgo promotion and leadership positions in anticipation of messy politics, sexist cultures, or irreconcilable challenges between work family life (Sandberg, 2014; Ward & Eddy, 2013). In order to pave the way for women's career advancement into the senior ranks of organizations, attention must be directed at the systemic norms and structures that drive the gendered nature of the workplace (O'Neil & Hopkins, 2015). A sole focus on individual level issues (i.e. women lacking confidence or opting out) detracts from the work that must be done at the organizational level to dismantle the system of pervasive, structural disadvantage facing women seeking to advance to senior leadership positions (Blackmore, 2014; Burkinshaw & White, 2017; Lyness & Grotto, 2018; O'Neil & Hopkins, 2015).

Gender and leadership scholars have a strong theoretical grasp on why women typically do not attain top leadership positions, but a weaker understanding of why some women do (Airini et al., 2011; Bowles, 2012; Lyness & Grotto, 2018). The support of mentors and other relationships emerges as a primary facilitator for women's aspirations for, and advancement into, academic leadership positions (Bryant, 2018; Cassady, 2014; Dahlvig & Longman, 2014; McTiernan & Flynn, 2011; Oikelome, 2017; Wheat & Hill, 2016). Leadership aspirations and opportunities for women often stem from human connection and relationship building (Dahlvig & Longman, 2014; Ely et al., 2011; Longman & Madsen, 2014). Murphy et al. (2017) summarized five types of developmental relationships that are powerful facilitators to advancing women into leadership roles: (a) mentors; (b) sponsors; (c) peers; (d) executive coaches; and (e) learning partners. Mentorship can be critical for the future success of women in higher education leadership fields and provide more opportunities for authentic leadership to occur (Behr &

Schneider, 2013; Longman & Madsen, 2014). Having role models that demonstrate a range of different ways of being in, and successfully navigating, a leadership role can help make the role more attainable and attractive while serving to weaken assumptions and stereotypes (Hannum et al., 2015).

Despite the positive influence of having a mentor on women's attainment of senior academic leadership positions, some women find it difficult to identify a mentor or role model, which is due, in part, to the continued underrepresentation of females and historically underrepresented populations in senior academic roles (Airini et al., 2011; Hill & Wheat, 2017; Madsen, 2012). Through 16 in-depth interviews, Hill and Wheat (2017) explored the role of mentors and role models in the career paths of women in key-line administrative positions to the presidency (e.g. academic dean, vice president, chief academic officer) and found the majority of participants lacked a primary career mentor, and did not realize the need to have one early on since most did not begin their careers with aspirations of achieving a senior leadership role. However, the mentors they did have (both male and female) provided numerous benefits including an increase in self-confidence in their ability to advance into leadership and build their credentials to become more qualified (Hill & Wheat, 2017).

In exploring other factors that contributed to women considering or stepping into leadership, Dahlvig and Longman (2014) interviewed 16 emerging academic leaders in U.S. higher education and discovered what they called *relational responsibility*—reflecting the observed pattern that women accepted a leadership role in response to a direct appeal from someone above, alongside, or below them. Willingness to do so was not related to a desire for prestige or increased salary, but rather out of a responsiveness and willingness to assist in meeting the needs or concerns that had been conveyed by others. Other studies have documented

that women's motivation or willingness to advance into leadership often aligns with a sense of purpose and the ability to honor relationships that are valued (Ely et al., 2011; Ibarra et al., 2013; Keohane, 2014).

Human Agency

Although leader development and advancement are influenced by contextual, social, and organizational factors, leadership is a journey that starts from within. Gergen (2005) confirmed this notion in his studies of U.S. presidents, finding that those who had been most effective first made their own, individual journey. Wolverson and Gmelch (2002) further contended that leadership development is an inner journey and that self-knowledge, personal awareness, and corrective feedback must be part of a dean's leadership journey. As previously mentioned, the individualistic nature of an academic career puts academics under pressure to manage their career advancement and reinforces the belief that they are personally responsible for making it happen (Dean et al., 2009; Kandiko Howson et al., 2017). Despite circumstances not under the leader's control, the decision to develop as a leader must be made with intention and purpose and requires deliberate commitment (Ruben et al., 2017).

Human agency is a tenant of social cognitive theory and considered essential for effective advancement and enactment of women leaders (Dean et al., 2009). Social cognitive theory assumes that people are more likely to attempt and sustain behaviors when they believe that they have the necessary capabilities to perform them and that the effort will produce desired outcomes (Bandura, 1986; 2001). In the agentic socio-cognitive view, people are self-organizing, proactive, self-reflecting, and self-regulating, and have the power to influence their own actions to produce certain results (Bandura, 2001). Through agentic action, people create styles of

behavior that enable them to realize desired outcomes and pass on the effective ones to others through social modeling and other experiential modes of influence (Bandura, 2001; Ford, 2016). When people doubt their competencies or anticipate neutral or negative outcomes, they may avoid or procrastinate at performing particular behaviors, put less effort into them, or give up relatively quickly when obstacles are encountered (Bandura, 1986). Social cognitive theory further explains that we learn by acting and interacting with our own selves, our experiences, and our environment; this intentional acting and interacting defines what it means to be an “agent” (Bandura, 2001, p. 2).

The notion of human agency provides a means to understand investment in a career path and considers how work is embedded within personal goals, challenges, relationships, and responsibilities (McAlpine & Amundsen, 2016). In discussing career paths of post-PhD academics, McAlpine and Amundsen (2016) described agency as efforts to be intentional, to plan, and to construct ways forward in light of constraints over time, whether expected or unexpected, and whether such efforts lead to successful outcomes or not. In qualitative studies of how female U.S. business executives attained top-tier leadership positions, both Bowles (2012) and Emory (2014) found human agency to be a dominant theme in the participants’ career journeys in the sense of intentional, future-oriented, self-directed, and self-reflective action.

Agency involves prioritizing what really matters in one’s work and life; it is about reflecting on what motivated a person into their professional career, determining one’s potential contributions through expertise, and then acting intentionally in one’s career trajectory (Neumann et al., 2006). Developing agency takes time and effort; it requires thought, reflection, learning through trial and error, creativity, ongoing assessment, persistence, and courage (Neumann et al., 2006).

Allowing for agentic capacity does not imply that people fully control their career paths and outcomes; rather, human functioning is a product of a reciprocal interplay of intrapersonal, behavioral, and environmental determinants that are socially interdependent, richly contextualized, and conditionally orchestrated within the dynamics of various societal subsystems (Bandura, 2001; 2006). Hannah et al. (2008) stressed that to meet today's complex organizational challenges, leaders must have the requisite agency to positively influence their followers and the organization's culture, climate, and performance. To mobilize groups toward collective performance, leaders have to both exercise personal agency and create similar levels of agency in those individuals they are leading by proxy (Bandura, 2001; Hannah et al., 2008).

Personal agency in the context of women in academic leadership refers to individuals accepting the responsibility and claiming the authority to be the means through which they accomplish their desired goals (Dean et al., 2009). It involves the individual capacity to act independently, make free choices and the responsibility to do so which necessitates ability, intentionality, authority, and accountability (Dean et al., 2009). In noting the tendency of some research to describe academic work as being like a game, Acker (2014) contended that behind the facade of a meritocratic system based on excellence, there are inequities and irrationalities that require strategic action (agency) in order for the players to survive and prosper. Individuals and groups working within organizations have the ability to alter organizational structures and cultures through acts of individual agency (Lester et al., 2017).

Human agency is characterized by the core features of intentionality, forethought, self-reactiveness, and self-reflectiveness (Bandura, 2001, 2006; Hitlin & Elder, 2007). These core features enable humans to play a part in their self-development, adaptation, and self-renewal with changing times (Bandura, 2001). For people to make their way through a complex world of

challenges, they have to make good judgments about their capabilities, anticipate probable effects of different courses of action, determine opportunities and constraints, and regulate their behavior accordingly (Bandura, 2001).

Intentionality refers to having a goal, vision, and purpose and doing something intentionally; an intention represents a proactive commitment that includes action plans and strategies to realize goals (Bandura, 2001; 2006). Intentions center on plans of action, but future-directed plans are rarely specified in full detail at the outset (Bandura, 2001). As Bratman (1999) stressed, initial intentions are filled in and adjusted, revised, refined, or even reconsidered in the face of new information during execution.

Forethought refers to the ability to visualize and anticipate likely outcomes and choose a course of action that will bring about those desired outcomes (Bandura, 2001; 2006; Fang 2012). A forethoughtful perspective provides direction, coherence, and meaning to one's life; it helps with life-course decisions and realizing how those decisions will affect the self and others (Bandura, 2001, 2006; Welter & Egmon, 2006). As people progress in their life and careers, they continue to plan ahead, reorder their priorities, and structure their lives accordingly (Bandura, 2001).

Self-reactiveness refers to the deliberate ability to motivate and regulate oneself in executing the intentional plans one has made (Bandura, 2001). Agency involves the ability to construct appropriate courses of action and to motivate and regulate their execution through self-regulatory processes that link thought to action (Bandura, 2006). A life plan without the motivation to see it through would represent hollow agency; people with agency must be able to motivate themselves to carry out the plans they have developed and pursue them to completion (Ellis et al., 2008). Evaluative self-regulation acts as a feedback mechanism after personal

standards have been met (Newman, 2006). In aspirational pursuits, personal standards of merit are progressively raised as knowledge and skills are expanded and challenges are met (Bandura, 2006).

Self-reflectiveness refers to the ability to employ functional self-awareness and reflect upon, and adjust, one's actions and thoughts as necessary (Bandura, 2001; 2006; Fang, 2012). Through reflective self-consciousness, people evaluate their efficacy, motivations, values, and the meaning of their life pursuits and make corrective adjustments as necessary (Bandura, 2001). This allows people to monitor their thinking, decide to act on ideas, change them, and/or judge the adequacy of them (Newman, 2006). Self-reflection raises self-awareness and allows people to analyze their own experiences to gain understanding about themselves and the world (Chan, 2005; Swanwick, 2010).

Self-efficacy beliefs constitute the key factor of human agency and provide a foundation for all other facets of agency to operate (Bandura, 1997; Hannah et al., 2008). Self-efficacy beliefs refer to beliefs in one's capabilities to guide, organize, and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments; they are the foundation of human motivation, well-being, and accomplishments (Bandura, 1989; 2011; Sloma-Williams et al., 2009; Wood & Bandura, 1989). An individual's efficacy beliefs can influence their career aspirations, the course of action they choose to pursue, how much effort they put forth in given endeavors, how well they motivate themselves and persevere in the face of challenges, their resilience to adversity, whether their thought patterns are self-enhancing or self-hindering, their vulnerability to stress and depression, and the level of accomplishments they realize (Bandura, 1997; Bandura & Locke, 2003).

Higher levels of self-efficacy provide the internal guidance and drive to create the agency needed to pursue challenging tasks and opportunities successfully (Hannah et al., 2008; Lord & Brown, 2004). Self-efficacy beliefs can positively affect leadership goals and aspirations, as well as predict a leader's self-perception of his or her own effectiveness (Bandura, 1997; Woods, 2004). Although institutional and structural barriers remain, providing opportunities for women to develop self-efficacy may foster their leadership aspirations and enable them to better maneuver through the landscape of academic leadership (Sloma-Williams et al., 2009).

Chapter Summary

The literature reviewed in this chapter provided background and context for the academic leadership journeys of women business deans. Business schools remain unique and challenging environments in which to lead, and the role of the dean continues to be a multi-faceted and multi-directional role within academic units in higher education. Women in, or aspiring to, academic leadership encounter multiple barriers and facilitators along their journey and continue to be underprepared for their roles. Women's leadership development programming can be a key component of preparing and advancing women into academic leadership roles since the individualistic nature of academic leadership puts the onus on aspiring leaders to have the agency, self-efficacy, and confidence to drive their leadership outcomes.

Researchers (see Davies, 2016; McTiernan & Flynn, 2011) emphasized the void in the existing literature on women business deans. By exploring and better understanding the academic leadership journey experiences of this under-researched and underrepresented population, this study sought to contribute empirical knowledge to help fill this gap. Through a phenomenological research design, new insights emerged that can contribute to the literature on academic deans, women business deans, preparation and leadership development of women for

the academic deanship, and how this particular subset of women higher education leaders attained their roles.

Chapter 3

Methods

The purpose of this qualitative, phenomenological study was to explore the academic leadership journeys of women business deans. In particular, this study sought to develop a more enhanced understanding of the common experiences that prepared women to become business deans and influenced attainment of their role. This study was guided by the following research question: “What are women business deans’ experiences with academic leadership preparation and role attainment?”

This chapter describes the research design and methodology that was used to explore the research question. It begins with a discussion on why a qualitative, phenomenological design was chosen, followed by a description of the sampling strategy and participants, data collection, and data analysis procedures. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the trustworthiness of the study, ethical considerations, and my researcher positionality.

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative, phenomenological research design. Exploring the academic leadership journeys of women business deans was best achieved through qualitative research as it allowed for optimal discovery, illumination, and unexpected insights as well as a focus on rich and descriptive data (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). Qualitative research allows researchers to explore the inner experiences of participants, to determine how meanings are formed through and in culture, and to discover rather than test variables (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). The purpose of a qualitative research project in the management education field can be manifold and, as in this study, includes the exploration and rich description of a novel

phenomenon as well as understanding the meaning of lived experiences of individuals in academic contexts (Köhler, 2016).

Specifically, a phenomenological approach was utilized in an attempt to gain entry into the conceptual world of women business deans to understand how and what meaning they construct from their lived experiences (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). Phenomenology aims to examine the lived experiences of a particular group of people to capture and describe their perceived realities within a certain context (Moustakas, 1994). Using rich and authentic language, in-depth insights and understandings of an experience from the perspective of the participants can be derived (Moustakas, 1994; Patton, 2002). These in-depth insights and understandings can lead to universal meanings determining the essence of the academic leadership journey experience for women business deans (Moustakas, 1994).

Phenomenological research starts with the researcher who has a curiosity or passion that is turned into a research question (Finlay, 2012). The researcher wants to better understand a particular phenomenon and forges a strong relationship to the topic (van Manen, 1997). My passion for studying women in higher education leadership and curiosity of how women business deans prepared for and attained their roles ultimately led to the central research question of this study. This central research question guided the study in an effort to uncover the “meaning, structure, and essence of the lived experience of this phenomenon for the participants” (Patton, 2002, p. 104).

Phenomenology as a discipline studies conscious experience of phenomena as experienced from the subjective or first-person point of view (Smith, 2016). Through participants’ conscious, first-person, subjective descriptions, others can better understand the journey to academic leadership and the ways in which participants prepared for and attained their

roles. The general process of phenomenology includes (a) identifying a phenomenon of interest; (b) setting aside previous experiences and habitual ways of viewing the topic; (c) gathering data from people who have lived that phenomenon; (d) distilling the data into meaningful units; and (e) rendering a distilled essence of the experience for all participants (Creswell, 2012; Moustakas, 1994).

Phenomenological methods can be adopted to explore the unique meanings of any educational experience and can lead researchers to suddenly see or grasp the phenomenon in a way that enriches understanding of everyday life experiences and transforms practice (van Manen & Adams, 2010). In the last two decades especially, scholars inside education have increasingly turned to qualitative designs and techniques to understand how leadership works, what it means in organizational contexts, and how it affects those contexts, especially from the perspective of the participants (Brooks & Normore, 2015; Bryman, 2004; Knapp, 2017).

The type of problem best suited for phenomenological research is one in which it is important to understand several individuals' common or shared experiences of a phenomenon to develop practices or policies, or to develop a deeper understanding about the features of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2012). Further, phenomenology is often employed for the study of topics void of extensive research (Creswell, 2012), as is the case with academic leadership journeys of women business deans. Since the goal of this research was to understand the common experiences of women business deans' journeys to academic leadership, phenomenology was identified as the most appropriate qualitative method. The goal in employing this research design was to generate in-depth insights and understanding of the preparation for, and influences that led participants to attain, their academic leadership roles.

Philosophical Worldview

Creswell (2014) suggested that in planning a study, researchers need to think through the philosophical worldview that they bring to the study, the research design related to this worldview, and the methods or procedures of research that translate the approach into practice. Worldviews are general philosophical orientations about the world and the nature of research that a researcher brings to a study, providing a basic set of beliefs that guide actions (Creswell, 2014; Guba, 1990). Social constructivism is the research paradigm that best aligns with my philosophical worldview and therefore guided the design and methodology of this study. Qualitative methods are consistent with and reflective of a social constructivist perspective (Klenke, 2016).

The social constructivist paradigm assumes a relativist ontology (there are multiple realities), a subjectivist epistemology (researcher and participant co-create understandings), and a naturalistic (in the natural world) set of methodological procedures (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). Social constructivists believe that individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work and develop subjective meanings of their experiences that are formed through interactions with others as well as through historical and cultural norms (Creswell, 2014). Social constructivist researchers value context, sensitivity, and tend to place considerable emphasis on understanding a phenomenon in all its complexities and within its particular environment (Klenke, 2016). Therefore, exploring the academic leadership journeys of women business deans, as a socially constructed and highly contextual phenomenon, was well informed by this paradigm.

Participants

Sample Selection

Individuals selected to participate in a phenomenological study should have significant and meaningful experiences with the phenomenon being investigated and therefore require a relatively homogenous group (Moustakas, 1994). Having personal, first-hand experience and knowledge of the phenomenon allowed participants to recall, discuss, and articulate their experiences. Therefore, the sample in this study comprised of a purposeful, criterion-based sample of women deans leading at AACSB-accredited, doctoral-granting, four-year, colleges of business in the United States who had all experienced the phenomenon of an academic leadership journey.

Purposeful sampling is a technique widely used in qualitative research for the identification and selection of information-rich cases for the most effective use of limited resources and is particularly suited to phenomenological inquiry (Kleiman, 2004; Patton, 2002). The criteria established for purposeful sampling should directly reflect the purpose of the study and guide in the identification of information-rich cases (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Accordingly, sample criterion for this study comprised of the following: (a) female; (b) currently in the role of dean (non-interim); (c) leading at an AACSB-accredited college of business; and (d) working at a doctoral-granting, four-year college or university in the United States.

A list of all AACSB-accredited colleges of business in the United States was retrieved from the Data Direct portion of the AACSB organization website, of which there were 533 as of September, 20, 2019. Access to this website (via a username and password) was granted by the University of Tennessee Haslam College of Business dean's office. I then conducted a personal review of all 533 college of business websites to identify their current deans. As of September

20, 2019, there were 122 women (22.9%) who held the title of dean (non-interim) at those colleges of business. Another 15 women occupied the role of interim dean within those same colleges. Out of the 122 full (non-interim) women deans, 30 (24.6%) were leading at a doctoral-granting institution, 80 (65.6%) were leading at master's-level institutions, and 12 (9.8%) were leading at undergraduate-only institutions.

While length and quantity of interviews are not mandated, Giorgi (2009) stated, “What one seeks from an interview in phenomenological research is a complete description as possible of the experience that a participant has lived through” (p. 122). In this study, participants were added until the needed data requirements were met, usually ranging from three to a maximum of ten in a phenomenological study (Giorgi & Giorgi, 2003). Both saturation and sufficiency were reached with the final sample size of nine participants (Charmaz, 2006; Seidman, 2013). Saturation was reached because gathering fresh data no longer sparked new insights or revealed new properties of core categories and concepts were well established and explained (Charmaz, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 2008). The final sample size also sufficiently reflected the range of participants that make up the population, so that others outside the sample have a chance to connect to the experiences of those in it (Seidman, 2013).

Recruitment

Due to the short tenure and high turnover of business deans (Bradshaw, 2015), the status of potential participants as a current, full dean (non-interim) was verified through each college or university's website before they were contacted. The 30 potential participants were contacted via e-mail with a recruitment letter outlining the details of the study (see Appendix A) once UTK IRB approval was obtained. Between October 15 and 17, 2019, the first participant recruitment letter was sent to all 30 potential participants. After the first recruitment cycle, four women

agreed to participate and four declined, most of whom indicated that they did not have the time to participate due to the study's commitment.

A second recruitment letter was sent on October 25, 2019 to all potential participants who had not responded to the initial letter, which resulted in one additional participant and two more declining to participate. One potential participant responded to this second recruitment letter indicating that she could have committed to one interview, but the rest was asking too much of her time. Given this response and in an effort to increase the sample size, it was determined in a discussion with my advisor that the interview was the most important data collection method and that participants could opt out of completing the other data collection methods. This revised recruitment approach was also discussed with, and approved by, the University of Tennessee IRB.

With this revised approach, a third recruitment letter was sent on November 2, 2019 to all potential participants who had not yet responded. In this letter, participants were made aware that they could opt out of writing the life-world description, completing the questionnaire, and sending their CV, but would still be asked to conduct one 60-75-minute interview. This reduced time commitment resulted in four more participants agreeing to conduct an interview only and one more declining to participate.

The final sample size was nine (30% of the population) and 16 out of the 30 potential participants responded to the recruitment letters for a response rate of 53 percent. Because some participants opted out of completing the background questionnaire, key background and demographic information was collected, to the extent possible, via LinkedIn, a review of participant CVs (either sent directly or found on their respective college of business websites), and/or in follow-up questions.

The nine women agreeing to participate were sent an e-mail outlining next steps in the data collection process, the first of which was to review, sign, and return an informed consent form via a PDF fillable form for digital signature (see Appendix B). The next steps included sending a current CV, completing the demographic questionnaire, writing a life-world description, and/or scheduling a mutually agreed upon interview time and location, which were conducted either in-person or via Zoom web-based video conferencing.

Exploratory Interviews

Knapp (2017) recommended conducting exploratory interviews with people who might be informants (or who are at least knowledgeable about the phenomenon to be studied) early in the design process – before the research problem has fully crystallized, conceptual frameworks have solidified, or research questions are set. Exploratory interviews were conducted with four current women business deans at AACSB-accredited, four-year colleges of business in the United States at the annual AACSB International Conference and Meeting (ICAM) in April, 2018. Through these exploratory interviews, insight was garnered that informed and narrowed the study's problem statement, research questions, and theoretical framework.

Description of Participants

The nine participants in this study's purposeful sample were drawn from the population of women deans leading at AACSB-accredited, doctoral-granting, four-year colleges of business in the United States, of which there were 30 at the time participants were recruited. All participants were Caucasian, married, and had children in or out of the home. The average age of participants (with six responding) was 59 and the average age when beginning their first deanship (with four responding) was 56. Participants worked at colleges of business in various

regions of the United States (West, Northwest, Midwest, Northeast, and Southeast) with eight states represented.

All nine participants had achieved the rank of full professor; five held professorships in marketing, two in management, one in accounting and one had a non-business doctorate, although taught and conducted research in business areas. Five of the participants were in their first deanship, three were in their second and one was in her third. The average time participants had been in their current deanship was 44.8 months. Of those participants who held previous deanships, the average time spent in the role was 51.8 months. In their current deanships, three participants were internal candidates and six were external. Roles held previous to the participants' first deanship (in order of most common) included associate dean, interim or acting dean, central administration, and professor, while some had served as prior department chairs. Five of the participants had previous industry experience.

Given the small, specific population from which the sample was drawn, individual participant descriptions were not provided considering they could jeopardize participant anonymity. Due to the qualitative nature of the study, numbers and percentages provided in this summary are not meant to generalize, but are rather intended to provide an idea of the characteristics of the sample of women that participated in the study.

Data Collection Procedures

Data collection procedures in this study comprised of document analysis of participants' CVs and demographic questionnaires, written life-world descriptions, and semi-structured, in-depth interviews. Data collection procedures for this study took place between October 15 and December 3, 2019.

Document Analysis

Document analysis is a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents (Brooks & Normore, 2015). Researchers often supplement interviewing with gathering and analyzing documents produced in the course of everyday events or constructed specifically for the research at hand (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Both Polkinghorne (1989) and van Manen (1997) suggested that experiences of phenomenon are often embedded in indirect sources, for example documents, pictures, and literary accounts. Like other analytical methods in qualitative research, document analysis requires that data be examined and interpreted in order to elicit meaning, gain understanding, and develop empirical knowledge (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Document analysis served three purposes in this study: (a) to enhance the credibility of the study by introducing one more source of methods triangulation; (b) to elicit potential interview questions; and (3) as a source of supplementary data and insights (Brooks & Normore, 2015).

Participant CVs were requested as a first step in the data collection process and those received were reviewed before interviews took place in order to gain an enhanced understanding of the participants' professional backgrounds and career paths to the business deanship. If a CV was not received from a participant, the participant's LinkedIn profile was reviewed prior to the interviews. Through analyzing CVs or LinkedIn profiles, aspects of the participants' academic leadership journeys such as their academic discipline, length of time in their current roles, previous roles held, and research interests were garnered.

In addition to reviewing participant CVs, a questionnaire was designed via the Qualtrics survey software to collect participant demographic data and background information before the interviews (see Appendix D). Because not all participants completed this questionnaire, I attempted to gather this information through the interviews or in follow-up member checks.

Although the research design of this study was qualitative, summarizing key demographic and background items provided context and enhanced the study's analysis and findings. Participant CVs and background questionnaires provided a backdrop against which the interview questions were situated and allowed for more time to be spent on substantive issues during the interview process (Seidman, 2013). Having this backdrop allowed my focus to remain on the interview protocol, as well as probing, elaboration, and follow-up questions during the interviews.

Life-world Descriptions

Finlay (2012) suggested that entering the life-world of the participants involves inviting description, intertwined with empathic listening, both in dialogue and in written texts. Life-world descriptions are written descriptions focused on the emotions and feelings inherent in an experience in which participants are asked to focus on a specific example of the phenomenon (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015; Finlay, 2012; van Manen, 1997). Participants were therefore asked to write about an event, person, and/or situation that was a key influence in their journey to academic leadership. van Manen (1997) suggested that writing causes the writer to be more reflective than talking, which can potentially elicit additional data regarding participants' academic leadership journeys. The life-world descriptions provided an additional data set and engaged the participants in reflection in another modality.

Giorgi (1997) confirmed that phenomenological data may be collected by straightforward description, interview, or a combination of the two. In either case, the questions are generally broad and open-ended, so that the subject has a sufficient opportunity to express her viewpoint extensively; what is sought is a concrete, detailed description of the participant's experiences and actions, as faithful as possible to what happened as experienced by the subject (Giorgi, 1997).

When a description and an interview are used together, the description usually comes first and is used as a basis for further elaboration during the interview (Giorgi, 1997). Therefore, the life-world descriptions, of which three were completed, were reviewed prior to participants' interviews to determine areas for elaboration during the interview process.

In-depth Interviews

The in-depth interview is by far the most dominant method for data collection in phenomenological research and was the primary method of data collection in this study (Bevan, 2014; Moustakas, 1994). In general, the goal of the qualitative interview is to yield a thick description that speaks to the range of participants' experiences and obtain a deep understanding of the interaction between the participant, setting, and topic under study (Ortiz, 2016). The purpose of a phenomenological interview is to describe the meaning and uncover the essence of a phenomenon that several individuals share (Marshall & Rossman, 2016; Seidman, 2013). To gather data regarding the phenomenon in this study, in-depth interviews were conducted with nine participants who had directly experienced the phenomenon of interest; that is, they had "lived experience" (Patton, 2002, p. 104) as opposed to secondhand experience.

The phenomenological interview involves an informal, interactive process and utilizes open-ended questions early on, which may become more semi-structured as the phenomenon becomes clear (Moustakas, 1994). Interview questions were constructed that attempted to access the structure and meaning of participants' academic leadership journeys (Patton, 2002). Although an interview protocol was developed in advance that included a series of questions that sought to invoke a comprehensive account of the participant's experience of the phenomenon (see Appendix C), those questions were altered, or not used at all, as the full story of

participants' experiences was shared (Moustakas, 1994). Flexibility in interview questions was maintained to allow for probing and pursuing of the phenomenon in greater depth (Kvale, 2007).

Interviews sought to elicit the pre-reflective, first-hand, subjective meaning of the academic leadership journeys of women business deans and their life-worlds (Bevan, 2014; Kvale, 2007). The interviews attempted to reveal more fully the essence and meaning of the experience, engage the total self of the research participant, avoid inference to causal relationships, and bring forth meaning through descriptions and renderings of the information shared (Moustakas, 1994).

The knowledge produced via the interview depends on the social relationship of the interviewer and interviewee, which rests on the interviewer's ability to create a stage where the subject is free and safe to talk of private events for later public use (Kvale, 2007). To create this environment and establish rapport, Moustakas (1994) suggested that phenomenological interviews start with a social conversation to create a relaxing and trusting atmosphere. As such, the interviews began with a discussion outlining the overview and purpose of the research, the intended use of the research, the measures taken to protect confidentiality and anonymity, and answering any questions the interviewee had regarding the study (Klenke, 2016).

An introductory question was also asked to glean participant attitudes and perceptions regarding the research topic. To explore a participant's particular lived experience, the context and biography from which experiences gain meaning must also be considered (Bevan, 2014; Husserl, 1970). The interview therefore transitioned into general descriptive/narrative and background questions which provided context in which the experience could be situated (Seidman, 2013).

The interviews conducted with women business deans were a form of elite interview, which are those conducted with participants at the top of an organizational social structure (Brooks & Normore, 2015). As the interviewer and primary research instrument, it was therefore important for me to become knowledgeable about the topic under study, master the technical language, and become familiar with the social situations and biographies of the participants in an attempt to gain respect and achieve symmetry in the interview relationship (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2015). Given my professional role in an AACSB-accredited, four-year college of business, I am familiar with much of the technical language utilized within the leadership, academics, and operations of U.S. colleges of business. The literature review further enhanced my knowledge of, and provided language useful in the exploration of, women's academic leadership journeys.

Interviews with participants were conducted between November 6 and December 3, 2019. One interview was in-person and eight were via Zoom web-based video conferencing, all lasting between 50-75 minutes. Interviews were audio and/or video recorded and field notes were recorded during the interviews, documenting any intonations, hesitations, pauses, non-verbal communication and other observations (Phillippi & Lauderdale, 2018). These observations aided in constructing thick, rich description and enhanced the data by providing context for use during analysis (Creswell, 2014; Patton, 2002).

After each interview was concluded, I transcribed the recorded audio within 36 hours to provide for maximum recall. Once interviews were transcribed and checked for accuracy, the complete transcription was sent to each participant for a member check in which they were asked to verify accuracy of the content, make any needed edits, and/or provide additional comments. None of the participants expressed concerns about the accuracy of the content, but a few made minor edits for clarification or removal of disfluencies. During this outreach, participants who

had not provided answers to the background questionnaire were asked to do so, but not all responded.

During the data collection process, I was cognizant of making notes in my reflexive journal after each interview (Finlay, 2014). These journal entries were helpful in allowing me to reflect on what I was hearing from the participants, to wrestle with my thoughts and assumptions, and document how potential biases may have occurred and affected the interview process.

Data Analysis

Data analysis in phenomenological research proceeds from the central assumption that there is an essence to an experience that is shared with others who have also had that experience (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Phenomenological analysis in this study sought to grasp and elucidate the meaning, structure, and essence of the lived experience of the academic leadership journeys of women business deans (Patton, 2002). To derive the essence of participants' experiences, interview transcripts and life-world descriptions were analyzed via phenomenology's descriptive-analytic approach (Giorgi, 2009). This descriptive-analytic analysis was governed by three interrelated processes: phenomenological reduction, description, and search for essences (Giorgi, 2009).

The five-step descriptive-analytic phenomenological data analysis procedure developed by Moustakas (1994) and adapted by Giorgi (2009) includes epochè (bracketing), delineating meaning units, establishing themes, textural and structural descriptions, and a composite description of the essence. Through significant statements, meanings of those statements, and themes of the meanings, a description of the universal essence of participants' academic leadership journeys was derived (Moustakas, 1994). Throughout data analysis, every attempt was

made to keep an intuitive sense of what was going on in the data; a trust in myself and the research process; and an effort to remain creative, flexible, and true to the data all at the same time (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). The data analysis procedure is outlined in Figure 1 and then explained in further detail.

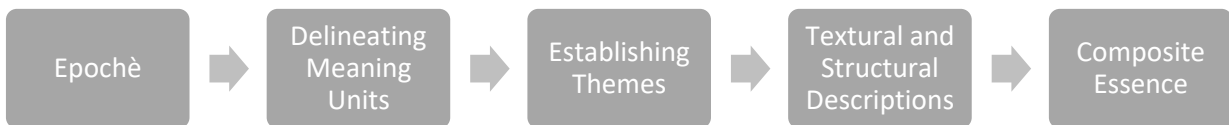


Figure 1: Phenomenological Descriptive-Analytic Data Analysis Steps

Epochè (bracketing/phenomenological reduction)

Phenomenology requires great reflexivity on the part of the researcher (Jones et al., 2014). Therefore, in a phenomenological study, identifying and bracketing the preconceived notions the researcher brings to the study should occur before data collection begins and is also the first step in data analysis (Moustakas, 1994). This first step is referred to as epochè which involves a setting aside of the researcher's personal assumptions, understandings, knowing, and judgments to not allow meanings, interpretations, or theoretical concepts to enter the unique world of the informant (Moustakas, 1994). This process of internal reflection results in a "phenomenological attitude shift" (Patton, 2002, p. 485) and enables the researcher to become clear about her pre-understandings. Although epochè is an ongoing process throughout data collection and analysis, bracketing follows epochè in an analytic process referred to as phenomenological reduction. Bracketing requires deliberately and continually identifying and putting aside one's own beliefs about the phenomenon under investigation to see the phenomenon as it is and be fully present to it; it helps make research findings more precise (Husserl, 1970; van Manen, 2014).

The purpose of phenomenological reduction is to lead the researcher back to the experiences of the participants and to reflect on it, in order to try and suspend judgment, to stay with the lived experience of the phenomenon to get at its essence (Giorgi, 1997; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Although not possible to completely abandon, I sought to withhold and render non-influential all past knowledge about the phenomenon to be fully present to the concrete instance of the phenomenon as presented by the participants' descriptions (Giorgi, 1997; van Manen, 2014).

To enter into the attitude of phenomenological reduction, I bracketed my past knowledge about the phenomenon in an attempt to encounter it freshly and describe it precisely as it was experienced by participants (Giorgi, 1997). To bracket my past knowledge and presuppositions regarding the phenomenon, a reflexive journal was kept documenting my assumptions, understandings, beliefs and biases before and throughout the research process. This allowed me to engage a phenomenological attitude of "seeing afresh" (Finlay, 2014, p. 122), the foundation on which all phenomenological inquiry rests.

Delineating Meaning Units

After bracketing my presuppositions, interview transcripts and life-world descriptions were read in their entirety and hand-coded, first to "get a sense of the whole" (Giorgi, 2012, p. 5) and then to extract significant statements, direct quotes, and/or sentences that provided an understanding of how participants experienced the phenomenon, referred to as meaning units. Giorgi (1997, 2009) used the term "meaning unit" rather than "data" or "code" to retain a sense of meaning and meaningfulness in a phenomenological study. Relevant meaning units were formed by a slower re-reading of the descriptions, noting each time a transition of the meaning in the description was encountered and continuing to read until the next meaning unit was

discriminated, and so on. The end result of this step was a series of meaning units expressed in the participant's own everyday language to gather an awareness of the lived sense of their experiences (Giorgi, 1997, 2002).

As I was transcribing interviews, initial meaning units and theme clusters began to develop. After all interviews were completed, transcribed, and reviewed for initial meaning units and themes, I reviewed all nine transcripts and the three life-world descriptions to continue to sort and delineate the meaning units, discover recurring patterns and themes, as well as identify significant statements and key quotes to support them. During this analysis phase, all statements were given equal weight, which Moustakas (1994) referred to as horizontalization.

Establishing Themes

In this step, clusters of themes were formed from the meaning units (Giorgi, 2009; Moustakas, 1994). Once the meaning units were established, they were examined, probed, and re-described so that the disciplinary (in this case academic leadership) value of each unit could be made more explicit (Giorgi, 2009). van Manen (1997) defined themes as “the experiential structures that make up the experience” (p.79) while Thomas and Pollio (2002) described them as “patterns that repetitively recur as important aspects of a participant's description of her experience” (p. 35). Themes connected to the theoretical framework of human agency were also extracted from the meaning units. These first two data analysis steps included several judgment calls, a continuous bracketing of presuppositions, and an elimination of overlapping clusters (Klenke, 2016).

Textural and Structural Descriptions

Clustered themes then led to a textural description of what the participants' experienced with the phenomenon (academic leadership journey) and a structural description of how it was

experienced in terms of conditions, situations, and/or contexts (Moustakas, 1994). Verbatim examples, in the form of significant statements, were used to describe what participants experienced regarding their academic leadership journeys and how, and in what contexts, they experienced them. According to Giorgi (2012), this step requires free imaginative variation to transform the data and is at the heart of phenomenological analysis. The task of free imaginative variation is to seek possible meanings through the utilization of imagination and approaching the phenomenon from divergent perspectives, different positions, roles, or functions (Husserl, 1983; Moustakas, 1994). Moreover, an active imagination is helpful when trying to discover the essence of a phenomenon or attempting to clarify the meaningful structure of an experience (Giorgi, 2009).

Composite Description of the Essence

From the significant statements, representing textural and structural descriptions, a synthesized, composite description presenting the common experiences, the essence, of the journey to academic leadership for women business deans was derived (Moustakas, 1994). According to van Manen (2017), true phenomenological insights are not technically derived or methodologically produced but rather encountered, discovered, given, found, or sometimes even stumbled upon. With this in mind, findings were discussed in relation to the central research question and the guiding theoretical framework of human agency, while allowing for additional findings and insights to emerge that best captured the essence of the academic leadership journeys of women business deans.

Trustworthiness

In qualitative research, terms such as credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability replace the usual positivist criteria of internal and external validity, reliability, and

objectivity (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). Credibility (paralleling internal validity) is the extent to which the results are credible or believable from the standpoint of the participant; transferability (paralleling external validity) is the extent to which the results can be transferred to other contexts or settings; dependability (paralleling reliability) is the extent to which the same results can be obtained by independent investigators; and confirmability (paralleling objectivity) is the extent to which the results can be corroborated or confirmed by others (Lincoln & Guba, 1985)

Lincoln and Guba (1985) argued that ensuring credibility is one of the most important factors in establishing trustworthiness. Four strategies were employed to enhance credibility in this study: (a) site and methods triangulation; (b) member checking; (c) rich, thick description; and (d) reflexivity. Since each woman business dean interviewed was leading within a unique business school context, the effect on the study of particular local site factors peculiar to one institution was decreased (Shenton, 2004). Employing methods triangulation by using three distinct forms of data collection (document analysis, life-world descriptions, and in-depth interviews) allowed findings across data sets to be corroborated (Patton, 2002).

Member checking is a technique that involves continuous, informal testing of information by soliciting the reactions of respondents to ensure their words match what they actually intended (Klenke, 2016; Morse, 2015; Shenton, 2004). Member checking, including participant review of the interview transcriptions and findings, holds the researcher accountable to those sharing their words, lives, and experiences (Shenton, 2004). Participants were asked to review the interview transcriptions and findings for accuracy, as well as to ensure their anonymity was protected and they adequately captured the essence of their experiences regarding their academic leadership journeys. Based on participant feedback, needed edits were made to the significant statements reported in the findings.

A detailed, thick description of the academic leadership journeys of women business deans was provided which further promoted credibility by conveying the actual situations being investigated and, to an extent, the contexts that surrounded them (Shenton, 2004). Without this insight, it would be difficult for the reader of the final account to determine the extent to which the overall findings “ring true” (Shenton, 2004, p. 69).

Researcher bias is one potential threat to credibility that has to be controlled by identifying the positions from which researchers speak (Klenke, 2016). The real imperative is for researchers to be aware of their values and predispositions and to acknowledge them as inseparable from the research process (Ogden, 2018). Addressing my potential researcher bias included outlining my positionality and bracketing my assumptions (*epochè*), and was managed throughout the research process via the use of a reflexive journal (Finlay, 2002; Morse, 2015). The reflexive journal allowed me to remain aware of, and document, any self-recognized biases, thoughts, and presuppositions that occurred before and throughout the study.

It is unlikely that findings from a qualitative study, which have been conducted on a very specific sample, can generalize widely (Köhler, 2016). However, in increasing transferability of the study, qualitative researchers do care about how their insights might be transferable to other contexts and samples (Köhler, 2016). Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggested that it is the responsibility of the researcher to ensure that sufficient contextual information is provided to enable the reader to make such a transfer. Although contextual information was discussed throughout the study, this research was phenomenological and exploratory in nature; finding commonalities and understanding through emerging themes, not generalizability was the primary focus (Maxwell & Reybold, 2015).

To address the issue of dependability, the research design and process of the study was reported in detail, thereby enabling a future researcher to replicate this work and assess the extent to which proper research practices were followed (Shenton, 2004). To enhance confirmability of the study, steps were taken (such as member checking) to ensure that the study's findings were the result of the experiences and ideas of the informants rather than my own characteristics and preferences (Shenton, 2004). In addition, an audit trail outlining decisions made, methods adopted, and the reasons for favoring one design approach over another was kept throughout the study. The audit trail allows any observer to trace the course of the research step-by-step via the decisions made and procedures described (Shenton, 2004)

Ethical Considerations

As researchers, we are morally bound to conduct our research in a manner that minimizes potential harm to those involved in the study (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008). Although no known risks were associated with this study, several important ethical considerations remained. Among the most important ethical principles the qualitative researcher has to adhere to are informed consent, voluntary participation, confidentiality, protection from harm, and maintenance of the well-being of participants (Klenke, 2016).

In a qualitative study, the participant is a co-creator of the research process, is empowered to change the course of the research protocol, and is the owner of the knowledge that is co-constituted by the researcher and the participant (Klenke, 2016). From a phenomenological perspective, meaning must be a result of co-creation between the researcher and the researched rather than just the interpretation of the researcher who may have different contextual factors or agendas influencing the descriptions (Wimpenny & Gass, 2000). It was therefore important to

ensure participant understanding of the research and to develop useful and ethically appropriate relationships with them throughout the study (Maxwell, 2013).

To ensure ethicality, this study followed the University of Tennessee's Institutional Review Board (IRB) process and IRB approval was obtained on October 15, 2019, before participants were contacted or data collection began. An informed consent form (see Appendix B) was reviewed, signed, and obtained by all participants before data collection began that described their right to voluntary participation, ability to opt out of answering questions or withdraw from the study at any time without penalty, and provided an overview of the study's risks and benefits. Participants were made aware that all written records related to the study would be kept in a locked filing drawer and all electronic files would be securely stored on a two-factor authenticated, password-protected computer. To assist in protecting anonymity, participants chose a pseudonym, or one was assigned to them, which was referenced throughout the study, ensuring data and findings were not linked to participants' real identities (Ogden, 2018). Several ethical codes outline the importance of anonymity and confidentiality in research, and using pseudonyms was a means to this end (Ogden, 2018).

Researcher Positionality

A researcher's positionality is a complex, multifaceted, and ever-present phenomenon as it relates to views, beliefs, and attitudes that constitute her identity (Parsons, 2008). Giorgi (2012) emphasized the importance for researchers who want to employ the descriptive phenomenological method to resist from positing as existing whatever object or state of affairs is present to them. Acknowledging and withholding my prior knowledge and presuppositions of women deans' academic leadership journeys better allowed me to take the experience precisely as it was described and assume an attentive and naïve openness to participant descriptions of the

phenomenon (Kleiman, 2004).

There are two main factors that may have influenced my positionality for this study: currently serving as a female leader in higher education and my twelve years of professional, administrative experience in a U.S., AACSB-accredited college of business. As a current female administrator within this context, I possess inherent biases and assumptions regarding the experiences of its women leaders. Because business schools remain male-dominated environments, I believe that women have a more arduous journey to the most senior-level business school leadership position. Although both men and women can be highly effective leaders and utilize various leadership approaches to achieve their goals, I simultaneously believe that women bring a unique set of skills and strengths to the leadership positions they serve and should be found in greater numbers within these top leadership positions. Further, I posit that once women become deans, they will be most successful when equipped with strategies to navigate the business school environment, challenges, and multiple work and life demands inherent in these positions. Without these strategies, they may be more prone to burn-out and therefore may decide to opt-out or step-out. To help women deans navigate this environment and arm them with the tools to be successful, more attention should be given to women-specific academic leadership development training, programming, and mentoring.

In addition, I believe the leadership of business schools should better reflect the diversity of its student populations. An increase in women business deans can increase the number of female role models for students and aspiring faculty/staff leaders (Davis & Geyfman, 2015; Treviño et al., 2017). Women deans of business schools may be more cognizant of ensuring representation of women in faculty and administrative roles, encouraging faculty to include the perspectives of female leaders through classroom cases and discussion, and informing current

and prospective female students of the benefits and positive social impact of pursuing a business career. In my opinion, this starts with the business school leadership and a culture that reflects and demonstrates these as values and priorities.

As a proponent of women leaders in higher education, and within business schools specifically, I have great compassion for, and interest in, their leadership journeys. This interest and compassion facilitated the establishment of trust and rapport, connection with the study participants and elicitation of deep-level responses from participants. However, I also recognize that this interest and compassion comes with biases and shortcomings that may have had an effect on the study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Therefore, it was important for me to bracket and suspend, to the extent possible, these biases and assumptions as well as reflect on them in my reflexive journal throughout the research process (Finlay, 2002).

Chapter Summary

Using a qualitative phenomenological research design, this study explored the academic leadership journeys of women business deans to develop a more enhanced understanding of the common experiences that prepared them to become deans and influenced attainment of their role. This qualitative approach allowed for a flexible, inductive, and emergent design which is best suited towards the study of educational leadership (Klenke, 2016; Knapp, 2017; Maxwell & Reybold, 2015) and aligns with my worldview of social constructivism. Semi-structured, in-depth interviews, life-world descriptions, and document analysis of participant CVs and background questionnaires constituted the data collection methods and data was analyzed via the descriptive phenomenological five-step process (Giorgi, 2009; Moustakas, 1994).

Credibility of the study was strengthened by employing methods triangulation, member checks, thick description, and the use of a reflexive journal. Ethical processes were inherent to

this study by obtaining human subject's review approval (UTK IRB), maintaining confidentiality, and adhering to qualitative research guiding ethical principles (Klenke, 2016). Flexibility and iteration were maintained throughout the study given that the process of designing good qualitative research is a very iterative one, involving a back and forth between possible research questions, framing ideas, potential data sources, and an evolving sense of the problem at hand (Knapp, 2017).

Chapter 4

Findings

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to explore the academic leadership journeys of women business deans. Specifically, this study sought to develop a more enhanced understanding of the experiences that prepared women to become business deans and influenced attainment of their role. This study was guided by the following research question: “What are women business deans’ experiences with academic leadership preparation and role attainment?” The following chapter presents the findings that emerged from three written life-world descriptions and nine in-depth, semi-structured interviews with women deans at AACSB-accredited, doctoral-granting, four-year colleges of business in the United States. Additional data collected and analyzed included participant demographic and background information. A composite summary of participant demographics was provided in chapter three.

Data analysis and organization resulted in five overarching theme clusters. Each theme was then categorized into sub-themes to facilitate and frame the discussion of the findings. Table 1 presents the five overarching theme clusters and 14 sub-themes that emerged after the data analysis process was completed.

Table 1*Theme Clusters and Sub-Themes Related to the Academic Leadership Journeys of Women Business Deans*

Theme Clusters	Sub-Themes
Path to Academic Leadership	Initial Incidental, Non-Aspirational Path External Recognition and Encouragement Obstacles Along the Path Increased Intentionality Later in Career
Training and Preparation	Lack of Formal Preparation Previous Roles Transitional Challenges
Importance of Relationships	Mentors Advice to Academic Women Informal Networks and Family Support
Having a Broader Influence	Bigger than Me Inclusive and Collaborative Leadership
Reflections	Role of Dean Research Topic

In this chapter, a presentation of the five overarching theme clusters and 14 sub-themes are provided and supported by significant statements and verbatim examples describing what participants experienced regarding their academic leadership journeys (textural descriptions) and how, and in what contexts, they experienced them (structural descriptions). The chapter concludes with a composite description of participants' experiences which emerged from the synthesis process of the textural and structural descriptions and represents the common experiences, the essence, of participants' academic leadership journeys (Moustakas, 1994).

After introductory and background questions, the interview shifted into questions seeking to further explore the two components of the central research question – the role preparation and

role attainment experiences of participants' academic leadership journeys. The first two themes, "path to academic leadership" and "training and preparation" encapsulate seven sub-themes that emerged regarding the participants' common experiences with these two areas. The next two themes, "importance of relationships" and "having a broader influence," as well as their five sub-themes, were additional findings that emerged and often spanned both areas of role preparation and attainment. The last theme, "reflections," includes two sub-themes that emerged regarding the research topic and the sacrifices and rewards participants' experienced in their role as dean.

Path to Academic Leadership

Participants had varying career paths that led to academic leadership and attainment of the business deanship. They were all full professors and had spent time as educators and/or researchers and over half had spent some time in industry. The roles held previous to participants' first deanship were (in order of most common) associate dean, interim or acting dean, central administration, and professor, and some had served as prior department chairs. Regardless of previous roles held, all nine participants discussed an initial path to academic leadership that was primarily incidental; none had aspired to the deanship starting out in their academic careers. However, at various points in their journeys, and often from external recognition and encouragement, they moved into academic leadership roles.

Once on the path to academic leadership, their aspirations and career goals, including those of the deanship, became more strategic and intentional. The four sub-themes of "initial incidental, non-aspirational path," "external recognition and encouragement," "obstacles along the path," and "increased intentionality later in career" were identified as capturing the participants common experiences regarding their path to academic leadership and are described in more detail below.

Initial Incidental, Non-Aspirational Path

Participants' stories revealed varying paths that led to the deanship but a commonality for each was that their initial step into academic leadership was unplanned and not an aspirational career move. Most were apprehensive to step into academic administration initially, noting the "joy, satisfaction, and flexibility" they were experiencing as a faculty member and the potential of losing those aspects when becoming an administrator. Diana loved being a faculty member and was not looking for something else. She described how she "stumbled" into her career:

I stumbled into my career more than I executed a clear plan. I was living the life I prized as a college professor on a major university campus. I truly was not looking for more than that. It seemed to me that being a dean would require less of what fulfills me and more of what frustrates me. Why would I want to do that? To me, leadership seemed to demand a trade-off that would leave me wanting, if not downright unhappy.

Likewise, Anna did not aspire to the deanship and always thought she would go back to industry after getting a PhD. She mentioned, "I didn't go to school thinking I would be an administrator. I went to school thinking this is a great Mom job; I can control my hours and still do research, my first love." Rita even took offense when her dissertation advisor joked about her being dean one day and commented, "I wasn't getting a PhD to be a dean, I was getting it to be a faculty member and scholar."

Similarly, Charlotte's initial career plans included just being an academic. She was a "happy camper" doing her research and felt she had a "good, balanced life." She explained:

I always wanted to be an academic and after working in industry for some time I knew I had to get it [a PhD] or I never would. And I thought, this will be a great job because I can also be a consultant; it seemed like a dream job. So that was my career journey, was always just to be an academic, and a good one.

In describing the unplanned circumstances that began their path to academic leadership, participants used verbiage such as "accident," "happenstance," and "serendipity." Anna mentioned the following when describing the circumstantial nature of her career:

I almost think my career advancement opportunities have been happenstance; I don't know that I really directed them. I certainly never set out in my career to be a dean. It was the circumstances that led to this, but it's been a nice career and I found that I enjoyed it and felt I could really contribute.

Emma also had what she considered a “unique journey to the deanship” and expressed, “I think a lot of these crazy journeys sometimes happen by accident.” Similarly, Claire considered herself “an accidental administrator in some ways” and Charlotte referred to herself as a “very accidental dean.” Rita referenced the “serendipity” involved in attaining academic leadership roles and mentioned, “People can lay out a whole path and start executing but I think there is a lot of serendipity involved as well.” Likewise, Charlotte referred to the “chance encounter aspect of this [academic leadership journeys] that is phenomenal.”

Some participants described their path to academic leadership as a “natural progression.” Like other participants, Charlotte started her career only wanting to be an academic and was not initially interested in academic leadership roles. But as time passed, she “felt a natural progression towards administration.” When someone asked her if she wanted to be an associate dean, she initially said, “Absolutely not, why would I want to do that?” Even though it did not initially interest her, she decided to do it anyway and described, “For some reason I decided to do it because I thought I would learn a lot and I thought it would be interesting, which ends up being a recurring theme for me.” Marie also described her move into administration as a “natural career step,” even though early in her academic career she was advised against pursuing academic leadership roles. She commented:

It's a long journey to get here but I think this is the confluence of all my experiences that I can bring to bear on this role now. I think we all have unique gifts and we have to figure out what the right way is to apply those gifts. I love doing research, I just think that I am better at this. So I don't mind that I defied whomever told me not to do administration, it's natural that I would do this.”

Although the initial step into academic leadership was unplanned and for most participants an apprehensive career move, once in administration, their aspirations shifted and they wanted to pursue the deanship. Grace was asked to be an associate dean and once in the role she described, “At that point, once I became an associate dean, then I really wanted to be a dean, but I didn’t set out with that as my ambition.” Marie also did not consider the deanship or set any concrete goals until she became an associate dean; and then a year or two in, she decided she “wanted to be a dean and got more serious about it.” She recognized over time that she could, and wanted to, pursue the deanship so put herself on the market. Similarly, Grace considered her associate deanship “the stepping stone; after that, I would say it was very much directed by myself.” This was similar for Diana who indicated, “Early on I was asked to do it [the deanship] and later on I pursued it.”

Claire was enjoying her role as a center director, which gave her exposure to bridging the business community with academia; it was at that point that she thought she could do the dean’s role. She shared, “I pretty much asked for it, the opportunity came up and they knew I wanted the external facing dean’s role, even though I agreed to do a stint in the senior associate dean’s role first.” Anna also knew fairly early on once she was an associate dean that she wanted to be a dean but got tired of waiting for her dean to retire, “I kept thinking that when he retired I would have an opportunity to move into that spot but he kept delaying his retirement and I finally got tired of waiting so I applied for a deanship elsewhere.” Rita was recruited into her first two administrative roles as department chair and then associate dean, but was more purposeful in deciding to pursue a deanship. She explained:

I was recruited into both of those roles but I made the decision to apply for the deanship. It shifted a little bit on me at that point. I sort of had transitioned one dean out and another one in and decided I didn’t want to be number two forever, so I learned of a deanship, applied for it, and got it. I knew if I didn’t go for it, I would be the associate

dean forever. I either needed to be the female number two or be the dean; and it was time to be the dean.

The shift in participants' aspirations to pursue the deanship was sometimes precipitated by watching other deans and realizing they could perform the role just as good, if not better than them. As Emma commented, "I had sort of watched a succession of deans before me and realized that I was equally capable of doing the job so why shouldn't I do it?" Claire shared a similar experience in realizing she could do the dean's role:

I had been a faculty member for a long time and through that process I have had many deans. And so after a while you go, if I were dean, I wouldn't do it this way or wouldn't do that. It was an opportunity to say, I've had this cumulative experience over all these years, I think I could do that job. I felt like I could do a reasonable job of taking the school to the next level.

Rachel had a similar experience and shared, "I think the main influences in my journey to becoming dean were watching bad deans come and go and having been tapped for leadership positions early and often in my career." When Rita was an associate dean, she served on the search committee for the dean and expressed, "That's when it started, that's when I knew I could do this [the deanship]."

Emma and Marie specifically referenced examples of male leaders as an impetus for pursuing academic leadership and the deanship. When discussing the main motivator in her journey to becoming dean Emma stated, "Incompetent men – just watching this parade of male deans and realizing that you could do this job and do it better than they could do it and with as much commitment if not more."

Similarly, Marie partly credits who she referred to as a "terrible, terrible male boss" in propelling her to prove him wrong which was "an interesting way of kind of pushing me along." And it was working for an all-male board of directors that served as a source of motivation for her advanced education and eventually put her on the path to academic leadership.

Rita mentioned how as an associate dean she “became less of an invited administrator and more purposeful in my career path, but the deanship was never an aspiration.” This statement is representative of the participant’s collective, common experiences in which the initial path to academic leadership was unplanned and non-aspirational; most were enjoying the flexibility and rewards of being a faculty member. However, once in initial academic leadership roles, participants recognized that they wanted to, and could, perform the role of dean, and their move into the deanship was more purposeful than their initial move into academic leadership.

External Recognition and Encouragement

Several participants’ stories revealed some form of external recognition and/or encouragement towards academic leadership, often before they felt the “pull” or desire to do those jobs. Other people, several of whom were, or became, mentors recognized something in participants that they did not see in themselves. Diana was not looking for something to do next, but people kept coming to her and saying, “You should think about this,” or “Have you thought about this?” As she explained:

I was getting a lot from the outside, people saying, “You need to be thinking about transitioning into a leadership track.” And after a while, you have to start listening to that. Initially it was other people seeing something in me that I wasn’t even looking for. They were encouraging me well before I felt the pull of those jobs.

For Rachel, there were little “prompts” along the way. As she described, “Even though it [the deanship] wasn’t an aspiration coming into academics, it was a journey that has some of the common elements of people recognizing me, and recognizing things in me that I didn’t know for myself.”

In describing the opportunities presented at the beginning of her leadership journey, Rachel further commented, “It started with people actually opening a door for me that I had to prove myself in, but allowed me to walk into a space that I might not otherwise have had the

opportunity to do so.” Likewise, Rita described the beginning of her academic leadership career as opportunity-based in which doors opened for her, “Starting out it was, here’s a door, here’s an opportunity, why don’t you look behind the door. There was somebody tapping on my shoulder suggesting I consider leadership roles.”

Participants described being “tapped early and often” by other administrative leaders or search firms for leadership opportunities. Rachel expressed:

I was thrust into a leadership position when I was only four years as an assistant professor. At the time I wasn’t sure but I look back now and can say that was a pivotal point for me and the experience turned out great.

Anna was sought out by a search firm at the “right time” noting that she was “getting tired of waiting for the dean to retire.” Claire was sought out as someone the provost identified as likely to be effective in administration, which led to an associate dean role, and eventually the role of dean. Similarly, Charlotte was nominated to be a dean even though she did not have any interest at the time. Others’ encouragement of her and her continual desire to contribute and learn led her to do it anyway. She explained:

The dean decided not to be dean anymore and some people nominated me to be dean and I was not interested at all. And they kept asking and I said, “No, I love my job and I’ll be helpful to the next dean.” Then the provost met with me and really wanted me to consider the job; she thought I would be really good at it and I had a lot of credibility. Then I started thinking about the school as a case study and I began to understand what could be fixed and how we could move forward. I started thinking about what I would learn from it and how it might enrich me.

Likewise, throughout Rachel’s career, people told her to “come back and teach or work with us” and eventually was given an opportunity to teach and loved it. She commented, “I would say there were instrumental people in my life that saw things in me that I didn’t see for myself, starting way back, that I had a talent that I could use as an educator.” Rachel took

opportunities that were afforded to her, such as being asked to apply for her first deanship by the provost, describing her journey to academic leadership as “intuitive and organic.” She stated:

I was not as organized as I see some people today who have laid out a life plan, it was much more intuitive and organic. It was either just looking or being tapped for opportunities where I thought I could make a difference because I’m driven by my life’s mission of changing lives one person at a time. So at some point you see these opportunities to do that at a higher institutional level.

Some participants expressed an intentional grooming by another leader that influenced their path to academic leadership. Grace’s first boss helped her understand that she wanted to lead an organization and was “grooming her for that pathway.” With coaching from her mentor, Grace made herself more visible to the dean in hopes of being asked to become the associate dean. She further commented:

We got me on the executive committee so that I would be in a room with the dean every week and able to make suggestions and do that kind of thing. And I think that's what led to me getting asked to be in the role. So, I guess it was half pursuit and half being asked, certainly the transition to the full dean I actively pursued.

And when Grace became an associate dean, her dean was grooming her to be a potential successor. She explained:

She let me in on a lot of decision making that I think a lot of associate deans don’t necessarily talk to their deans about, things at the board level and that kind of thing. She was a great mentor there.

Like Grace, Rita was being groomed by her department chair who she claimed, “had eyes on me being his successor,” even though she did not realize it at the time. He gave her an opportunity and that is when she began to realize her skill set as an administrator. She shared, “At that point I began to see differences. I was a good researcher and teacher but I understood that I was probably a better manager than most; a skill set I probably developed in industry a little bit.”

Rachel shared a statement that summed up the notion of being tapped for opportunities expressed by several participants, “There are these moments and these individuals that speak into

your life that tell you and show you things that otherwise you wouldn't have even thought of as opportunities in the past." External recognition and/or encouragement towards academic leadership was a common aspect of participants stories. Other people recognized leadership abilities in them, often before they recognized those abilities in themselves. By being recognized, groomed, and tapped for leadership opportunities, participants embarked on the journey to academic leadership.

Obstacles Along the Path

Although external recognition and encouragement were important facilitators in participants' journeys, they also discussed certain obstacles and challenges along the path to academic leadership, ones they claim may be holding other academic women back from pursuing or advancing into academic leadership roles. One challenge mentioned was having to work harder to prove themselves along the way. Claire noted that "this is a common problem with women" and elaborated:

There's not that many of us, so I think you have to prove yourself and I think people start with "I'm not sure who this person is or what their view is going to be," whereas, they assume competence with the prior male deans. You have to work a little bit harder to show that you have things under control and that you know how to drive things forward.

Similarly, Emma's perception is that "women have to have proven themselves before they are promoted." She referred to this as "the classic problem we tell our students and a classic problem with the first job" and posed, "How do you get the first job without experience? You have to prove yourself; but how do you prove yourself, if you don't get a shot? To me that is an obstacle." Anna thinks this is more about "women waiting until they feel they can check off all the boxes" and may be holding women back from pursuing opportunities:

I think one thing women often do is look at the next position they want and what's required and they start checking off that list. They say, "I've done these two things but I don't have this third thing done." My observation in conversations with male colleagues

is that they don't do that. They look at a position description and say, "Oh, I've got two or three of these, I'm good to go." And they tend to be more aggressive in applying for positions that they think they are qualified for and believe they'll learn the rest of the job after they get the position. I don't think it's a skill or an experience difference. I think opportunities might come and go before they take them.

Diana also thinks this is "typical of women" and shared, "Women don't promote themselves and don't ask for what they need, and they're not always as proactive as they should be in terms of their careers, early on especially." In addition to having to prove and not promoting themselves, Emma feels that "women might be seen as riskier hires and the rules are applied differently to them. I just think there is a different standard applied to women."

Several participants mentioned "the pipeline issue" as an obstacle for women advancing into academic leadership roles, referring to the tenure and promotion timeline and challenges associated with getting to the full professorship. Participants discussed the propensity of women to get stuck at the associate-to-full professor process, even though until that point, they are progressing at a similar rate as men. In discussing this issue, Anna recognized that women were less likely to be business deans than men and mentioned how "she and her colleagues have talked about the pipeline issue for years." She explained:

Most of us feel that it's a pipeline issue, that when you look at the percentage of women who pursue a PhD in business, it's slightly less than men. And then once you watch them through the pipeline, there's certainly more parity as assistant professors; but then whether or not they make promotion to associate professor, and then importantly to full professor, that parity begins to go off into different areas. So men are much more likely to become full professors in business than women. Our belief is that if we could get more women to make it to full professor without stepping out or without failing that process, that you would be more likely to see women business deans.

Rachel experienced this slower progression in her career journey and described her main career interruption as being "around career progression and advancing from assistant to associate and then associate to full." She elaborated:

The only interruption I had was the slower progression I had to full [professor], due to lots of expectations around service and leadership roles prior to that. But I would call it more of a delay, because I actually think there's an element of truth that's still about that and women are slower to progress to leadership positions because of it. And I'll see men that come through with having accomplished all this stuff. I still think it does happen today that women are slowed more than men.

Claire described this as a “double-edged sword” that academic women may face early in their careers because, “if you really want a career in upper administration you need to be a full professor.” She does not advise women to take on too much administration until they have tenure because “if you don't make it to full, your opportunities for advancement into upper administration are really limited.” In her opinion, the biggest challenge is “getting more female faculty promoted through the faculty ranks.” Rita shared a sentiment that expressed participants' experiences in progressing from a faculty member to the deanship, “It's a long, long cycle to the deanship through the faculty route.”

A part of getting stuck at the associate professor level, according to participants, is the amount of service roles women take on combined with conflicting family responsibilities that may be occurring during that time. Diana summarized:

That one decision (promotion and tenure) is probably the biggest impediment of all for most women. That time is just a train wreck, a collision biologically and in terms of your family, what's going on around raising kids. It really is at that early juncture of your career that it's a problem for many women. That's the time when you're going to be wanting to have and raise kids.

Rachel acknowledged that women are often tapped for service opportunities and encourages them “to be smart about it,” even though she was not sure she always was. She was once advised by a male colleague to do something with service that “has the maximum impact but the least amount of effort.” But she thought, “There's a lot of stuff that just needs to get done and it isn't too glamorous.” Emma also admitted to doing her fair share of service roles, “I know women are accused of taking on more service and stepping in and I've always done my fair share

and found it to be an important part of my job.” Likewise, Claire has noticed that “women are quicker to help out in some of the extra programmatic support things, which is great, but at the end of the day it takes them away from their research.”

Although service roles can take time away from research, Rachel indicated that it may be detrimental for a woman’s academic career to say “no” to them and explained:

I think many women, and men too but it’s worse with women, have had challenges getting from associate to full professor. There are a lot of people that get stuck and I think it’s because women are often differentially asked to do service and have an expectation put on them that they must say yes. It doesn’t appear to me that men get punished in the same way that women can get punished if they say no, I think that culture is changing, I hope it’s changing, but I still see it.

Rita thinks women often get called on for service opportunities because their “voices are needed at the table,” and this may be keeping them from progressing at the same rate as men, and from thinking about a deanship. She explained:

I believe women start out as assistant professors and are just as successful as their male counterparts, and promoted and tenured just like their male counterparts. And then as associate professors, and as women, and people of color, this would apply to visible forms of diversity. There are fewer of them, and we need their voices at the table so they get pulled into more service activities, being on search committees, they get invited to speak more. And they also are likely to have family responsibilities. And we know that women tend to be the manager and take care of everything, even today with more equal partnerships. There are tremendous demands on women at the associate professor level that they can’t even think about getting their research done, much less being a dean one day; I don’t think it crosses their minds.

Given the multiple demands placed on academic women, Anna posited, “Women today feel like it’s such a hardship and not a work-life balance trade-off they are willing to make.” As participants shared, this trade-off and overburdening women faculty with service roles may be keeping them from progressing through the tenure and promotion timeline at the same rate as men and influencing their advancement into academic leadership roles.

Increased Intentionality Later in Career

Participants' stories were filled with discourse about what is next in their leadership journeys, but for the majority of participants, this intentionality did not happen until later in their careers. In describing the next step in her academic leadership journey, Anna is deciding whether a provost or president position is the right one for her. She indicated, "This one is going to be more thoughtful and intentional, but up to this point, it really hasn't felt that way." Similarly, the second half of Diana's career has been much more of her "being mindful of jobs, timing, opportunities, ultimate goals, all of those things." Personal life commitments early on made Diana consider the life-span of her career which led to more intentionality. She described:

It made me realize that what I wanted to accomplish personally and professionally was something I had to look at over periods of decades. There are going to be times you can't do it all and have it all. It has made me more mindful of understanding that at any given point in time, everything is impossible but if you are intentional over longer periods of time, a whole lot of things are possible.

Although Emma wishes she would have been more intentional with some of the choices she made earlier in her career, she now views her career more strategically and shared:

Now that I'm in the role of dean and haven't necessarily been strategic getting into the role, I would say now I see my career in a more strategic way that I probably hadn't done until a few years ago. And now, I am thinking far more strategically about how to leverage who I am for my next move. It's an interesting phase to be going through to think about where the deanship leads you.

She further stressed the ability to stay mobile when considering a future career move, "I always feel that career mobility is a really, really important card that we all have to control. It doesn't mean you exercise it but you have to make sure you are mobile and not trapped." Marie shared a similar sentiment regarding staying mobile and considering future career moves, "Something you learn in your PhD program, at least I learned, was that you have to always be positioning yourself for moving, whether you're going to move or not. That is always in the back

of my mind.” Although Marie indicated she could do the job of provost or president, she has no desire to pursue those roles because they would not fit with her current lifestyle. She explained:

I don’t ever want to be provost or president, I have absolutely no desire. I can do it, I know I can do it. I don’t want to do it because of the commitments that would take me away from family. It just wouldn’t fit me.

Rita is also thinking more strategically about her career now that her children are adults. She commented, “It has made me think a little bit differently and more purposefully about what I want to accomplish and how I want to influence things.” Intentionality in her career path includes a focus on her current role and shorter-term goals. She explained:

There are other women I have worked with that have gone through the dean’s ranks into provost and presidency roles and I have always marveled at some of the clarity that they have about what they want to do. I have enough clarity to get to the next step, and right now this is the next step. So I don’t have any aspiration or clarity around what I need to be investing in to get to the next step; and right now, I have a lot of work I want to do at this step. And that’s okay.

Rachel shared a sentiment expressed by other participants, “I still think the thing with leadership and with women and with higher education is you have to carve your own path in some sense.” Participants in this study were in different phases and stages of their academic leadership journeys. Some realized this may be their final administrative role and some were considering their future options; while others were already planning their next career move. Regardless of the phase, the second half of participants’ academic leadership journeys has been more intentional and strategic than the first.

For participants in this study, the path to academic leadership was initially unplanned and non-aspirational. They enjoyed the flexibility and rewards of being a faculty member and did not consider a move into administration until others recognized them as potential leaders and encouraged, and sometimes groomed, them to pursue academic leadership roles. Certain obstacles exist along the path to academic leadership such as women having to prove themselves

and not progressing to the full professorship at the same rate as men. However, once in initial academic leadership roles, participants aspirations shifted and their desire to pursue the deanship increased, often prompted by realizing they could perform the role of dean as good as, if not better than, others. The second half of participants careers has been much more intentional and purposive and most are considering what is next for them in a more strategic way.

Training and Preparation

In discussing training and preparation for the deanship, participants stressed the lack of formal training available for the role, which often led them to take a self-directed approach to their academic leadership development. Participants experienced varying levels of preparation, but those who were most prepared credited previous administrative and/or industry roles as invaluable in preparing them for the deanship. Participants also experienced, and were sometimes unprepared for, certain transitions that occurred when moving from faculty to administrative roles. The three sub-themes of “lack of formal preparation,” “previous roles,” and “transitional challenges” describe common elements of participants’ training and preparation experiences.

Lack of Formal Preparation

When beginning their initial deanship, participants experienced varying levels of preparation for the role. Regardless of the level of preparation experienced, a commonality among participants was the lack of formal preparation received. Even though Charlotte felt like she was prepared for the deanship, a lack of formal preparation and transfer of knowledge for the deanship left her underprepared for the role. She shared:

I felt like I was prepared pretty well for the deanship; I felt like I knew a ton. I knew most of the faculty and the people, I knew the programs. But wow. I thought I was 50-60% prepared for this role and I was probably 10%. There wasn’t time to get prepared either. And you would think there would be all this transfer of knowledge and stuff. Nope.

Charlotte thinks formal preparation and training is a huge growth area, especially for colleges of business. She commented:

From what I understand, dean training consists of going to an AACSB conference and trying to pick up stuff or you do it informally like I have. We are a business school and we do not do this; I don't know anyone that's really able to talk about a wonderful story on this front. So hence all of the informal networks. It's a huge growth area.

Marie shared a similar concern and mentioned the assumptions made in preparing academic leaders, "We do a really, really bad job in higher education of preparing the next generation of leaders. We assume people just know how to do it, just like they assumed we knew how to teach but never taught us."

A lack of formal preparation for the deanship led many participants to take a proactive, self-directed approach to training and development in which they sought out coaching and leadership development opportunities or spent time learning on their own. Emma admitted that a lot of her learnings are "self-directed" and mentioned, "I spend a lot of reflective time thinking about leadership and styles of leadership and organizational structure. I'm trying to make sense of a lot of what I see and I do that through reading."

Diana has been proactive about seeking out professional development and leadership training throughout her career. In one instance, Diana became aware of an opportunity to attend a national leadership program for women and approached her dean at the time to ask for support in her attending, which he approved. She further described seeking out opportunities and the inspiration it brings her, especially opportunities to connect with other women leaders:

I love the opportunity to pull out of my job and put myself in a place where I can be introspective about how I'm doing and what I'm doing, as well as to learn from somebody. This is one piece of my career that I have absolutely been proactive about. I will seek out opportunities to explore my personal leadership style and hang out with other leaders, especially other women leaders; it's a joy and inspiration to me.

Rita also took a purposeful approach to investing in her leadership training and initiated attending formal programs. She indicated:

Those were investments in me to consider how I wanted to advance my career at that point. I am always investing in those kinds of things. I am always looking for those workshops and those skills to help because I don't think I am ever done with that; that's a very purposeful thing.

To learn and succeed in their deanships, several participants mentioned hiring a personal coach and the benefits of doing so. Diana was proactive in seeking out individual coaching and claimed:

You really have to put yourself in that space where you can be introspective and work with someone who can coach you on that, where you can do self-diagnosis and have someone push or pull you; I think that's key.

Grace also hired three different coaches throughout her career that were helpful to her and recommends this to new deans. She explained:

I hired a strategic coach to help with visioning. I would recommend that to new deans. Get your feet on the ground and then hire a coach for a while as you establish what your deanship is going to be and how it's going to shape the organization. It's really helpful because there aren't that many people you can talk to anymore. It's a pretty lonely job to a certain extent and that coach is a critical person to help you stay disciplined and focused and push yourself.

Those that did receive formal preparation did so through national higher education leadership trainings, AACSB workshops and conferences, and/or topical seminars. For example, to develop skills in fundraising and development, Anna attended a seminar on fundraising, as did Marie who claimed, "Almost nobody goes into a dean position knowing how to fundraise and I felt like I needed as much as I could get there, so I was proactive in that."

A few participants also mentioned attending formal regional or institutional academic leadership programs. Several participants attended the AACSB Aspiring Dean's Seminar and a few attended the AACSB New Dean's Seminar. In reference to the Aspiring Dean's Seminar,

Marie commented, “That was a really nice resource for thinking through what the job might be like, how I should negotiate my salary, the things that would help me be successful in my first three or six months; it has been enormously helpful.” Two years before Anna ever interviewed for a dean position, she attended the Aspiring Dean’s Seminar and indicated, “I did that in a thoughtful way to think about what that might look like as I was getting tired of waiting for the dean I worked for to retire.”

Engaging in other opportunities available through AACSB was also mentioned as helpful preparation. Some participants were active in AACSB as associate deans and attended associate dean’s conferences. A few participants also chaired certain AACSB-member affinity groups, groups that facilitate networking and communication among members that share common interests or job responsibilities, and worked on AACSB accreditation teams. Those who were on AACSB accreditation teams said the experience was pivotal. Rachel mentioned, “Volunteering with AACSB and working with accreditation was great preparatory training for being a dean.”

The intentional, self-directed approach to training and preparation was evident in participants’ stories, often triggered by the lack of formal preparation available for the deanship. Regarding leadership development, Diana mentioned, “There are no cookie cutter answers. Leadership is something one grows into uniquely, with experience, with intentionality, with the help of mentors, with eyes wide-open about one’s strengths and weaknesses, and with learning, learning, learning – that never stops.” This sentiment was a common one shared by participants in which, regardless of the preparation received, developing as a leader has been a unique and life-long journey.

Previous Roles

Participants expressed being most prepared for their deanships by virtue of their previous experience as an associate dean, other administrative roles, and/or their roles in industry. Often times, participants took on expanded duties in their previous academic leadership roles which was helpful preparation for the role of dean. Watching other academic leaders enact their roles and modeling aspects of their behavior, through both positive and negative examples, was also influential in participants' role preparation.

Several participants mentioned taking on "expanded duties" in their associate deanships or other academic leadership roles, which was helpful preparation for the role of dean. As an associate dean, the dean Diana worked for was out-of-the-office frequently and as the "number two in the college" she was "on watch for big chunks of time." She referred to that experience as akin to a "junior dean role, having circled the job 360" and credited the preparation it gave her for her own deanship, "I was ready and I jumped in and felt totally prepared. I actually remember a little moment of joy about six months in when I actually thought in my head, I so get this job, I am so ready for this. It was a great moment for me." Likewise, as associate dean, Charlotte mentioned being "like the academic in charge, second in command" given that her dean was gone a lot and she "got exposure to so much and was learning a ton."

Similarly, Marie served in what she considered an "expanded associate dean role" that helped prepare her for the deanship. She shared:

I was very involved with promotion and tenure, in hiring, in creating programs, a lot of things that one does as dean I was able to get involved in. It really helped me understand what the role was like, the breadth of the role.

Grace also had a lot of exposure to the dean while serving as associate dean, serving as her "thinking partner" and credited the experience it gave her. She shared, "I had a lot of exposure. I

would sit down and figure out deeper complex personnel issues with her. I knew a lot of the tough spots and I knew how to work with faculty.”

Participants who had served as an associate dean at a smaller school credited that experience and the preparation for the deanship it provided. Anna explained:

As the one associate dean, I was over pretty much everything other than the financial aspects of the college and the graduate school. I think that smaller schools may be better preparation for being a dean because you get to touch a little bit of everything. I was basically running the college. By the time I got to the deanship, I had gone through two or three deans, several AACSB visits, strategic planning, raising money, and a building expansion. I had a lot of experiences others might not have had.

Likewise, Emma worked in a smaller school environment and claimed it gave her “first-hand knowledge that there is no buffer between you and your customers, no layers between you and the market” which gave her confidence to “know hands down how a business school runs.”

Being relied upon as an associate dean to transition an outgoing and an incoming dean led Rita to feel “totally prepared to be dean” and gave her confidence to “go for it [a deanship].” When she assumed the deanship she “wasn’t surprised by anything that hit me; there were things that were different, but not surprising.” She shared:

When I was the associate dean, between the previous dean’s purposeful tutelage of me during his exit and the new dean’s reliance on me as he entered, I was exposed to everything that went on there. I was in the room for everything and it just prepared me in a way that was remarkable. Not just in terms of issues but stylistically. I was ready, and I think that’s why I went for it.

Participants who had served in an interim dean capacity also credited the preparation it gave them for the full deanship. Serving in an interim dean role was helpful to Claire in preparing for the deanship because she knew the students, the business community, and the faculty. She elaborated:

I knew going into a meeting that they were likely to have a certain perspective and different issues were going to be salient for different people. It gave me an opportunity to maybe help diffuse issues beforehand. Having school-specific knowledge was helpful.

Rachel also felt prepared to take on the deanship, having served as interim dean and spending two years in a central administration role. She explained:

I really had the opportunity to get grounded in higher education administration, helping with the visioning and mission process for the entire university and working across the entire portfolio of the president's suite. It gave me a firm understanding of what was going on and put me in touch with high-profile groups and that was pivotal for me.

Diana also spent time in central administration before becoming a dean and commented on the preparation that provided:

I worked with every dean on campus which was a great opportunity to learn from deans; but from a different perspective, because I was facilitating their hiring and promotion and tenure and all kinds of things. It gave me more of a top-down view.

Participants who had served in more than one deanship discussed the preparation and knowledge their initial deanships gave them for the subsequent one(s). Marie felt quite prepared going into her second deanship and explained, "A lot of things in retrospect I hadn't quite done right in the first deanship, I could fix in the second. But it's still a role that stretches me." Similar to Marie's experience, Grace felt more prepared for her subsequent deanship and stated, "I had to learn a lot about the larger university context but I felt very comfortable that I knew what the job of dean was and how a good dean operates."

The majority of participants had some sort of industry experience before becoming, or during their time as an academic; and those that did, mentioned how those roles helped prepare them for the deanship. They discussed transferable skills from leadership in industry to academic leadership such as strategic skills, problem-solving, budgeting, and working with a variety of constituents. Anna had industry experience before becoming a dean and discussed that experience as the biggest advantage in preparing her for the deanship:

For me the biggest advantage was the industry experience. More and more of a team's time is focused on two things: either managing the money you have in an effective way

or going out and raising more. And having had experience managing budgets and people, and really understanding the financial model of the institution and how to leverage that in a way to maximize resources for your college is really important. And the ability to go out and raise funding is really important. Those are not typically skills that someone who aspires to be a dean has, or are easy to acquire.

Similarly, Grace previously ran a research center and described the role as a “mini-dean experience.” She mentioned:

That role was similar to what a chair would do except with a broader mandate to raise funds, sell our product, and build a customer base. It was almost a mini-dean experience in terms of the breadth of the profile I had there. That was a facilitator because I was able to expand my leadership skills and learn them in a very profound way.

Watching other leaders enact their roles and modeling aspects of their behavior was also discussed as being influential in participants’ role preparation. Rachel referred to this as “observational education” and mentioned it was a large component of her preparation for the deanship. Diana commented that the dean she served under for several years was “extraordinarily impactful” for her in terms of how to do the job. She felt fortunate to be able to “have a front row seat to someone that could help me see how to do this job through both positive and negative examples.” Similarly, Rita modeled the behavior of other leaders and indicated:

Watching other leaders was important. I learned through interacting with them and modeling their behavior. While I didn't agree with everything they did, or how they conducted themselves in every circumstance, I also didn't have full information for those circumstances.

Although little formal preparation for the deanship exists, participants felt most prepared for their roles by virtue of the experiences and skills they accumulated in previous administrative and/or industry roles, and watching other leaders enact their roles through both positive and negative examples. Often taking on expanded duties in their previous administrative roles, participants prepared for the role of dean in a way that enabled them to successfully take on the role themselves.

Transitional Challenges

In discussing training and preparation, participants' stories revealed various challenges faced when transitioning into academic leadership roles, including the deanship. Some of these transitional challenges included shifting from faculty to administration, learning how big the job is, and moving between school contexts. Several participants mentioned the unexpected challenges that occurred when transitioning from a faculty member to an administrator. Emma expressed, "I think because they're lonely jobs and when you transition from a faculty member, I mean, I am still faculty but you're not a faculty member anymore when you are dean; now you're the boss." The transition to the deanship was a pivotal decision for Rachel because she would become an "institutional actor" and no longer be as connected to the faculty. She explained:

When the provost called me into his office saying he would like for me to apply to be dean, that was in one sense a turning point for me because when you're a faculty member, and then you're a department head, you are still very much connected to the faculty; you're still firmly planted in the faculty role as well as well as a leadership role. When you consider the opportunity of being a dean, there's no turning back. It's one of those pivotal decisions that, you're becoming more of an institutional actor rather than a faculty member.

This transition was described by some participants as experiencing the "loss of an academic identity". Charlotte indicated:

When you join up into this field, you join as an academic and you join academics to do research, teach, and maybe consult and that all goes. I realized later it was like letting go of my academic identity. You're going to be the administrator person. So that's the biggest sacrifice; that you lose your identity as a researcher which is what got you into it in the first place.

The identity shift from faculty to administrator was due in part to messages participants received along their leadership journeys about administration being the "dark side." For example, Marie was told early in her academic career, "You're getting a PhD to do research but the

administrators kind of suck the life out of you and you don't want to waste your talents on that." Even though she was "advised never to be an administrator; it's the evil dark side," she knew that if given the opportunity, she would pursue administrative roles. She emphasized, "I knew I liked impacting change at the highest levels and I was good at it."

Another transitional challenge was learning "how big the job of dean is" given its breadth and multiple demands, and the learning curve that ensued. This was the biggest surprise for Charlotte in transitioning from faculty to the deanship and she explained:

The job is big; and of course it is. It's like running a company that's inside a multi-national firm. But you don't know what big is until you do it because again, you're an academic. You've got staff and faculty and that's a whole other thing. Staff have high turnover and it's a whole different set of dynamics on the staff side. Everything's a learning curve. Every single piece.

Marie also referenced the learning curve and transition that occurs when taking on the deanship and mentioned, "It's just all of a sudden it's you and everybody's looking to you." And although Claire felt mostly prepared for the deanship having been an internal dean candidate, she indicated that there is "still a steep learning curve in dealing with upper administration."

Specific challenges were noted by participants who had transitioned into the deanship as an internal candidate. Grace transitioned to her first deanship after being an internal candidate and explained:

My first deanship was internal and transitioning from being faculty to now being over faculty. I was now the leader of the faculty and had to recalibrate those relationships, coming up from the inside. It was an exhausting first year; I had a lot of internal relationships that I had to formalize more.

Some participants discussed transitioning into academic leadership roles between different school contexts and the importance of being aware of those differences. Anna shared:

I don't think all schools are the same. I think there are different challenges and opportunities if you're a small private compared to a public compared to a really large

public compared to an institution with a strong international presence. Every institution is different. Not all jobs are the same.

Although Rachel felt prepared in terms of her skill set for her second deanship, there were institutional differences when transitioning from her first to second deanship that she was unaware of. She commented:

I don't know if you can ever be totally prepared for a new institution and a new leadership role in that sense. I was incredibly well prepared to step into the role but there were cultural distinctions between the two institutions and I don't think I was totally aware of what those distinctions were coming into it. But I didn't have any questions about my skill set.

To help make successful transitions between institutional contexts and cultures, Rita recommends "relying on the people within those contexts and taking time to understand the culture you are in." She suggested:

Find people that will tell you about a place. It takes people to facilitate, it takes some time to build trust with folks. One of the things I have learned how to do because I have moved institutions is how to go into a situation and pretty rapidly go through a process of assessment to understand the culture of the college and its programs and dynamics. Undertaking a little bit of time to understand the context and culture of the place will help us achieve things and be more successful in the long run.

Rita summarized, "I think that the culture and context drives 80% of what we do on a day-to-day basis and I can only affect the 20% margin that will move the whole."

In addition to the lack of formal preparation, participants experienced certain transitional challenges when moving into academic leadership roles. These challenges included shifting from faculty to administration, sometimes resulting in the "loss of an academic identity," learning how big the job is due to its multiple demands and stakeholders, and moving between school contexts, in which regardless of skill preparedness for the role itself, a contextual learning curve ensued.

Importance of Relationships

Throughout participants' stories, relationships and networks emerged as being highly influential in both their academic leadership preparation and role attainment. In most instances, these took the form of mentors, role models, coaches, informal networks and family support. Participants considered themselves mentors, valued encouraging and developing others, especially women, in their career journeys, and provided advice to academic women considering future leadership roles. The "importance of relationships" theme is grouped into the three sub-themes of "mentors," "advice to academic women," and "informal networks and family support" and discussed in more detail below.

Mentors

Mentors, sometimes referred to as role models or coaches in participants' stories, have been influential in multiple ways throughout the participants' academic leadership journeys, influencing both their role preparation and attainment experiences. Rita commented on the various mentors she has had throughout her academic leadership journey who have contributed to her decisions and provided "nudges and encouragement" along the way:

There are many people that have contributed to decisions and experiences that I have had. I didn't always see it at the time but upon reflection, you can see the nudges, the encouragement, and sometimes a little shove through the door. I have had a whole slew of mentors and role models and I look to them for different things.

Mentors have shown up at various times and in various forms throughout participants' lives. For many participants, mentors have been current or former colleagues and/or supervisors and for some, there was one pivotal person who was a key influence in their academic leadership journey. For Charlotte, this pivotal person was a previous dean who she indicated, "Gave me a ton of opportunity to do things. He had a way of letting me grow and he let me succeed in a lot of high-profile ways." For Diana, it was a female panelist at a business school leadership

conference who had a pivotal influence on her academic leadership journey. When Diana was considering whether or not to heed the encouragement of others and embark on the path of administration, she approached this woman for career guidance. As she recalled, the woman panelist provided her with the following advice that “crystallized her thinking about choosing leadership:”

There is no denying that leadership can leave you sitting around way too many tables and participating in meetings that, many times, are not fruitful in any way. Those experiences cannot always be avoided. However, in some of those meetings, very important decisions are being made about the future of the institution and you can choose to be at those tables or not.

That conversation clarified for Diana “who I was and what kind of institutional player I wanted to be.”

As a young professor, Anna worked with a female associate dean who she indicated, “Has always been a mentor in terms of encouraging me to make the move and apply, perhaps before I felt I was ready. I would say she pushed me a bit.” Likewise, Grace had a mentor who created opportunities for her to be noticed as a potential administrator. She shared:

She was a star faculty and she actually told the dean, “You really should look at Grace as associate dean material because she’s got great ideas, she’s got strategy and she executes.” So that kind of created the opportunity and the dean started watching me for a while.

In a similar circumstance Marie “had a great mentor” when she was an associate dean who provided opportunities and helped her get the experiences she needed for the deanship. She mentioned, “He was wonderful at mentoring me, recognizing that I had potential, and giving me opportunities to do things that weren’t in my job description that he knew people would look for.” At another school, Marie had a mentor in the associate provost who, “was nurturing and supporting in believing that I could do whatever I set my mind to and that was really important.” Rita’s former department chair was a great mentor to her and the initial reason she became an

administrator. As she emphatically stated, “He is someone I’d give my right tooth for, he’s been a great mentor over the years.”

Despite the importance of mentors throughout participants’ journeys and in the deanship, Emma claims that “we don’t do it enough.” She shared:

The role of mentors and coaches is important and we don’t do it enough. And I don’t think it has to be a woman mentoring another woman. My perception is that you can have lots of different mentors for different reasons and they can come and go in your life at different times. It’s important to find that someone you can talk to because it’s a pretty lonely job.

Not only did participants discuss the influence of mentors along their own leadership journey, they also viewed it as their responsibility to mentor, encourage, and develop the next generation of women leaders. Grace commented:

Since we have no women chairs here, I’ve been going around and kind of mentoring and coaching some women who I think would be really good in the role. There are a lot of really talented people who would be good at administration so I have had long conversations with women in that situation to help them think through, is this the track I want to be on? I also help them plot out some leadership roles where they can begin to get more visibility and demonstrate their talents. I do a fair amount of coaching high potential women here.

Similarly, Marie goes around and meets with everyone when they start working for the school and asks them, “What do you want to be when you grow up?” If they want to be in a leadership position someday she indicated, “I can help mentor them and give them opportunities, but I wouldn’t know that if they don’t speak up.” Rita “likes developing people and helping them grow and be exposed to new roles and ideas” and sees it as her responsibility to mentor future generations of women academic leaders, crediting former generations of women for “opening the door.” She shared:

I think that women that are perhaps a decade ahead of me made the door a little easier for me to walk through and I think there’s a responsibility. I am through that door, maybe I can make it open a little easier for the next generation of people coming through.

Mentors have taken various forms and shown up at different times throughout participant's academic leadership journeys. Colleagues, supervisors, and sometimes one pivotal person provided important guidance and support along their path to the deanship. The mentorship they received led participants to become mentors themselves, supporting and encouraging other women along the path to academic leadership.

Advice to Academic Women

In the spirit of mentorship and encouragement, participants offered advice to women starting out on an academic career path who may be seeking or interested in future academic leadership roles, specifically the business deanship. Participants advised women to build their career over time, in part by taking risks and saying “yes” to opportunities. Diana recommended that women “take it on in little pieces; build it in chunks” but also claimed that “women sometimes do hold themselves back on these things.” Other advice she shared included being mindful and intentional about saying “yes” to opportunities that “will stretch and grow you in some way.” She elaborated:

The opportunities we take should stretch us and pull us in the direction we want to go. You should always end a job with more skills and knowledge on your plate than you started with, always. I think you've got to be very mindful of where you want to end up and think in terms of chunks of time and the job descriptions that would build to that end.

Rachel thinks that the biggest obstacle for some women is being scared to take a risk and advised academic women to, “Have some intentionality around seeking leadership positions and just be willing to take a risk. When you're offered an opportunity, don't be scared to take it.” Similarly, Claire encouraged other academic women to “just try it” and stressed that “there is a lot that women bring to the table that enable them to be good in a role where you have to be able to manage a lot of diverse stakeholders.” Charlotte provided similar encouragement, “Just jump in

there and do stuff. If you aspire to this, just do whatever comes up and do it well and you'll get the next thing."

Grace advised "not keeping your head down" and encouraged building both competencies and a network. She explained:

You can't just keep your head down. If you haven't built a network of allies, and people haven't seen you in a wide range of areas where you're demonstrating your competency, you're not going to get to your goals. I find that quite a few of our women faculty are keeping their head down and just trying to plow through and part of my job is to coach them to do these other things.

Similarly, Marie encouraged other women to "stay open to the opportunity and not be afraid of administrative roles. She also recommended that women "think about where your passion intersects with making a difference" and shared:

We all have to figure out what we are passionate about and where we can make a difference and a living and where those come together. I think we all go into higher education and teaching because we care about making a difference. Just be open to how you can make the biggest difference and how you are best suited to doing that. I don't think people should be afraid to go into administrative roles, but they are probably getting a similar message to what I got, which is you shouldn't do that. Take on responsibilities here and there that make sense to you and you're excited about and don't be afraid to say "I might be interested someday."

Rita claimed that knowing your "why" is very important because "it's a slog at times and you need to understand your why so you can push through and better ignore things that might bog you down and keep you from moving forward." She recommended some "reflection and self-care to be able to keep your eye on that." In addition to knowing your "why," Anna mentioned that "fit is really important" and advises women to, "Look really carefully into what the day-to-day role means at the kind of institution you are considering. Not all jobs are the same and each one offers different challenges and opportunities."

Participants stressed the importance of “finding mentors and a network of people who can help you reach your goals.” Diana recommended, “Tap into the wisdom and experience of mentors; people are flattered and generous with their time.” Whereas, Rachel advised:

Pay attention to the formal and informal power structures of the organization, people whose careers you admire, and where you might have an opportunity to build relationships. You can always position yourself as a woman seeking advice which is an old, very effective way to advance your goals.

Similarly, Marie suggested, “Go and talk to people who are in these positions, learn how they got there and what they would do over again. Surround yourself with people who can be mentors or good sounding boards.” Likewise, Charlotte recommended, “Patch together a network of something, people that you trust that can be there along the way.” Rachel suggested, “Look for mentors and career opportunities that are aligned with your goal.”

Even when taking advantage of opportunities and having a strong network of allies and mentors, Charlotte stressed that “you may never be fully prepared for the role of dean” and encourages women to “just do it.” As one of her mentors once told her:

You’re on the cliff; at some point you just have to jump off the cliff or you turn around and walk away, but you will never be ready. You just jump into this abyss that you have no idea about and you just have to let that go. If you think you want to do it, don’t overthink it, just do it and figure it out as you go and hope for some people that can be there for you along the way.

Mentors, sometimes referred to as role models or coaches, have been instrumental in participants’ academic leadership journeys. Mentors have taken various forms and have served multiple roles throughout participants’ careers and sometimes there was one “pivotal” person that influenced the trajectory of participants’ leadership journeys. Participants also consider themselves mentors and do their part to encourage and develop the next generation of women academic leaders. Participants shared advice to academic women who may be considering and/or interested in future academic leadership roles and advise other women “to

just try it” and say “yes” to opportunities that will stretch them and lead them down the path to academic leadership.

Informal Networks and Family Support

Participants discussed the important influence of informal networks and family support during their academic leadership journeys. Due to a lack of formal preparation and training, participants often relied upon informal networks, colleagues (both past and present), and/or other connections for information, advice, and support, some of whom were also mentors and ambassadors for them. When Rachel was dealing with a difficult situation, she reached out to someone in her network for guidance. She commented:

That person was an ambassador for me and gave me advice that was pivotal in handling a sensitive situation that ultimately made campus leadership aware of me. That situation turned into actually probably what put me on the trajectory to the deanship.

Marie mentioned an informal network of deans that she created and has been an important facilitator on her leadership journey, “When I was associate dean, I formed a group of other associate deans and we would get together and became a support group for each other.” Similarly, Grace stays connected with the faculty and leadership team from her previous schools and “keeps an active network going.” This network was critical in giving her advice in transitioning into a new role where some of the faculty were resistant to her becoming dean. She expressed, “I feel like I have a group now that when I need to get advice, I can get it. I am very attentive to sustaining relationships from where I’ve been before.”

Other participants formed informal networks early in their academic leadership journeys that have remained an important connection for them throughout their careers. When Rita was a department chair, there were a group of department chairs that went to workshops and other events together and have stayed in touch over the years. That group has become “an informal

sounding board and go-to group” for her. Rita also mentioned an informal, organically-formed group of regional deans that came out of the AACSB New Dean’s Seminar that stays in touch weekly. According to Rita, “We discuss how to handle things, the full gamut of this circle of trust. And it’s a mix of men and women and I think that’s a really nice dynamic.”

Although participants mentioned having both mixed-gender and all-female networks, the all-female networks were emphasized as being particularly beneficial. Diana creates informal networks of women to get together for lunch or dinner “just to talk about things together” and commented on the joy it has provided her:

I create a lot of what I call my informal networks that have allowed me to put a voice to the things that I have concerns about but also have people who are good listeners and good sounding boards, and I think women are excellent listeners. Women are very attuned to providing that kind of support to each other so building those informal networks has been important in my leadership journey. It’s been a joy in my life. It’s been a nurturing thing; it’s my soul food.

Claire also mentioned the value in having an all-female network of business deans that support one another and get together annually. She commented, “There really aren’t that many of us; so to have others who you can reach out to is really valuable.” Similarly, Rachel has a set of female colleagues that has been very supportive of each other and described:

It is sort of an informal women’s networking group that was operating and acted as sort of a system to smooth the past or provide insight that you needed in order to progress in leadership roles at the university and we have stayed connected.

One formal network that does exist is the Women Administrators in Management Education (WAME) group, an affinity group of AACSB, and was touted by several participants as being a critical support network for them. Emma referred to the WAME group as “fantastic” and elaborated on the value it has provided her:

I love the WAME group; I found my people there. And I kind of stumbled into it a little bit; I wasn’t really aware it existed until I became a dean. I love the way they run the sessions and it’s the only session I go to where we actually share among ourselves.

In addition to the value of their informal and formal networks, several participants discussed the importance of having supportive spouses or other familial support along their academic leadership journeys and for continuous success in their role. In discussing the support her husband has provided Claire mentioned, “He’s been a really big influence because he’s always there to tell me I can do it. He’s been very instrumental in being quick to say, we can figure this out.” Anna’s husband has also been a main influence and support in her career journey and was “always willing to make choices in his career so that he could move when she wanted to move.” She reflected, “He has been very supportive and we’ve been able to juggle our careers so that our children always had a parent at home when they got home from school. We were fortunate in that way.”

Marie’s husband has also been an important source of support during her academic leadership journey and she stressed the importance of spousal support for women deans. She shared:

I could not do what I do if I didn’t have a supportive husband, it just wouldn’t be possible. I think we underestimate that, and I think the role of husbands for women deans is much different, or even women faculty, is much different than the reverse.

Similarly, Diana has a husband whom she claims, “loves being there to support me; he’s my biggest cheerleader” and she advises other women to “marry well,” especially given the demands of the deanship. She explained:

Having a supportive partner is huge. I just can’t imagine doing *this* job, because there’s a physicality and the demands once you get to the dean job, that I can’t imagine trying to do without a supportive partner. It’s just been a gift to me.

Other familial support was also influential in participants journeys, such as when Rita mentioned the “great support system she had in both her spouse and sister.” Charlotte also commented on the support received from her dad, sister, and spouse:

My dad was another influence, he always told me I could do whatever I wanted and be whoever I wanted to be and to go for it. He was always very encouraging. My husband has been the same way; he is very positive and very supportive. My sister was always there too, in the background.

Participants stressed the importance of informal networks and spousal or other familial support during their academic leadership journeys. Informal networks, along with the WAME affinity group, provided an important source of information, advice, and support during participants' academic leadership journeys and in their deanships. Family support, especially spousal support, was also stressed as an important influence on success during participants' career journeys and in their deanships.

Having a Broader Influence

Another common aspect of participants' journeys to academic leadership was the "calling" often felt towards administration due to the broader influence they could have by assuming academic leadership roles. In doing so, they realized that it was not about them individually, but about the greater good of students, colleges of business, institutions, society, and higher education collectively. This led participants to adopt and enact a leadership style that was inclusive, collaborative, and relationship-centric. The two sub-themes of "bigger than me" and "inclusive and collaborative leadership" encapsulate this discourse and are described in more detail below.

Bigger than Me

By assuming academic leadership roles, participants realized they could contribute to something "bigger than themselves" such as the college, institution, the next generation of leaders, society, and higher education as an industry. This realization often preempted participants to forgo their individual faculty careers and become administrators.

Emma recognized the relationships she had built were “bigger her than her” and wanted to contribute those to enhance the university. She indicated, “There are a lot of things that I have given to our president, relationships I’ve built that are bigger than me, that are for the university.” When beginning the business deanship, Charlotte was intrigued by all the new things she was going to learn and realized it was “bigger than her,” or even the deanship. She began to wonder, “You have this whole university above you, which is hugely complex. You’re into 30,000 students and how does it even work? What’s the business of business? Or cities? That’s how I got here.”

Marie’s focus in leading her business school is on “building a community and making it a really special place.” She indicated, “It’s not about me. It’s about helping to change the school and make it better and hopefully it will continue to get better at whatever point I leave here. And that’s what drives me.” Grace also expressed a focus on community and having a broader organizational impact:

I believe that you’re here to mobilize the whole community to make the organization as best as it can possibly be and to deliver on our mission. And to make sure that we are serving our students to the best of our ability and maximizing the use of our resources, giving them a great education and at the same time we are a research organization so we have to balance those two things. For me it’s all about what impact you’re having on the organization.

Similarly, Rachel’s “clarion call” to leadership included the broader influence she could have on students, educating the next generation of leaders, and creating sustainable institutions. She explained:

I believe that in higher education two things are incredibly important. One is always putting the students first because the only thing that makes universities are our students. We really are called to educate the next generation, do research that contributes and transforms society, and be an economic and cultural engine for the place that we are, and then the region, the nation, and the world. I think you have to keep students first, and then think about building sustainable institutions at whatever level you are working.

Rita also commented on having a broader influence on higher education, even though her initial career focus was “achievement-oriented.” She indicated, “At some point more recently it shifted a little bit to making a difference in higher education, at a time when I think higher education is under fire.”

For some participants, having a broader influence included ensuring they had a “seat at the table.” Rita realized she needed a seat at the table to help ensure an inclusive representation of voices that could influence a broader array of decisions and help mitigate blind spots. She commented:

I know that the nature of the conversation is somewhat more inclusive just because I am in the room. And there are blind spots that we all carry and if I am not sitting there, those blind spots are going to take over. While I’m at the table, I can help mitigate some of these blind spots. We all have our blind spots, but at least when we are in the room together we are able to influence and address a broader array of things.

Diana also felt “a real urgency to have a voice in the evolution of our institutions” due to the critical issues facing higher education as an industry. She acknowledged a “responsibility, even a calling, to be involved and at those tables at a critical time.” In doing so, she was able to affect a broader range of people than she could as an individual faculty member. She explained:

By sitting at the table, I learned to change hats. I had to take off the hat that allowed *me* to experience the rewards of a faculty member at the center of instruction and scholarship, and I had to put on the hat that allowed me to create a container for *many other people*. Leadership can be viewed as leveraging your skills as a multiplier; affecting many more faculty members and students than one could individually.

After being encouraged to “choose leadership,” Diana chose to “be proactive, to embrace the leadership path and own it in a deep-seated, authentic, and whole-hearted way.” She also grew up with a very clear lived experience about the difference higher education can make. She expressed:

My educator DNA felt absolutely compelled to strive for better – for our students, our programs, and our university. I was hit with absolute clarity about both who I was (and wasn't) and the path that would lead me down; I knew I wanted to be at the table.

Participants realized that they could have a broader influence by assuming academic leadership roles than they could as an individual faculty member and this became a driving force in their academic leadership journeys and in pursuing the deanship. By “choosing leadership,” participants could make a difference on the greater collective of students, faculty, colleges, institutions, society, and higher education as a whole.

Inclusive and Collaborative Leadership

The importance of relationships mentioned throughout participants' stories, as well as their desire to have a broader influence, extended into the way they approached their leadership style and enacted their leadership roles. The majority of participants described an inclusive and collaborative approach to leadership, stressing the value of building relationships, teams, and coalitions, as well as having a diverse array of perspectives, ideas, and voices at the table.

Several participants stressed the value of “bringing people together to get things done” and having a representation of voices and ideas. Marie indicated:

I just think I make better decisions when there's lots of different voices at the table. I try to make sure that people know I don't want just 'yes' people. I want us to be able to share our ideas and to challenge our thinking so that we make the best decisions.

Similarly, Diana mentioned the importance of creating a space for people to bring ideas forward:

I don't have to be the smartest in the room. I have a lot of smart people here. I want to create a space where every one of those people can bring forth really great ideas and run with them.

Likewise, Grace believes in “bringing in people who have better expertise in specific areas than me to build a team and mobilize an organization.” Marie described a similar collaborative, team-based approach to leadership:

I really prefer to build a team of strong leaders who are actually better than I am, but making sure we complement each other. I am not afraid to make decisions by myself when the situation calls for it. I think leadership has to change sometimes to fit the context but I prefer to have a teamwork approach to things or at least get input and then make the decision.

Part of this collaborative, team-based approach includes building relationships and coalitions. Rachel referenced building strong teams and tries to, “find common ground when other people cannot do so and negotiate toward a place of commonality to build strong teams.” She mentioned that building relationships and forming coalitions are the main aspects that influence her ability to succeed, especially as a woman dean. She elaborated:

You’ve got to be willing to invest the time in relationships and building relationships and forming coalitions. It’s important for me to form coalitions and allies and relationships in order to expand my school’s goals, my college’s goals. I think it’s probably essential for every leader, but I think it’s even more important for women because sometimes it’s the Lone Ranger kind of approach. I would say that is absolutely essential.

Charlotte further emphasized, “You have to develop relationships to get anything done. I have the ability to develop relationships and that is key.” This collaborative, team-based approach is critical for success in the role, especially since participants are often external-facing and frequently away from the office, having to rely on others for leadership in their absence. Anna described:

The longer I have been here, the more collaborative I have to be because I am gone more. I am literally gone every other week which means I have to have a strong team and we have to be comfortable working at a distance together. The team is doing it.

Charlotte also described having a relational approach to the deanship and building coalitions as critical to her success. She provided an example:

My approach is relational, definitely. I’m building coalitions; figuring out together what we’re going to do and then building the coalition around it. In one instance, all I needed was a simple majority but I was like, no way. If we don’t get 51% I don’t want it. We have to want to do this as a school and we’re going to work our butts off to get people to want to do this.

Similarly, Grace mentioned forming alliances and relationships, specifically with faculty and staff, as critical for success:

To do well as a dean you have to have a very strong alliance with faculty where you aren't "the dark side" – that's the old joke, that deans go to the dark side. Well, no, we should be facilitators of faculty members' success. Deans also have to bridge the gap between faculty and staff. They have to work together and there has to be mutual respect. If a dean doesn't have faculty working with her, you're lost, you can't get anything done.

In working with faculty and staff, Claire mentioned, "Tenured faculty have specific ideas of how they think the world should play out. Everyone has a slightly different utility function and you have to work with and understand those to drive things forward." Emma also stressed the importance of working with faculty and tries to get faculty to "lean in and own what we're going to do. I try to nurture the idea and push it out."

Diana is "always trying to knit people together across crazy boundaries" to create a culture of inclusiveness, community, and collaboration. She shared:

I think the *most* important thing you can do as a leader is build culture and create a container, a space where everyone feels bonded in that community. It's not about me. It's about how do I build a space, a culture, a community that says, oh, let's all go and run together, this will be fun. And then once you get that, turning people loose to do *their* best; it's not about me being *my* best.

As an important component of an inclusive and collaborative leadership style, several participants mentioned leading with transparency and trust. Grace stressed the importance of trust and transparency in the deanship and shared:

If the people you are leading don't trust you, it's nothing but a lot of resistance and behind the scenes maneuvering. You just create a toxic environment if you can't be trusted, so you have to be thoughtful about everything you do and how it's going to be perceived. Is it aligned with what you've said you are going to do and your values? I'm very transparent in my decision making and I really think that's authentic.

Likewise, Claire considers her leadership style transparent and inclusive and tries to "be as transparent as I can in terms of the situations we are facing and how we are trying to make

decisions about those.” In enacting her leadership role, Claire acknowledged, “I try to be inclusive. Whenever possible I try to make sure I get a broad cross-section of views and use those to help drive decision-making.” Similarly, Charlotte leads with transparency because she “wants people to get it, where we are at and what we need to get done.”

Being a good listener and weighing different ideas and perspectives were also mentioned as important in enacting an inclusive and collaborative leadership approach. According to Rita, “Listening can help de-escalate situations.” She tries to “listen and be respectful of people and bring them along; I like people and it’s just fun, but not everyone will always be excited about the ideas we are building.” Rachel considers her leadership approach “strategic, inclusive, and collaborative in the sense that I always seek a lot of listening and use a lot of ‘we’ instead of ‘I’ when I talk.” She considers herself a “we’re all in this together” leader but stressed, “That doesn’t mean I won’t make hard decisions; I’m willing to do that.” Grace also strives to “listen intently, not project assumptions, and build powerful relationships across culture and identity differences.”

Wanting to have a broader influence, participants adopted and enacted an inclusive and collaborative leadership style in an effort to ensure a wide range of perspectives and voices were included when making decisions. By building relationships and coalitions, leading with transparency and trust, and creating an inclusive, team-based culture, participants were able to create buy-in and achieve success in their roles.

Reflections

Participants shared their thoughts and reflections on the topic of this research as well as their role as dean, including sacrifices, challenges, and rewards experienced in the position. Participants commented that some of these sacrifices and challenges may be holding other

women back from pursuing academic leadership roles. Despite these challenges, participants discussed the many rewards they have experienced in their role as business dean and other academic leadership roles.

Role of Dean

Although the central research question of this study sought to explore the role preparation and attainment experiences of participants, several common reflections were shared regarding their experiences in the role itself, including the sacrifices, challenges, and rewards therein. For most participants, the journey to the deanship, as well as the role itself, has not come without certain sacrifices and challenges. Time and work-life balance were sacrifices frequently mentioned in participants' stories. Marie expressed having to manage her time in a different way as a dean:

Anytime you get into this kind of role, you have to understand that your time isn't going to be the same; it's not an eight to five kind of job. Managing that time with my spouse meant that there were times when I didn't do things as a dean that maybe I would do if I didn't have somebody at home. I give up sleep a lot.

Anna agrees that time is the biggest sacrifice in being a dean, "It's the time, you only have so much time in a day and whether you devote that to work or whether you devote that to your family is a choice that people have to make."

Due to the sacrifices often experienced with time and work-life balance, several participants referenced the loneliness associated with the role. Charlotte admitted to "making a ton of sacrifices in becoming dean" and commented on the loneliness felt in the role:

You make a huge personal sacrifice because you start early, you go late, and you're exhausted. And your mind is so cluttered. So that's a sacrifice because that's a lonely life. I come in on Monday and might not see my husband until Friday night, like I just abandoned him like that. So it's a huge personal sacrifice.

Likewise, Emma expressed the sacrifice of balance and commented on the loneliness she has experienced in the deanship:

I worked like a crazy woman. I sacrificed balance. I think any woman who juggles a very senior role, that's not a role you can just simply walk out of at five o'clock, that you can switch off. I didn't take time off. I am happy with the choices I have made, but it's kind of a lonely existence each day.

Rita also mentioned the "lonely" nature of the deanship, having "sacrificed the stability of being in one location and having a social network" when raising her family. She shared:

It was a conscious choice but I feel the fragmentation a little as my children have grown. As a female administrator it gets very lonely so there are a few more walls that go up over time and over different levels of responsibility you take on. I don't have the sort of social network at this stage. Those were pretty significant trade-offs.

In discussing the issue of balance, Diana thinks the word "balance" sets women up for feeling like they are a failure. She never uses the word "balance" because it "implies some sort of "Zen-like state, some kind of equilibrium where everything is in perfect alignment." Instead, she calls it "work-life management" noting that:

On average you are balanced, but at any given point in time you may be leaning more into one part of your life more than another. When I tipped too far for too long into the professional, I had to manage that.

Grace commented that the hard work and long hours inherent in the dean's role, due to its multiple demands and stakeholders, can be draining:

The deanship is hard work and you have to do it very intentionally. It's not something you can take for granted. You travel a fair amount as a dean, but it's mostly just the sheer amount of work and the long hours are draining to a certain extent. You're the head of faculty but also the leader of a complex organization with lots of different demands and lots of different stakeholders.

Perhaps in response to the demanding nature of the dean's role, other participants also expressed being "hard-working." Emma stated, "Working hard is who I am; it's in my bones. I do a very honest week's work, not a day's work, but a week's work. I've always had the capacity

to do a lot.” Anna also considers herself hard-working and explained, “I work long hours and I push people hard, sometimes maybe too hard to get things done.” Charlotte described working hard as a “classic woman problem,” and commented, “I swear, women work hard. If you give me something I am going to get it done and I am going to put a lot into it.”

Diana thinks the “ability to get things done is really critical” and describes herself as someone who has “always just been organized and can get things done.” This achievement-orientation and tendency to “work hard and get things done” led the majority of participants to never experience an interruption in their career paths. Claire commented:

I took hardly any maternity leave. I was doing research, and then it’s hard to stop when you have papers under review and refereed comments to respond to. It’s hard to just say I’m not going to do any work; I’m going to focus on my family. So I really haven’t taken any time off in terms of my career.

When Diana thinks of an interruption, she thinks about something that “literally pulls you off the path for a while and then you have to re-engage again” and she didn’t have that. She referred to what she experienced as “a slow-down period around, not surprisingly around childbirth and child-rearing young kids.” She stated, “I made conscious choices that kept me more at home when they were really little; I had to switch gears to accommodate what was going on in my personal life.” Similarly, Emma was always “quite strategic about making sure there wasn’t a break.” Although most participants did not experience interruptions, Rita does not recommend that approach and reflected, “I probably should have taken an interruption, but I never did. For many years I was pushing, I was an achiever. I just didn’t slow down for a very long time. I don’t recommend it.”

Successfully enacting the role of dean also comes with certain challenges, often external to the role itself and out of the leader’s control. Charlotte shared:

A lot of it [success] is up to chance. Right now my success is whether we can survive in a crazy market and finding new sources of funds. Business schools are literally under attack and my success will be judged as to whether we can stay financially healthy in a declining market with declining international applications. It's tough, new things around diversity, equity, and inclusion, freedom of speech, and just these political minefields that are hard to navigate. There are so many forces against us.

Charlotte wondered if these forces may be deterring people from pursuing a deanship. She commented, "Since all the forces are pulling down, I really have to work hard to pull it up and that might be why a lot of people are like, 'no thank you' on the deanship." Charlotte considers the role of dean an important one, albeit a challenging one, "I think it's an important job, I think I'll get better at it. I think I'll leave this place better. But it's tough, it's such a multi-faceted job." According to Emma, "The role of dean is not for the faint-hearted."

When discussing their academic leadership journeys and enacting their role as a woman dean, some participants discussed the gendered nature of certain situations they have experienced throughout their deanships, but most did not consider them detrimental to their success. Grace described how she handles these situations:

I'm aware enough that when there is a gendered situation, I can either turn it around gently and politely or it just doesn't bother me anymore. I have a thick skin at this point. I just think it's not worth it, it's just the way it is. Whereas, earlier in my career it would have been very upsetting. I always hate it when women say, "Oh, no, I've never had anything go wrong." I certainly have. It was just in a different period of my life. It's not right now.

Rita had never really "thought about being a woman" until taking on her current deanship. She commented, "I mean, I knew it clearly, but I just never thought about it, I was just doing it. I never entertained a lot of discussions about it – I didn't have time for it. I just didn't react to things." Reflecting, Rita indicated:

There were a lot of comments and lots of things said, and occasionally I'd get fired up about some statement that was made or some lack of eye contact with me relative to the guys, but I didn't let it slow me down.

Emma described the gendered-nature of a situation in which a male from senior administration was unsupportive of her and taking credit for projects she had implemented and executed. In a subsequent meeting with him she felt like she “didn’t have a voice” and explained:

...I met with him and suddenly he seemed fine. I don't know, I just don't get it. I think it's hard being a business school dean, but I don't think he would have done it if I was a man, I really don't think so, perhaps there was a power trip going on. I think we have to put up with a lot of shit, we really do. You can't show your emotions, nor would I. But you sit there through situations like that thinking there's no way that a male dean would put up with this nor would he do it to a male dean. I don't agree with most of what he said. But you know, you don't have a voice, you just don't have a voice.

Charlotte described a situation in which she was running a meeting during a time when a health matter required her to take steroids. She recounted the story:

I had this meeting and I was telling my husband about it after the fact and said, “You wouldn't believe this meeting. I had zero trepidation. I was the most confident person in the room. I kind of just said what I said, and I knew I was right. And it was amazing. And people were like, “that speech you gave was great.” And he [her husband] said, “well you were on steroids and full of testosterone.” And I said, do not tell me this! It was like a completely different experience. And it was the weirdest out of body experience for me, but he said, “that's what guys feel like every minute of every day. They go into a room and that's them.” So I wonder if it's this, “no, we've been watching and you're amazing,” [with women] whereas guys are like, “I want to be the dean, put me in this role.”

Rita shared that she has to be comfortable in the donorship area “without playing the gender card” since most of the school’s top donors are men and commented on how some women have just “ignored all of it.” She indicated:

I have to be comfortable in that world without playing the gender card and without challenging them on the gender issue. I think there's some women that are senior to me that have just pushed through those things by ignoring all of it. And if you begin to open it up, you get into a really messy space. And we are very achievement-oriented in these roles. There are senior women to me that just don't talk about it.

Emma also mentioned the “gender card,” and said, “I don't like playing the gender card. I generally just get on and do my job and don't think about it.” Rachel commented on the “social

capital and sometimes mentoring that you don't get in academia and other places because you are female." She elaborated:

I still believe there's a strand of it, and it's not intentional. I think today, and I don't think it was personal back then necessarily, of exclusion by virtue of act, the way people organize their lives. Guys didn't have to change their life.

Participants stories revealed certain sacrifices and challenges they experienced along their academic leadership journeys. Participants sacrificed time and work-life balance and sometimes encountered gendered situations, although they were not viewed as obstacles to their success. Participants did not experience formal interruptions in their career journeys, in part due to the achievement-oriented and hard-working nature in which they approached their academic leadership roles and the deanship.

Despite the sacrifices and challenges participants experienced on the journey to becoming, and in the role of dean, most commented on how much they "love being a dean," that it is "a fun job," and the joy and rewards they have experienced in the role. Marie emphasized:

It's one of the most rewarding things I've ever done. I mean, I absolutely love what I do. I love the people I work with. I never, ever imagined I'd be doing this, but it is really fun. And some days are just crappy and that's true no matter what you are doing. But by and large, it's just plain fun.

Emma "loves being a dean" and shared a similar sentiment:

I am incredibly grateful for the choices I have made and am committed to higher education, it's something I enjoy. I love being a dean. I love leading the school and I like the challenges we all face in the industry.

Grace also loves being a dean and referred to the first few years of her deanship as a "wonderful, wonderful time." She mentioned, "A lot of great things were happening and it made me fall in love with being a dean because you can shape an organization if your environment is favorable to that." She further elaborated:

It's a really fun job. You can be so creative, you're working with amazing people, you're doing really good work, you're making a huge impact in the world if you do your job well. There are huge rewards in this position, and more so than in an associate dean position because you can really set the direction of the organization and create the culture and bring in new, exciting, and innovative programs.

Rita mentioned the challenging but rewarding nature of the deanship, "Most days I like being dean. Some days I just want to walk out. It's challenging but rewarding." Similarly, Diana has a "passion for education" and mentioned, "It [the deanship] can be a vicarious experience to be sure. Nevertheless, it is an experience that is worthy and satisfying, especially to those who truly believe that education improves lives, communities, countries, and ultimately the planet." This leads her to "get up excited about what I do every morning."

Participants experienced various sacrifices and challenges in their academic leadership journeys and in their role of business dean specifically. These sacrifices and challenges, such as time and work-life balance due to the demanding nature of the dean's role, may be holding other women back from pursuing academic leadership roles and considering the deanship. Despite these sacrifices and challenges, most participants have found the deanship to be a fun and rewarding experience in which they can influence on student lives, higher education, and society.

Research Topic

To determine participants' perceptions about the research topic and create rapport during the interview process, an introductory question was asked of each participant regarding their initial reactions to the topic of this study. Several participants mentioned that they get a lot of requests to participate in research studies but "usually hit delete" because they are not interested or do not have the time. However, they did not delete my request, noting their "interest in the topic," that it was "worthwhile to give their time towards," and an "area that warrants more research." Marie indicated:

I thought it was kind of interesting, it got my attention. A lot of times I get these kinds of requests and I just hit delete because I am too busy, I don't have time. I think the fact it was about women business deans, because there aren't that many of us, I thought it might be a worthwhile thing to participate in.

Diana was "thrilled to participate because it's such a rich area that needs to be explored." Grace mentioned the significant difference she thinks having more female deans running business schools has made and commented, "The whole thing is fascinating to me so I thought it would be a good area to give a contribution to; I was happy to contribute."

Participants also discussed the timeliness of the research topic for both colleges of business and higher education as an industry. Diana commented:

This is not the time for business as usual. Studying what is going on with women, how we bring more women into the equation and the issues around that is an incredibly timely topic. Diversity breeds richness of creativity and decision-making. And if ever there was ever a time that's needed in higher education, it is right now.

Rachel mentioned, "I think this is just one of those issues that is sort of ubiquitous across not just higher education, but across the landscape in general, both here and globally. I think it's an area that warrants more research." In addition, participants discussed the influence they thought this research may have on future generations of women considering whether the deanship would be a potential career path for them, and others discussed the value for current women deans.

Additional participant comments referenced the low number of women deans compared to men, the importance of increasing this number, and increasing diversity in business school leadership in general. Rita commented on how, "the number of women deans is small and I don't see it growing; that's something I'm concerned about, so I'm glad you're doing it." Diana thinks the goal should be to double the number of women business deans. She shared, "The female representation of business deans is not where it needs to be. I would say a goal would be to

match the percentage of students, which would put us at 40%, it would have to almost double.

Charlotte also commented on the importance of diversity in academic leadership:

Leadership in general, it goes without saying, is sort of where things can really go right or wrong. The women's side of this is also inherently interesting because I think diversity in academic leadership has really just started to take off. I think it's important in its own right to focus on this as a topic; there's a lot of stuff going on there.

A few participants addressed the female-focused nature of this study, while others indicated that it was not about gender. Marie does not like defining herself as a woman and stated:

I don't like to define myself as being a woman and never have. In some ways, I think I am just like everybody else, but the truth is, I'm not, so it's probably a good thing and I just thought it was kind of intriguing and a good study to be involved.

In contrast, Anna's initial reaction to this research topic was that "the qualifications to be a business dean are not impacted by your gender." She shared, "I needed the same kinds of skills and experiences that a man would need, but I do recognize that business school deans are less likely to be women."

The women business deans who participated in this study were willing to give their coveted time to participate in this research given their interest in the topic, the timeliness of the research, and the need to increase more women business deans, as well as diversity in higher education leadership in general. In today's higher education landscape, participants stressed that "this is not the time for business as usual." Participants indicated their hope that this research will influence future generations of women to consider an academic leadership path, as well as benefit current women business deans.

Essence of the Journey to Academic Leadership for Women Business Deans

The purpose of the final step in the phenomenological analysis is to integrate "the fundamental textural and structural descriptions into a unified statement of the essence of the

experience of the phenomenon as a whole” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 100). The essence constitutes “common or universal” qualities of the experience “without which it would not be what it is” (Husserl, 1991, p. 43). The essence of the experience of the journey to academic leadership for women business deans is captured below in a composite description that emerged from the synthesis process of the participants’ significant statements, reflecting both descriptions of the how (textural) and what (structural) of their experiences.

The essence derived from participants’ stories was that the journey to academic leadership was incidental and non-aspirational early on and began before participants became aware of their leadership aspirations or felt a pull towards academic leadership roles. Having been tapped early and often for leadership opportunities, frequently with the recognition and encouragement of others; participants began to “choose leadership” and assume initial academic leadership roles. Once in these roles, they realized they could do the job of dean just as well, if not better than others and their career goals became more intentional and purposive.

Because little formal preparation for the deanship exists, participants relied most on informal networks, mentors, and previous administrative and/or industry experience to learn and prepare for the role of dean. Despite various challenges experienced in the role, the deanship became a rewarding experience, yet sometimes a lonely position not without sacrifice. Participants encouraged other women academics to take a risk, try it, and realize that they will never be fully ready to take on the deanship; but if they do, would find it a fun and rewarding job in which they can have a broader influence on colleges of business, higher education, and society.

Chapter Summary

Chapter Four presented major findings from the study. Participants' in-depth accounts of their experiences led to the emergence of five theme clusters and 14 sub-themes. The five overarching themes that emerged from the data were "path to academic leadership," "training and preparation," "importance of relationships," "having a broader influence, and "reflections." These five themes and their sub-themes encapsulated the common experiences of participants' academic leadership journeys and led to the essence of the academic leadership journey experience for women business deans.

This essence revealed, in summary, that even though the journey to academic leadership was incidental and non-aspirational early on, with the recognition and encouragement of others participants assumed initial academic leadership roles. Once in these roles, their career goals became more intentional and they continued on the path to the deanship. Because little formal preparation for the deanship exists, participants relied most on informal networks, mentors, and previous administrative and/or industry experiences to learn and prepare for the role of dean. Despite various challenges and sacrifices experienced in the role, the deanship has been a rewarding experience, and one in which they could have a broader influence on many facets of higher education.

The next chapter will begin with a summary of findings and then present a discussion of the findings in relation to the central research question, additional findings, the theoretical framework, and the literature review. The chapter will also discuss conclusions, implications of the findings for educational and professional practice, provide recommendations for future research, and conclude with final reflections.

Chapter 5

Conclusions and Recommendations

The purpose of this study was to explore the academic leadership journeys of women business deans. Specifically, this study sought to develop a more enhanced understanding of the common experiences that prepared women to become business deans and influenced attainment of their role. This study was guided by the following research question: “What are women business deans’ experiences with academic leadership preparation and role attainment?” Through a qualitative, phenomenological design, nine women business deans from U.S., AACSB-accredited, doctoral-granting, four-year colleges of business were interviewed and the data from the interviews, along with written life-world descriptions, were analyzed.

This chapter begins with a summary of the findings presented in chapter 4, followed by a discussion of the findings in relation to the central research question and additional findings, and their congruence with related literature, as well as the theoretical framework of human agency. The next section provides conclusions and implications for current educational practice. The chapter concludes with recommendations for future research and final reflections.

Summary of Findings

Findings of this study resulted in five overarching themes and 14 sub-themes that were introduced in Chapter 4. Table 2 summarizes these findings.

Table 2*Summary of Findings*

Theme	Sub-Theme	Summary of Findings
Path to Academic Leadership	Initial Incidental, Non-Aspirational Path	The initial path to academic leadership for participants was incidental and an unplanned, non-aspirational career move. Most were satisfied being a faculty member, enjoyed the rewards they were experiencing as an academic, and were not looking for something else.
	External Recognition and Encouragement	Most participants ended up in initial academic leadership roles from the recognition and encouragement of others. Other people saw leadership abilities in them often before they recognized those abilities in themselves.
	Obstacles Along the Path	Certain obstacles exist along the path to academic leadership, ones participants claim may be holding other academic women back from pursuing or advancing into academic leadership roles. These include women having to work harder to prove themselves and the slower progression to full professor.
	Increased Intentionality Later in Career	Once assuming initial academic leadership roles, participants' motivations shifted and they realized they wanted to pursue the deanship. This shift was often precipitated by watching other deans and realizing they could do the role just as well, if not better than them. The second half of participants' careers have been much more purposive and intentional.
Training and Preparation	Lack of Formal Preparation	Participants received little formal preparation for their academic leadership roles, including the deanship. This led participants to take a self-directed approach to training and development, seek out leadership development opportunities on their own, and rely on mentors, coaches, and informal networks to learn and enact the role of dean.
	Previous Roles	Experience in previous administrative and/or industry roles provided the most preparation for the role of dean, including watching other leaders perform their role, through both positive and negative examples. Often taking on expanded duties in their previous roles and being groomed by other leaders, participants learned the role of dean in a way that prepared them to successfully take on the role themselves.

Table 2 Continued*Summary of Findings*

Theme	Sub-Theme	Summary of Findings
Importance of Relationships	Mentors	Mentors, sometimes referred to as role models and/or coaches, were instrumental throughout participants' academic leadership journeys. Sometimes there was one pivotal person that influenced participants' academic leadership trajectory. Participants consider themselves mentors and do their part to encourage and develop the next generation of women academic leaders.
	Advice to Academic Women	In the spirit of mentorship and encouragement, participants offered advice to academic women who may be considering, or aspiring to, future academic leadership roles. They encourage other women academics to "take a risk," try it out," and say "yes" to opportunities that stretch their skill set.
	Informal Networks and Family Support	Participants relied heavily on informal networks for learning, support, and success in their deanships, especially given the lack of formal preparation received. Family support, especially spousal support, was critical in participants' academic leadership journeys and in their current deanships.
Having a Broader Influence	Bigger than Me	Participants realized they could have a broader influence on a greater collective of students, faculty, institutions, society and higher education by assuming academic leadership roles and this became a driving force in their deanships and careers.
	Inclusive and Collaborative Leadership	Participants adopted and enacted an inclusive and collaborative leadership style in an effort to ensure a wide range of perspectives and voices were included when making decisions. This allowed participants to create teams and coalitions to achieve goals.
Reflections	Role of Dean	Due to support networks and being "hard-working and achievement-oriented" participants did not experience major interruptions in their leadership journeys. However, the demanding nature of the deanship often left participants sacrificing time and work-life balance. Despite the sacrifices experienced in the role, most participants have enjoyed the deanship and found it to be a fun job with many rewards.
	Research Topic	Participants were willing to give their time to this research given their interest in the topic and the "need to increase the number of women business deans," as well as diversity in the deanship in general. Participants stressed that "this is not the time for business as usual" and hoped that this research could influence future generations of women to consider academic leadership roles.

Discussion of Findings in Relation to the Central Research Question

The central research question of this study was, “What are women business deans’ experiences with academic leadership preparation and role attainment?” Although much insight was gained regarding these two specific areas, additional aspects of participants’ academic leadership journeys emerged throughout the interview process. Therefore, the discussion of findings will focus on the two components of the central research question, with a subsequent section that discusses additional findings. The findings often spanned both aspects of the central research question. For example, the importance of relationships, including mentors, informal networks, and spousal support were highly influential in participants experiences of both preparing for and attaining the role of dean.

Role Attainment

Participants had varying paths that led to attainment of the business deanship. They were all full professors and had spent time as academic teachers and/or researchers, and over half had spent time in industry. The roles held previous to participants’ first deanship were (in order of most common) associate dean, interim or acting dean, central administration, and professor, while some had served as prior department chairs. This finding is congruent with research conducted by AACSB (2018) in which the positions of associate dean, interim dean, and department chair were the most frequent jobs held by both male and female business deans prior to assuming their role.

Findings of this study indicated that the initial path to academic leadership for participants was incidental and an unplanned, non-aspirational career move. Most were satisfied being a faculty member, enjoying the “joy, satisfaction, flexibility, and rewards” they were experiencing as an academic, and not looking for something to do next. These findings are

consistent with existing literature on women in academic leadership in which several studies indicated that women academic leaders typically did not intentionally look for administrative positions or have formal career plans, and many had planned to be educators throughout their careers (see Madsen, 2007, 2008; Redmond et al., 2017).

Some women choose to remain faculty members not interested in formal leadership roles; hesitant to forgo their independence, scholarly freedom, teaching, and inspiring students, which is what initially drew them to the professorship (Blackmore, 2014; McTiernan & Flynn, 2011; Ward & Eddy, 2013). Several participants shared this initial sentiment towards academic leadership. Diana mentioned, “I was living the life I prized as a college professor and was not looking for more than that.” Anna and Charlotte never went to school thinking they would be administrators; their initial career plans were “always just to be an academic” and “research was their first love.”

Research with business school deans across institution types found that the majority (30% who were women) had not planned to become deans and applied for the job only after being approached to do so; their move into the deanship was unintentional and serendipitous, but also a natural progression (Davies, 2015). Participants shared a similar pattern and used terms such as “happenstance,” “serendipity,” and “accidental,” in describing the set of unplanned circumstances that led them to initial academic leadership roles. As other research has found, even though department heads and long-term faculty are those most likely to consider advancement into academic administration, it is generally an evolutionary process rather than a career aspiration held during their years as college students (Land, 2003). Although Charlotte began her career only wanting to be an academic, over time she “felt a natural progression

towards administration,” as did Marie and Rachel who described their moves into administration as a “natural career step” and “a natural progression.”

Although all nine participants did not have initial academic leadership aspirations, they often accepted a move into academic leadership roles in response to a request, encouragement, and/or recognition from other administrators, sometimes being “groomed” for those roles. Others often “saw something” in participants and encouraged them to “think about leadership” often before they had an interest in doing so or recognized leadership abilities in themselves. Diana, Anna, Rita, and Rachel described these experiences as “prompts along the way,” “someone seeing something in me,” “being tapped early and often,” and “someone opening a door or tapping on my shoulder” to consider academic leadership opportunities. Similarly, existing research has shown that women academic leaders, such as female presidents, had informal career paths based on opportunities and influential individuals’ encouragement or an invitation to consider a move into the role (Madsen 2007; 2008).

Other research has found that many senior female academics were hesitant to apply for leadership positions without specific encouragement or endorsement of their credentials from others and had rarely put themselves forward for their roles (Chesterman et al., 2005). This pattern holds true for women CEOs in which few women set out to be CEO and the majority gave no thought to being CEO until someone explicitly told them they had it in them (Korn Ferry, 2017). This finding is also congruent with existing research on “relational responsibility” (Dahlvig & Longman, 2014, p.12) that has demonstrated women will often accept a broader leadership role in response to a personalized request from key individuals, out of a willingness to fulfill a compelling need within the institution, and/or in response to a desire or sense of purpose

to employ their abilities for the benefit of others (Dahlvig & Longman, 2014; Ibarra et al., 2011; Keohane, 2014; Longman et al., 2018; Murphy et al., 2017).

The willingness to pursue and accept administrative positions was often a result of wanting to affect change at a broader level and out of a sense of responsibility to assist in meeting the needs of the school rather than a desire for a new title, greater salary, or prestige (Dahlvig & Longman, 2014). Similarly, participants advanced into academic leadership roles partly out of a desire to have a broader influence than they could have as individual faculty members. Diana, Rita, Marie, Charlotte, and Emma all referenced academic leadership roles as “bigger than themselves” and a way they could “influence change and outcomes at a broader level.” Diana described this broader influence as “taking off the hat that allowed *me* to experience the rewards of a faculty member and putting on the hat that allowed me to create a container for *many other people*.”

Findings indicated that once participants assumed initial academic leadership roles, their motivations toward leadership shifted and they realized they wanted to pursue the deanship. Grace, Anna, and Marie considered their associate deanships the “stepping stone” and the point when they “got more serious” about becoming a dean. In describing this shift, Rita mentioned becoming “less of an invited administrator and more purposeful in my career path.” This shift in motivation to pursue the deanship was sometimes precipitated by watching other deans enact their roles, through both positive and negative examples. Emma, Rita, Claire, and Rachel discussed the impetus for advancing into the deanship as “watching other deans and realizing they could do the job just as well, if not better than them.”

Findings stressed the importance of relationships, informal networks, mentors, coaches, and spousal support during participants’ academic leadership journeys. The extant research has

found similar themes of mentor influence, networks, spousal support, coaches, and additional key relationships as important influences during women's journeys to becoming academic deans (Contreras Flores, 2016; Hannum et al., 2015; Kleihauer et al., 2012; Longman et al., 2019). Mentors and role models are primary facilitators who influence leadership considerations, aspirations, and advancement for women in higher education (Bryant, 2018; Cassady, 2014; Dahlvig & Longman, 2014; Ely et al., 2011; Longman & Lamm Bray, 2017; Wheat & Hill, 2016). McTiernan and Flynn (2011) found that 56% of women deans had utilized a mentor in their career journey as opposed to 45% of men.

Findings of this study are consistent with this literature in which the majority of participants discussed the important influence that mentors, coaches, and role models had on their academic leadership journeys and role attainment of the deanship. Rita mentioned, "I have had a whole slew of mentors and role models and I look to them for different things." Mentors "encouraged," "pushed," and sometimes "groomed" participants for the deanship, recognizing their leadership potential, supporting their leadership development, and encouraging their advancement into academic leadership roles.

Other research has discovered the power of "defining moments" (Dahlvig & Longman, 2010, p. 238) in women's higher education leadership journeys in which a single conversation or even a single sentence, was cited as having been "the *most* defining moment within their leadership development journey" (Dahlvig & Longman, 2010, p. 245). This is consistent with current findings in which participants often referenced one pivotal person or experience that was highly influential in their decision to pursue academic leadership. Charlotte and Diana both described key people who influenced their journey, one crystallized Diana's thinking about

“choosing leadership” and another gave Charlotte “a ton of opportunities to succeed in high-profile ways.”

Although mentors and other influential individuals were facilitators in participants’ role attainment of the deanship, findings also revealed certain obstacles experienced along their academic leadership journeys; ones that may be keeping other women from pursuing and attaining academic leadership roles. These included women “having to prove themselves more,” and the “slower progression from assistant to full professor.”

Research has shown that some women hold themselves back from their next career step until they can check off all the boxes and are affirmed by others; whereas men tend to take the chance and go for it (Hannum et al., 2015). This burden of having to prove themselves in business schools results in several practices that make it difficult for women to advance to higher ranking jobs (Gutierrez y Muhs et al., 2012). Participants noted similar challenges. Emma mentioned that women have to “prove themselves” and Anna discussed how women wait to go after their next career move until they can “check off all the boxes.”

Another obstacle encountered on the path to the deanship and other academic leadership roles, and what may be contributing to the lower number of women business deans, is the slow progression from associate to full professor often experienced by women. Several participants referred to this as a “pipeline issue” within business faculty in which women are not making it to the full professorship as the same rate as men. Flynn, et al. (2015) found a similar pattern in their research on gender in business schools and noted that many gender gaps can be traced back to the underrepresentation of women as full professors and academic administrators. Women business faculty are less likely to become full professors than men and hold relatively few associate dean and academic department chair positions, both major stepping stones to the dean’s

role (Flynn et al., 2015). Across colleges of business globally, women comprise 33.7% of associate deans and 63% of assistant deans, but fill only 26.2% of academic department chairs and 25.2% of deanships (AACSB, 2018; Bartel, 2018). Across faculty positions in colleges of business, only 22% of women are full professors, even though they occupy 38.3% of assistant professor roles (AACSB, 2018; Bartel, 2018).

These trends are emulated in corporate America where only 4.8% ($n = 24$) of women are CEOs of S&P 500 companies (Catalyst, 2019a) even though they comprise 26.5% of senior-level managers, 36.9% of mid-level managers and nearly half (44.7%) of the entry-level workforce (Catalyst, 2019b). According to Huang et al. (2019), it is not the “glass ceiling” (p. 3) preventing women from reaching senior leadership positions; the biggest obstacle that women face on the path to senior leadership is much earlier in their career, at the first step up to manager. This early inequality has a long-term impact on the advancement of women into leadership roles; since men significantly outnumber women at the manager level, there are fewer women to hire or promote to senior managers (Huang et al., 2019).

A similar pattern emerged for participants and as the findings revealed, may be due in part to the expectations of service roles placed on academic women early in their career. Both Charlotte and Rita discussed the “unequal service expectations placed on women” and the need to help women “advance through preserving their time and ensuring they are not burdened in a way that they can’t become full professor.” Existing research on business schools has demonstrated this pattern in which administrators often ask female faculty members to take on ancillary assignments in service to the school, but turn to male faculty with more career-building, high-visibility assignments (Bartel, 2018; Bisoux, 2017).

Service work can be fulfilling for women but is not necessarily career-advancing (Bartel, 2018). In past research, women deans have admitted to accepting time-consuming service assignments that did not provide them with the external contacts and skills that one might expect of an incoming business dean (Flynn, 1996). They were also negatively affected by timing issues that can influence generating a strong publication record, achieving tenure, and taking on administrative roles while juggling family responsibilities (Flynn, 1996). Participants admitted to taking on their “fair share” of service roles and that “women are often tapped for service opportunities.” Claire mentioned that “women are quicker to help out with programmatic support things which takes them away from research at the end of the day.” Rita thinks “women’s voices are needed at the table” which is why they may be called on often for service, but may also be “keeping them from progressing at the same rate as men.”

Diehl and Dubinski (2016) found that in organizations with male-dominated leadership, such as business schools, men are more likely than women to be perceived as future leaders, and thus men are more likely than women to receive leadership development, advice, and career-related support to prepare and sponsor them for future leadership positions. However, none of the participants mentioned receiving less career-related support than their male counterparts.

Role Preparation

Existing research indicates a lack of formal preparation for academic leadership, including the deanship, and has found that developing leaders in academia has often been left to chance or the individual mentoring efforts of a few people (Gmelch, 2013; Gigliotti, 2017; Gmelch, 2013; Gmelch & Buller, 2015; Gmelch et al., 2011; Wolverson & Gmelch, 2002). Incoming deans often discover they are not adequately prepared to meet the responsibilities of overseeing a broader range of issues and realize that the expertise and behaviors they need to

succeed as leaders must be acquired while they are on the job; leaving most deans to be self-taught professionals (Gmelch, 2002; Gmelch & Buller, 2015; Kambil & Budnik, 2013). This is consistent with research on colleges of business specifically, where 68% of deans (23% of whom were female) reported being somewhat unprepared or not at all prepared to manage at least one of their role responsibilities (Davis, 2018).

Similarly, findings indicated a lack of formal preparation and training for the business deanship. Although participants attended various regional or national trainings, along with a few AACSB workshops or seminars, most of their training and preparation was informal and self-directed. Existing research also discusses the importance and value of women-only leadership development programming (Brue & Brue, 2016; Debebe, 2016; Hill et al., 2018; Knipfer, 2017; Madsen & Andrade, 2018; Murphy, 2017). However, only one participant had attended a national women-only leadership development program and discussed the value it had in her development as a leader.

Leadership development efforts have been slower to reach education, and colleges and universities in particular, due in part to the perception that subject matter expertise and experience are the primary qualifications necessary to provide effective leadership in higher education (Gigliotti & Ruben, 2017). Charlotte and Marie emphasized formal training for the deanship as a “huge growth area” for higher education, noting that institutions “just assume we know how to lead; like they assumed we knew how to teach, but never taught us.”

Research has confirmed that the decision to develop as a leader must be made with intention and purpose, and requires deliberate commitment (Ruben et al., 2017). The lack of formal preparation and training led participants to take a self-directed approach to learning and development, in which they often sought out leadership development opportunities, relied on

mentors and informal networks, and hired coaches to help them learn and succeed in their deanships. Diana and Grace hired coaches to learn and develop in the role of dean, especially since the deanship is “a pretty lonely job and there aren’t that many people you can talk to anymore; a coach can help you stay disciplined and push yourself.”

Findings indicated that participants relied most on their experiences in past administrative and/or industry roles to prepare for the deanship, sometimes taking on expanded duties in those roles. Diana, Charlotte, and Marie mentioned taking on expanded duties in their associate deanships which allowed them to “circle the dean’s role 360” and “be like the academic in charge, second in command” which gave them exposure to the breadth of the role and prepared them for the deanship. Participants also discussed observing other deans enacting their roles as a sort of “behavior modeling” to learn the role of dean, through both positive and negative examples. This is consistent with previous research on the leadership preparation of business deans at U.S. doctoral institutions which found that regardless of discipline, deans relied most on experience in past administrative posts and relationships with faculty leaders to prepare for their roles (Del Favero, 2006).

Findings uncovered certain transitions that occurred when participants transitioned from faculty to administrative roles and between school contexts. As was experienced by some participants, research has shown that new academic leaders find themselves immersed in a transition that demands personal development and creates new challenges and learning settings (O’Neil et al., 2015; Wolverton & Gmelch, 2002). Emma, Rachel, Charlotte, and Grace discussed the unexpected transitions that occurred when moving from a faculty role to an administrative one, during which participants sometimes experienced what Charlotte referred to as “the loss of an academic identity.” This is consistent with existing research that has indicated

the reality of a higher-level administrative career in academic leadership can be difficult to imagine for many faculty members; even when the path is made available and actively chosen, the transition can result in sort of an identity crisis (Sapp & Crabtree, 2018).

Leadership has been characterized as a contextual phenomenon and research contends that leadership skills will vary by context, such as moving from one academic department to another or between different institutions (Day & O'Connor, 2003; Gallos, 2002; Kalargyrou et al., 2012). Rita and Rachel both experienced such a transition when moving between institutional contexts and cultures, and although Rachel was well prepared to step into the role “there were cultural distinctions between the two institutions” of which she was not aware. Rita commented that “the culture and context drives 80% of what we do on a day-to-day basis.”

Additional Findings

Although the central research question focused on role preparation and attainment, a few additional findings emerged regarding participants' experiences in the deanship. Existing literature has indicated that in efforts to emulate the world of business, many schools have created work environments that encourage and reward long hours and frequent international travel, practices that are often incompatible with maintaining a healthy work-life balance (Morgan 2016). The long hours, travel, and demands of the dean's job can create a constant balancing act for women (McTiernan & Flynn, 2011; Sorce & Flynn, 1999).

Balancing one's personal and professional life prior to and while serving as business dean persists as one of the greatest challenges women face, especially for those with family responsibilities (McTiernan & Flynn, 2011; Sorce & Flynn, 1999). While women are more educated and more employed than ever, they continue to take on most of the household and familial duties (Germano, 2019). Even with supportive spouses, as participants expressed having

and as critical to their success, participants such as Rita discussed that “women tend to be the manager and take care of everything, even today with more equal partnerships.”

Participants mentioned that the long hours and multiple demands of the deanship often lead to a sacrifice of work-life balance. They discussed the “sheer amount of work and long hours” inherent in the deanship, how it is “not an eight-to-five kind of job” and “there is only so much time in the day, so what you devote that time to is a choice you have to make.”

The balancing act between academic women’s personal and work lives is often touted as a barrier to women advancing in higher education leadership (Chesterman et al., 2005; Glass & Cook, 2014; Keohane, 2014; McTiernan & Flynn, 2011; Morley, 2014). Some women forego academic promotion and pursuing leadership roles due to increased role conflict, long hours, work-life concerns, and a perception that advanced positions in academe are not open to women, particularly women who hope to make time for a family or life beyond work (Blackmore, 2014; Ellinas et al., 2018; Glass & Cook, 2016; Keohane, 2014; Morley, 2014; Sandberg, 2014; Ward & Eddy, 2013). Although participants discussed how work-life concerns and sacrifices influence their lives, they did not result in formal career interruptions or keep them from pursuing or attaining the deanship.

Some participants referenced gender-based scenarios they had experienced along their academic leadership journeys. However, unlike other research that has shown gender-based barriers can impede women’s journeys to academic leadership (Diehl & Dubinski, 2016), the women in this study did not consider those situations detrimental to their success. When encountering gendered situations, participants found ways, as Grace and Rita described, “to turn it around gently” or “not entertain discussions about it.” They mentioned “not reacting” to situations, “having thick skin” and “being comfortable in a world without playing the gender

card.” This is similar to research on women CEOs in which they did not see challenges as obstacles, they saw them as learning opportunities; noting that if they hit roadblocks as a woman, they just went around them instead of trying to smash through a wall or disassociating with someone (Korn Ferry, 2017).

Despite the challenges and sacrifices experienced along their academic leadership journeys and in their role as dean, most participants enjoyed the business deanship, found it fun and rewarding, and a role in which they could influence a broader array of people and outcomes. These findings are consistent with existing research that discovered senior women leaders in higher education enjoyed the impact and difference they could make and it motivated them to work through the challenges they faced and stay the course despite the role’s demands (Hannum et al., 2015). Participants encouraged other women business academics to “say yes” to opportunities, “take risks and go for it,” and ensure they are strategic about accepting assignments “that stretch them and add to existing skill sets.”

To be successful, deans must be masters of connecting, collaborating, and convincing, keeping dozens of moving targets in their sights, yet remaining composed, building trust, and standing firm when they must (Davies, 2016; Kring & Kaplan, 2011). Business schools require leaders who are adaptive, collaborative, creative, and resilient (Thomas et al., 2013). In a global world, leaders must be adaptable to new situations, flexible, inclusive and collaborative or failure is inevitable (Werhane, 2007). These leadership characteristics are demonstrative of situational leaders who adapt and readapt themselves to new and changing situations (Northouse, 2019).

Findings revealed that participants adopted and enacted an inclusive and collaborative leadership style in which they led with trust and transparency and adapted to situations as needed, while also remaining decisive and strategic. Charlotte and Grace discussed “bringing

people together and forming teams to mobilize an organization” and “building relationships and coalitions in order to get things done.” Participants referenced making better decisions “when there are more voices at the table” and creating a space “where every person can bring forth good ideas.” Although participants took a “we’re all in this together” approach, they were also willing to be decisive and “make hard decisions” when the situation called for it.

Discussion of Findings in Relation to the Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework that guided this study was human agency, a tenant of social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986; 2001). Human agency is defined as the “capacity to exercise control over the nature and quality of one’s life” (Bandura, 2001, p. 1), which has at its heart, self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997). In the agentic socio-cognitive view, people are self-organizing, proactive, self-reflecting, and self-regulating, and have the power to influence their own actions to produce certain results (Bandura, 2001). Human agency is characterized by the core features of intentionality, forethought, self-reactiveness, and self-reflectiveness (Bandura, 2001; 2006; Hitlin & Elder, 2007). For people to make their way through a complex world of challenges, they have to make good judgments about their capabilities, anticipate probable effects of different courses of action, determine opportunities and constraints, and regulate their behavior accordingly (Bandura, 2001).

Human agency is considered essential for effective advancement and enactment of women leaders and provides a means to understand investment in a career path, (Dean et al., 2009; McAlpine & Amundsen, 2016). As some literature has noted, the individualistic nature of an academic career puts academics under pressure to manage their career advancement and reinforces the belief that they are personally responsible for making it happen (Dean et al., 2009; Kandiko Howson et al., 2017). Existing research has found human agency to be a dominant

theme in women executive's career journeys in the sense of intentional, future-oriented, self-directed, and self-reflective action (Bowles, 2012; Emory, 2014). Similarly, these tenants of human agency, in particular intentionality, emerged throughout the study findings.

Intentionality refers to having a goal, vision, and purpose and doing something intentionally; an intention represents a proactive commitment that includes action plans and strategies to realize goals (Bandura, 2001; 2006). Findings indicated that due to the non-aspirational nature of their initial academic leadership roles, participants did not manage their initial move into administration in a strategic or intentional way. Most ended up in initial academic leadership roles from the recognition and encouragement of others in a “serendipitous” way, as opposed to having a strategic plan that was individually managed. However, once participants assumed initial academic leadership roles, they experienced a shift in aspirations and demonstrated increased agency as their career goals, including the deanship, became more intentional. Marie was intentional about pursuing the deanship “once she felt ready and recognized that she could and wanted to do it.”

According to Ruben et al. (2017), despite circumstances not under the leader's control, the decision to develop as a leader must be made with intention and purpose and requires deliberate commitment. Participants demonstrated agency through a self-directed and intentional approach to training and development, due to the lack of formal preparation available for the deanship. They often hired “coaches” or initiated attending other training and development opportunities to learn and succeed in their roles.

Forethought refers to the ability to visualize and anticipate likely outcomes and choose a course of action that will bring about those desired outcomes (Bandura, 2001, 2006; Fang, 2012). As people progress in their life and careers, they continue to plan, reorder their priorities, and

structure their lives accordingly (Bandura, 2001). Participants demonstrated forethought by making strategic decisions and re-ordering priorities at different times and phases of their academic leadership journeys. These decisions were often around raising young children or in response to other family considerations (spousal jobs, etc.). Early in their careers, participants were more likely to balance family and child-rearing responsibilities with their academic careers and made decisions to accommodate that. Combining family and work to the extent possible was a strategy discussed, such as having spouses attend work events or taking family along on “work vacations.” The second half of participants’ careers has included being more “mindful of jobs, timing, opportunities, and ultimate goals” and they view their careers more strategically. Diana mentioned, “at any given point in time, everything is impossible; but if you are intentional over longer periods of time a whole lot of things are possible.”

Self-reactiveness refers to the deliberate ability to motivate and regulate oneself in executing the intentional plans one has made (Bandura, 2001, 2006; Ellis et al., 2008). Although participants shifted priorities as needed, they regulated their academic leadership journeys by ensuring there were not any major interruptions in their careers. Emma described being “strategic” in ensuring there were not any interruptions in her academic career path. Other participants referenced a “slow-down period, not surprisingly around child-rearing years,” but none indicated a formal interruption in their career path. This was partly due, according to several participants, to support networks and their “hard-working nature and ability to get things done.”

Self-reflectiveness refers to the ability to employ functional self-awareness and reflect upon, and adjust, one’s actions and thoughts as necessary (Bandura, 2001; 2006; Fang, 2012). This allows people to monitor their thinking, evaluate their motivations and values, decide to act

on ideas, and make corrective adjustments as necessary (Bandura, 2001; Newman, 2006).

Existing research indicates that self-knowledge, personal awareness, and corrective feedback must be part of a dean's leadership journey (Wolverton & Gmelch, 2002).

The findings revealed self-reflection and self-analysis as an important component of participants' leadership journeys. Diana referred to self-reflection as "deep work" and mentioned how important it was to "put yourself in a space where you can be introspective and do some self-diagnosis." Emma claimed that most of her learning has been on the job and "by being reflective and self-aware." Rita mentioned that as a dean, taking time for some "reflection and self-care" can help you "understand your 'why' and better ignore the things that might bog you down or keep you from moving forward." Charlotte indicated, "I think you choose how you frame your life, which is a huge thing." This ability to reflect and re-frame when needed allowed participants to manage their outlooks, their deanships, and their careers.

Participants also demonstrated agency through their leadership style and enacting their leadership role. To meet today's complex organizational challenges, leaders must have the requisite agency to positively influence their followers and the organization's culture, climate, and performance (Hannah et al., 2008). To mobilize groups toward collective performance, leaders have to both exercise personal agency and create similar levels of agency in those individuals they are leading (Bandura, 2001; Hannah et al., 2008). Findings illuminate this aspect of agency in which participants formed teams and coalitions in an effort to accomplish goals, especially given the multiple demands and frequent travel inherent in the role that often took them away from the office. Their inclusive and collaborative leadership style allowed them to "bring people together to get things done."

For most participants, once in initial academic leadership roles, they demonstrated agency by planning future courses of action for their careers. These decisions were often determined by “how much they had left to give” to the role of dean or in future academic leadership roles. For Marie, demonstrating agency in her career means knowing that even though she can do the job of provost or president, she does not want to due to the “commitments that would take time away from family.” Diana managed her career and life choices by knowing “when she was tipping too far into the professional area of her life and managing that.” For Emma, agency included maintaining “career mobility” which is a “card she can control,” even though she is not sure what is next in her career. Grace demonstrated agency by knowing she did not want to end her career as dean at a particular institution, so she made intentional plans to move to another school.

For some participants, managing career plans included shorter-term goals. Rita and Charlotte both discussed not having a “very long-term plan” even though Rita is “thinking more strategically” about the future, she has work she wants to do at this phase of her career. Regardless of timing and future career goals, Rachel mentioned, “I still think the thing with leadership and with women in higher education is that you have to carve your own path in some sense.”

Self-efficacy beliefs constitute the key factor of human agency and provide a foundation for all other facets of agency to operate (Bandura, 1997; Hannah et al., 2008). Self-efficacy beliefs refer to beliefs in one’s capabilities to guide, organize, and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments (Bandura, 1989; 2011; Sloma-Williams et al., 2009; Wood & Bandura, 1989). An individual’s efficacy beliefs can influence their career aspirations, the

course of action they choose to pursue, and how much effort they put forth in given endeavors (Bandura, 1997; Bandura & Locke, 2003).

Role models, mentoring relationships, and effective networks accelerate professional advancement, but self-efficacy is required for women to demonstrate leadership potential and intentionality in planning for a leadership career (Ford, 2016). This is consistent with the findings in which mentoring, coaches, role models, and networks were highly influential in participants pursuing and advancing into academic leadership roles; but self-efficacy enabled participants to manage their career paths and advance into the deanship. As participants continued along their leadership journeys, their self-efficacy beliefs increased and they “knew they could do the role of dean.”

During her interview, Charlotte referenced “the chance encounter aspect to this [academic leadership journeys] that is phenomenal.” She recommended I read an article by Bandura (1982) that discusses chance encounters. Having framed this study with Bandura’s theory of human agency, which allows for individual acts of planning and control, the two seemed contradictory. However, after reading the article, it was clear that the two concepts are far from mutually exclusive. In the article, Bandura (1982) claimed:

Whatever the social conditions might be, there is still the task of explaining the varied directions that personal lives take at any given time and place. This requires a personal, as well as a social analysis of life paths. (p. 748)

Bandura (1982) explained that human encounters involve degrees of fortuitiveness; people often intentionally seek certain types of experiences, but the persons who thereby enter their lives are determined by a large element of chance. In one example, Bandura indicated that through a semi-fortuitous process, some students meet inspiring teachers who have a decisive influence on their choice of careers (Bandura, 1982). This concept was similar for participants;

their academic leadership journeys were often influenced by someone who encouraged or inspired them to pursue leadership roles. Although human agency was demonstrated throughout participants' stories; chance encounters, sometimes referred to by participants as "happenstance" or "serendipity," were also influential along their academic leadership journeys.

Conclusions

Based on the study findings and the extant literature on the preparation and advancement of women into academic leadership roles and the business deanship, four main conclusions can be drawn:

1. Women business faculty do not automatically aspire to academic leadership. Initially, women business faculty may not have a clear understanding of what academic leadership roles entail, the broader influence the role can have, and may receive messages about academic administration being "the dark side." This messaging may lead to a perception that academic leadership roles are unappealing and not worth the loss of flexibility and rewards of remaining a faculty member. This could be hindering women business faculty from initially considering academic leadership roles. Getting more women into initial academic leadership roles is critical. Once in initial administrative roles, women's aspirations shift and their academic leadership career plans, including pursuing the deanship, become more purposive and intentional. Although challenges and sacrifices exist, occupying the business deanship can be a fun, rewarding experience and a way to influence a broader array of people and outcomes.
2. Training and preparation for the business deanship is largely informal and based on experience in other leadership roles. Other than AACSB workshops, seminars, and/or committee involvement, little formal preparation for the role exists, often leaving women business deans to take a self-directed approach to their training and preparation activities. Institutions may not be actively encouraging faculty to pursue academic leadership roles and hence, not preparing them for such roles in a formal, intentional way. Without formal preparation, or at least a more concerted effort, coupled with a loss of an "academic identity," as women transition into academic leadership roles, they may not be set up for success in the deanship and it may be contributing to short tenures in the role.
3. Recognition and encouragement from others, along with mentor influence, informal networks, and family support, are essential components of women advancing into, and succeeding in, academic leadership roles, including the business deanship. Without this support and influence, women may be initially hesitant to consider, or advance into, academic leadership roles.

4. The tenure and promotion process and timeline, coupled with increased service expectations and family obligations that often occur during that time, may be constraining academic women's ability to achieve the full professorship. This, in turn, results in a lower number of women qualified for, and on the pathway to, academic leadership roles, including the business deanship.

Implications for Practice

Findings and conclusions from the study support multiple implications for educational and organizational practice focused on educating, preparing, and advancing women into academic leadership roles within colleges of business. One primary conclusion that emerged from the findings indicated that women do not initially aspire to academic leadership roles within colleges of business and may be receiving messages that such roles are unappealing and administration is the “dark side.” In reference to the “pipeline problem,” some research with deans has shown that the talent pool is shallow not because there are not qualified people, rather because there are people who are uninterested or unwilling (Gigliotti, 2017).

The implication for educational practice, specifically colleges of business and those that educate future business faculty, includes increasing awareness of potential academic leadership opportunities early in business faculty careers. With the need for more women in future academic leadership roles, it is important that women faculty are encouraged to assume these positions and are made aware of both the challenges and rewards of doing so. Appealing to their potential desires to have a broader influence and highlighting the many rewards in these roles may serve as motivation to consider the academic leadership path and say “yes” to opportunities along the way that can help them broaden their skill set and advance into those roles.

Academic deans have a key role in the development and functioning of colleges and universities; and for this reason, it is important for them to have the preparation necessary to be effective in the role (Gigliotti, 2017; Gigliotti & Ruben, 2017). It is critical to the future of

business schools that ample numbers of aspiring leaders can successfully make the transition from faculty member to administrator and are prepared to take on and successfully fulfill the role of dean. However, a conclusion from this study is that there is a lack of formal preparation and training for the business deanship.

The implication for business school and institutional leadership, as well as professional organizations such as AACSB, includes a more concerted effort to implement formal training and preparation programs for academic leadership in business schools, specifically the business deanship. An institutionally based leadership development initiative can be a key component in preparing deans to successfully make the transition and fulfill their leadership roles (Gigliotti, 2017; Gigliotti & Ruben, 2017; Gmelch & Buller, 2015). Academe needs a pool of talent that is ready to take on new positions because of recent trends toward shorter periods of tenure for administrative leaders; building effective teams of leaders from which to choose skilled replacements is a prudent approach (Cano & Whitfield, 2019). The need to develop and retain talented leaders from a variety of backgrounds and perspectives is not a women's issue, it is an institutional imperative affecting everyone (Hannum et al., 2015).

Only one participant in this study mentioned attending a women-only leadership development program for academic leaders even though women's leadership development programming is an important strategy for preparing and equipping greater numbers of future women leaders in higher education to successfully take on leadership roles (Bilimoria et al., 2008; Ngunjiri & Gardiner, 2017; Selzer et al., 2017; Sulpizio, 2014). A need remains for continued focus on developing leadership skills and abilities in women through a host of leadership development efforts and interventions (Madsen & Andrade, 2018). Universities have the opportunity to make a significant difference in the effectiveness of women leaders through

the development of resources and programs that directly support current leaders and those aspiring to take on a leadership role (Redmond et al., 2017).

An implication for practice is the design and implementation of a women-only leadership development program for potential, aspiring, and current women business school leaders. Leadership development opportunities directed at female candidates for upper-level leadership roles in higher education should incorporate the voices of women who have been successful, advocate for women in leadership, address both the costs involved and the supports needed in assuming a higher education leadership role, and make clear the benefits and rewards of formal leadership positions (Hannum et al., 2015; Hill et al., 2018; Madsen & Andrade, 2018). WLDP reinforces the need for attention to both structural and institutional change, and creating agency in women as they construct and internalize a leader identity, establish their sense of purpose, and determine how to share that with others (Ely et al., 2011; Eddy & Ward, 2015).

Research has noted that individuals experience the greatest personal growth when a robust, developmental network of people is invested in their personal growth and professional advancement; such a network contributes to greater work satisfaction and likelihood of leadership aspirations and career advancement (Dahlvig & Longman, 2014; Higgins & Kram, 2001; Longman & Madsen, 2014; Murphy & Kram, 2014). Having role models that demonstrate a range of different ways of being in, and successfully navigating a leadership role can help make the role more attainable and attractive while serving to weaken assumptions and stereotypes (Hannum et al., 2015).

Based on this research and the finding that recognition and encouragement from others, along with mentor influence and informal networks are essential components of women advancing into and succeeding in academic leadership roles, another implication is the

implementation of a formal networking program for women academic business faculty. Such a program could connect early-career women business faculty with current women in academic leadership roles who can provide support, advice, and encouragement as they progress along the pathway to the full professorship and consider future academic leadership roles. Leadership development and mentorship programs on campus and through national consortia help faculty discern their aptitudes and aspirations (Sapp & Crabtree, 2018).

Although 38.3% of tenure-track business faculty are women, only 29.8 % are tenured and a mere 22% earn full professorship (AACSB, 2019). Findings suggest that the tenure and promotion process and timeline, coupled with increased service expectations and family obligations that often occur during that time, may be constraining academic women's ability to achieve full professorship. Given that full professorship is a requirement for most academic leadership roles, another implication for business schools is to develop policies and procedures that promote more women making it through the tenure and promotion process and becoming full professors. This includes implementing infrastructures that support female faculty in tenure and promotion and ensure the timeline does not get disrupted by overburdening them with service roles. Furthermore, work-family conflict affects male and female faculty differently and should be addressed in efforts to retain faculty and remove barriers for female faculty seeking leadership opportunities (Ellinas et al., 2018).

Recommendations for Future Research

Although much literature exists on women in higher education leadership, little research exists on the specific experiences of women business deans. To help fill this gap, this study targeted this specific population of women higher education academic leaders and explored their academic leadership journeys using qualitative, phenomenological methods. The central research

question specifically sought to better understand how this subset of women higher education leaders prepared for and attained their roles. Five themes and 14 sub-themes emerged as empirical evidence relating to these and other aspects of their academic leadership journeys. I recommend future research utilize these themes to conduct research that could complement or expand the findings of this study.

This small sample was drawn from a population of 30 women business deans leading at AACSB-accredited, doctoral-granting colleges of business in the United States. Replicating this study for women leading at other types of institutions (i.e. masters-level, undergraduate only, non-accredited, and community colleges) could explore the similarities and differences in role preparation and attainment experiences for women business deans across institution types. This research was also conducted specifically with women business deans in the United States. Future research could explore whether these trends are consistent globally and what, if any, specific academic leadership journey experiences women leading at international colleges of business may encounter.

All participants identified as White, Caucasian females. Therefore, the current study did not allow for a deep exploration of analysis across ethnic and racial groups. Future research could expand this research to a larger population of women business deans to better explore the intersectionality of race, gender, and other identities. Utilizing an intersectional framework can guide exploration of how gender intersects with race and other identities by considering the range of identities represented by women rather than just the single category of gender (Ngunjiri & Gardiner, 2017). Another area for future research includes exploring the similarities and differences in academic leadership journey experiences between men and women deans in

colleges of business. Some survey research exists that does this, but a qualitative design could better uncover in-depth insights into the experiences for both populations.

A finding that emerged from this study was that women faculty are not making it through the tenure and promotion process at the same rate as their male counterparts. Future research could study the population of women business faculty who are on the pathway as assistant professors and explore the specific challenges and experiences they are encountering on the journey to full professorship. In addition, their motivations and aspirations to pursue academic leadership roles and eventually a deanship, along with their perceptions of these roles, could be explored.

Based on the literature and the findings of this study, women-only networks and women-only leadership development programming are important tools for developing women leaders (Debebe et al., 2016; Knipfer et al., 2017; Madsen & Andrade, 2018; Ngunijiri & Gardiner, 2017). Due to the lack of formal preparation received by participants, and from similar findings in the literature, future research could explore design aspects of a women-only leadership development program for the business deanship and other academic leadership roles in business schools. New theories and approaches to leadership development are needed to address the realities faced by women, both in terms of motivations to lead and experiences in leadership (Ibarra et al., 2013; Kezar & Wheaton, 2017; Storberg-Walker & Haber-Curran, 2017). It is imperative that leadership development programs for women academic leaders address the specifics of the context within which they are leading, align with current literature, and be based on current research and theory (Knipfer et al., 2017; Madsen & Andrade, 2018).

Finally, future research may employ other research methods to explore this research topic. For example, a mixed-methods study utilizing an executive psychometric assessment

(Korn Ferry, 2017) to measure traits, drivers, and competencies of women business deans, followed by qualitative interviews based on results from the assessment may provide a more nuanced understanding of this population of women as well as allow for a larger sample.

Chapter Summary

This chapter provided a discussion of the findings in relation to the central research question and additional findings, and their congruence with related literature, as well as the theoretical framework of human agency. Findings in relation to both role attainment and role preparation were consistent with existing literature on women in academic leadership. Participants demonstrated aspects of human agency throughout their leadership journeys, as has been found in the literature regarding agency in executive women's career advancement.

Implications for practice were presented, and included opportunities and support for early career women business faculty, formal academic leadership and women's leadership development programming, a women's mentoring program, and policies and procedures that promote women making it through the tenure and promotion process. Suggested future research includes expanding this research with women business deans at other institutional types, utilizing an intersectional framework and other research designs to explore this topic, exploring women business faculty's experiences through the tenure and promotion process and aspirations to academic leadership, and research that can inform the design of a women-only leadership development program for business faculty and academic leaders.

Final Reflections

It was an honor and a privilege to have nine women business deans, whose time is coveted, share their academic leadership journey experiences and stories with me. These women shared stories of persistence, hard-work, and passion, and it was clear they are all in the role to

contribute their talents and leadership to something greater than themselves. Much like participants were influenced by others who saw something in them, it is my sincere hope that these stories can influence other academic women to consider pursuing academic leadership roles, and the business deanship, if that is where their passion and talents lead.

As Charlotte told me during her interview, “You could have a consultancy career for the rest of your life thinking through the many number of themes you’re going to end up identifying.” Indeed, I think I could, but for now, it is time for me to figure out the next step in my own leadership journey; I have a broader influence to make.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Participant Recruitment Letter

Dear _____,

As a woman business dean leading a four-year, doctoral-granting, AACSB-accredited college of business in the United States, you are invited to participate in a doctoral research study seeking to explore the academic leadership journeys of women business deans. In particular, this qualitative study seeks to develop a more enhanced understanding of the common experiences that prepared women to become business deans and influenced attainment of their role. Data will be collected via in-depth interviews, life-world descriptions and background questionnaires.

If you agree to participate in this study and are selected, you will be committing to one 60-90-minute interview at a mutually agreed upon location (or via Zoom web-based conferencing), sharing of your CV, completion of a demographic questionnaire, and completion of a written life-world description before the interview takes place (which in total should take approximately 60-75 minutes).

-During the interview, you will be asked questions regarding your experiences with role preparation and attainment during your academic leadership journey. Interviews will be audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim and a copy of the transcription will be sent to you for review for accuracy and edits. You will also have the chance to review the interviews transcripts, as well as the study's findings and conclusions to ensure they accurately reflect your experiences. In total, your commitment to this study will last no longer than six months (approximately from October, 2019-March, 2020).

Your participation in this research is voluntary and all of your responses will be kept confidential. If you choose to participate in this research, you will be asked to select a pseudonym, ensuring no personally identifiable information will be associated with your responses to any reports of this information. There are no anticipated risks to you as a result of your participation in this survey. You will not receive any incentives for your participation and if you choose not to participate, it will not result in any penalty.

Please indicate your interest in participating in this study by responding to this e-mail no later than **Friday, Oct. 18, 2019**. If you choose to participate, and are selected for this study, you will be contacted to schedule a mutually agreed upon interview time and asked to sign and return a consent form before data collection begins. Once the consent form is received, you will be sent further instructions to complete the demographic questionnaire and life-world description.

Thank you for your consideration in participating in this study. Your response and time are greatly appreciated. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the lead researcher, Tara Mohrfeld, at tara@utk.edu; 865-804-7474 or her advisor, Dr. Dorian McCoy at dmccoy5@utk.edu; 802-881-1189. If you have questions regarding your rights as a participant, you may contact the University of Tennessee Institutional Review Board (UT IRB) Compliance Officer at utkirb@utk.edu; 865-974-7697.

Sincerely,
Tara Mohrfeld, Doctoral Candidate
Higher Education Administration, University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Appendix B

Informed Consent Statement

Research Study Title: Journey to Academic Leadership: Experiences of Women Business Deans

Researchers: Tara Mohrfeld, PI, University of Tennessee, Knoxville
Dorian L. McCoy, Faculty Advisor, University of Tennessee, Knoxville

WHY AM I BEING ASKED TO BE IN THIS RESEARCH STUDY?

We are asking you to be in this research study because you are a woman business dean at a doctoral- granting, AACSB-accredited college of business in the United States.

WHAT IS THIS RESEARCH STUDY ABOUT?

The purpose of this research study is to explore the academic leadership journeys of women business deans. In particular, this study seeks to develop a more enhanced understanding of the common experiences that prepared women to become business deans and influenced attainment of their role.

HOW LONG WILL I BE IN THIS RESEARCH STUDY?

If you agree to be in this study, your participation will last for approximately six months (from October 2019-March 2020) and will involve one 60-90-minute interview, sharing of your CV (approximately five minutes), completion of an online background questionnaire (approximately 15 minutes) and completion of a written life-world description (approximately 45 minutes) before the interview takes place. This time frame also includes review of the interview transcriptions (approximately 60 minutes) as well as the study's findings and conclusions (approximately 90 minutes) to ensure they accurately reflect your experiences.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF I SAY "YES, I WANT TO BE IN THIS RESEARCH STUDY"?

If you agree to be in this study, we will ask you to:

1. Send a copy of your CV via e-mail
2. Complete and submit an online background questionnaire
3. Complete and submit a written life-world description describing a significant situation that influenced your academic leadership journey
4. Schedule and conduct one in-depth interview with the PI either in-person at a mutually agreed upon location or via Zoom web-based video conferencing

WHAT HAPPENS IF I SAY "NO, I DO NOT WANT TO BE IN THIS RESEARCH STUDY"?

Being in this study is up to you. You can say no now or leave the study later. Either way, your decision won't affect your relationship with the researchers or the University of Tennessee.

WHAT HAPPENS IF I SAY “YES” BUT CHANGE MY MIND LATER?

Even if you decide to be in the study now, you can change your mind and stop at any time. If you decide to stop before the study is completed, you may contact the PI or her faculty advisor and any previous data collected will not be included in the study and destroyed.

ARE THERE ANY POSSIBLE RISKS TO ME?

It is possible that someone could find out you were in this study or see your study information, but we believe this risk is small because of the procedures we use to protect your information. These procedures are described later in this form. It is also possible that reflections and discussions on your academic leadership journeys may contain both positive and negative emotional aspects. To minimize this risk, you may opt out of answering any interview questions that may be uncomfortable.

ARE THERE ANY BENEFITS TO BEING IN THIS RESEARCH STUDY?

We do not expect you to directly benefit from participating in this study. Your participation may help us learn more about what the journey to academic leadership is like for women business deans and how they prepare for and attain their roles. We hope the knowledge gained from this study can provide research-based recommendations on how business schools and professional organizations can develop and support women on the path to academic leadership and may inform the intentional, customized design and development of leadership programming for this specific subset of women higher education leaders. Insight from this study may also provide guidance for future and aspiring women business deans into the experiences, barriers, and supports that influenced attainment of their role, strategies for advancement, and navigating the leadership journey.

WHO CAN SEE OR USE THE INFORMATION COLLECTED FOR THIS RESEARCH STUDY?

We will protect the confidentiality of your information by asking you to choose a pseudonym that will be referenced throughout the study. Data and research records, including downloaded interview audio and video recordings, electronic copies of written life-world descriptions, participant CVs, and interview transcripts will be securely stored on the PI's UT OneDrive secure file hosting site/account. Names included in the background survey will be stripped after interviews take place. Original interview recordings will be transcribed and destroyed prior to analysis. Hand-coded interview transcripts and written life-world descriptions will be kept until this research project is completed, and then they will be shredded.

Consent documents will be kept for three years. All research documents will be kept in a locked filing cabinet in the PI's University of Tennessee office, with a locked office entry door. Only the PI and her advisor will have access to the research records. If information from this study is published or presented at scientific meetings, your name and other personal information will not be used. We will make every effort to prevent anyone who is not on the research team from knowing that you gave us information or what information came from you. Although it is

unlikely, there are times when others may need to see the information we collect about you. These include:

- People at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville who oversee research to make sure it is conducted properly.
- Government agencies (such as the Office for Human Research Protections in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services), and others responsible for watching over the safety, effectiveness, and conduct of the research.
- If a law or court requires us to share the information, we would have to follow that law or final court ruling.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO MY INFORMATION AFTER THE STUDY IS OVER?

We will not keep your information to use for future research. Your name and other information that can directly identify you will be deleted from your research data collected as part of the study. We will not share your research data with other researchers.

WHO CAN ANSWER MY QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS RESEARCH STUDY?

If you have questions or concerns about this study, or have experienced a research related problem or injury, contact the researchers, Tara Mohrfeld (PI), tara@utk.edu, 865-804-7474 or her faculty advisor, Dr. Dorian L. McCoy, dmccoy5@utk.edu, 865-974-6140. For questions or concerns about your rights or to speak with someone other than the research team about the study, please contact:

Institutional Review Board

The University of Tennessee, Knoxville 1534 White Avenue
Blount Hall, Room 408 Knoxville, TN 37996-1529

Phone: 865-974-7697

Email: utkirb@utk.edu

STATEMENT OF CONSENT

I have read this form and the research study has been explained to me. I have been given the chance to ask questions and my questions have been answered. If I have more questions, I have been told who to contact. By signing this document, I am agreeing to be in this study. I will receive a copy of this document after I sign it.

Name of Adult Participant

Signature of Adult Participant

Date

Researcher Signature (to be completed at time of informed consent if in-person)

I have explained the study to the participant and answered all of his/her questions. I believe that he/she understands the information described in this consent form and freely consents to be in the study.

Name of Research Team Member

Signature of Research Team Member

Date

Appendix C

Interview Protocol

INTERVIEW DETAILS	
Date	
Begin Time	
End Time	
Location and Type	
Interviewer	
Interviewee (Pseudonym)	
Other	

THINGS TO REMEMBER:

- ☐ Communicate purpose and nature of research
- ☐ Assure interviewee of confidentiality (and limits) and allow her to choose a pseudonym to protect anonymity
- ☐ Remind interviewee of voluntary participation and opting out of answering questions
- ☐ Ensure consent form is signed
- ☐ Obtain permission to audio-record the interview (and video record if via Zoom)
- ☐ Ensure interviewee is willing to receive follow-up e-mails for clarification and review interview transcriptions for accuracy (member checks)
- ☐ Turn on audio recorder (or ensure Zoom is recording)
- ☐ Define any technical terms for interviewee
- ☐ Thank interviewee for participating in the interview when finished and discuss next steps

Central Research Question: What are women business deans’ experiences with academic leadership preparation and role attainment?”

Background Questions and Rapport Building		
	<i>Interview Question</i>	<i>Notes</i>
1)	Please describe your initial reactions to this research (elaborate on DQ answer).	
2)	Please describe your journey to academic leadership, specifically the business deanship.	

<i>If not addressed in Q2, the following will be asked as probes/elaboration:</i>		
2a)	What led you to choose a career in academia?	
2b)	Was the role of dean an aspiration in your career journey?	
2c)	Have you ever had an interruption in your career path? If so, please describe.	
2d)	What and/or who were the main influences in your journey (career path) to becoming dean?	
Questions Regarding Role Attainment		
3)	What circumstances led you to attain the role of dean? Were you asked or sought out to become a dean or did you pursue the role?	
4)	What personal and professional characteristics do you possess that aided in your career advancement?	
5)	What obstacles and/or facilitators did you face on your journey to becoming dean?	
6)	In what ways, if any, did you direct your own advancement and career opportunities that led to becoming dean?	
7)	What sacrifices, if any, did you make along your journey to becoming dean?	
Questions Regarding Preparation for the Role		
	<i>Interview Question</i>	<i>Notes</i>
8)	What, if any, formal preparation and/or training did you receive for the role?	
9)	What, if any, informal preparation and/or training did you receive for the role?	

10)	How prepared did you feel when you took on the role of dean?	
11)	What most prepared you for your role as dean?	
Closing Questions		
	<i>Interview Question</i>	<i>Notes</i>
12)	How would you describe your overall leadership style?	
13)	What influences your ability to be successful as a woman dean?	
14)	What advice would you give to aspiring women business deans or those early in the role?	
15)	Is there anything else you would like to share?	

Appendix D

Demographic Questionnaire Items

1. Please indicate your name (names will only be used for the purposes of background information and elaboration during the interview process; names will be stripped from this survey before analysis and no identifying information will be shared or discussed in the findings or conclusions)
2. Please indicate your age
3. Please indicate at what age did you attain your first, full deanship (non-interim)
4. Please indicate your race
5. Please indicate your ethnicity
6. Please indicate your relationship status
7. Please indicate whether you have children or other dependents
8. Were you an internal or external candidate for your current position?
9. Was a search firm utilized during the search for your current position?
10. Please indicate the length of time you have served in your current position (in years and months)
11. Please indicate the role held previous to your current deanship and previous to your first deanship (if different).
12. Did you attend the AACSB Aspiring Dean's Seminar?
13. If yes, please indicate whether you pursued/initiated attending the conference or if someone else recommended you attend and what your expectations were in attending
14. What were your initial reactions to the topic of this research and participating in this research study?

Vita

Tara J. Mohrfeld was born and raised in Southeast Iowa and attained her undergraduate degree in psychology from the University of Iowa in 1994. Her passion for student affairs and higher education began early on, having served as a resident assistant and sports camp counselor during her undergraduate years. This passion led her to pursue a Master's degree in College Student Personnel, which she earned from Bowling Green State University in 1996. During that time, she was a hall director, student life coordinator, career services intern, and completed a summer orientation internship at Western State College in Gunnison, Colorado.

After completing her master's degree, she held positions in residence life and instructed academic success and career planning courses. This developed her interest in career services which led to overseeing the career services offices at both Maryville College in Tennessee and the University of South Florida, St. Petersburg and ultimately led to her first role as an associate director of career services for the University of Tennessee (UT) MBA Program.

Over time, she shifted into an operational role for the MBA program, managing student services, global trips, course scheduling, and extra-curricular activities. Having this broader view of administration, coupled with the desire to affect positive change and outcomes at a higher level, Tara decided it was time to pursue her life-long goal of getting a PhD. She was honored to be accepted into the Higher Education Administration program at UT, beginning her doctoral journey in 2014. Her very first paper was on women in higher education leadership, and she has remained passionate about that topic ever since, leading to her dissertation research. During the time in her PhD program, Tara's professional roles continued to expand, including a year as the interim director of the MBA program and her current role overseeing student and academic services for graduate business programs in the UT Haslam College of Business.