

AN ANALYSIS OF A CONSORTIUM OF FIVE COMMUNITY COLLEGES IN
IMPLEMENTING AN INTERNATIONAL STUDENT RECRUITMENT PROGRAM

By

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Abstract of Dissertation Presented to the Graduate School
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By

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The purpose of this qualitative case study was to gain an in-depth knowledge of a consortium of five community colleges in implementing an international student recruitment program. Specifically, the study focused on the organization's important features, benefits, challenges and factors that influenced its success in recruiting international students. Data were collected from institutional documents and in-depth personal interviews with five presidents, five mid-level executives and six administrators. Findings were based on the analysis of documents and interview data in relation to the research questions.

The study's findings revealed 1) the important features of the model that provided an effective framework of operation included a three-tiered, self governance structure, the geographic diversity of its membership and its small size. 2) There were several benefits of *The Consortium* that included: a) leveraged financial resources of the member institutions that allowed *The Consortium* to have a greater reach into more global markets than each institution could accomplish individually; b) collaboration through shared responsibility, knowledge and establishing strong relationships that resulted in enhanced international relationships, shared expertise over more global

markets and a ready resource of best practices among colleagues; and c) a high financial and intangible return on investment for members of *The Consortium*. 3) International student recruitment was very susceptible to internal challenges and external, global conditions that were beyond the control of the organization. 4) Factors that were most critical to *The Consortium's* success were the relationships among its members built on shared organizational values of mutual trust and respect, the relationships cultivated with international agents, diversity, organizational experience and leadership.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Background of the Topic

Globalization was no longer a new phenomenon. There was recognition of the role of education in the positioning of the United States (U.S.) on the world stage. That we should be preparing students to be competitive in a global economy was understood by many in higher education (Dellow, 2002; Raby & Valeau, 2007; Spaulding, Mauch & Lin, 2001; U.S. Department of Education, 2006). The forces of technology and economics that effected education across borders defined globalization (Altbach, 2002; 2006a). Shifts in student demographics, the media and the need to train a more competitive labor force were catalysts for globalization of our colleges (Romano, 2002).

Internationalization addressed policies and programs at the national or institutional level developed in response to these global forces, for example, establishment of international branch campuses and policies relating to recruitment of international students (Altbach, 2002). Other discussions of the elements of internationalization present in varying degrees at higher education institutions included curriculum initiatives, study abroad programs, institutional commitment through leadership, policy and programs, dedicated funding resources, faculty development and the presence of international students (Frost, 2002; Green & Siaya, 2005; Spaulding et al., 2001).

As one component of international education, foreign students were recognized as integral to U.S. economic and foreign policy interests. Participants at a forum on global competitiveness convened by the Comptroller General of the United States in 2006, expressed concern over the challenges of increased competition for foreign students in the global market (U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2007a). Competitors included

universities from Australia, Canada, Japan, Singapore and the United Kingdom as well as countries of the European Union (Peterson, Briggs, Dreasher, Horner & Nelson, 1999).

Open Doors, published by the Institute of International Education, was considered the most reliable, definitive source of data on student mobility. Compiling data from the *Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, Education at a Glance: 2010 OECD Indicators*, the Institute of International Education (2011a) reported as many as 3.3 million foreign students in the international education marketplace. The U.S. hosted the largest percentage of these students.

Within the U.S., total enrollment of foreign students at all higher education institutions had experienced a steady increase from 564,766 in 2005-2006, to 690,923 total students in 2009-2010. Against these worldwide and national trends in international student flows, community colleges also tapped into the international student marketplace. Recent trends showed community college foreign student enrollments at 13.6% of total enrollments, attracting 94,175 foreign students in 2009-2010 (Institute for International Education, 2011c).

Community colleges had not traditionally been focused on international education. Established with a very local focus to serve their immediate communities, their emphasis included local community development, access and opportunity to everyone interested in postsecondary education, connections with other community agencies and building the local workforce through vocational training (Cohen & Brawer, 2003; Gleazer, 1980). By the 1990s, there was a shift in the mission from serving the local community to serving the economy, as community colleges responded to needs of business and

industry (Levin, 2000). Subsequently, in the post-September 11, 2001 period, colleges responded to the socio-economic, political and technological transformations of globalization by embracing an international education mandate (Raby & Valeau, 2007).

Efforts at internationalization included a variety of activities such as study abroad programs, internationalization of the curricula, on campus co-curricular programs, institutional linkages, scholar exchanges, and foreign student recruitment. The presence of foreign students was also perceived as an important ingredient in the internationalization process with benefits that yielded increased revenues, as well as the development of global competence in students, faculty, and enrichment for the surrounding community (Altbach, 2002; Beerkens, 2003; Dellow, 2002; Levin, 2001).

Statement of the Problem

Providing access for international students to U.S. higher education through strategic recruitment activities received national attention as the U.S. government sought to enhance the image of America internationally and positively impact global attitudes (U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2008). Government agencies addressed issues that effected the U.S. ability to attract international students including increased competition from other countries through expanded educational products, increased access to higher education through technology based distance learning opportunities, growth in the number of branch campuses established by American institutions in foreign countries, high cost of American educational programs, and restrictive visa policies and procedures since September 11, 2001 (U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2007b).

Simultaneously, countries that were the source for the largest numbers of international students were increasing their own capacity to provide higher education

options at home. Other sending countries, for example, South Korea and Japan, sought to increase their numbers of international students to fill the gap caused by a decline in their college-aged student population. Coupled with intensified recruitment efforts of other countries, these conditions made it imperative for heightened U.S. attention to recruitment of international students (American Council on Education, 2009).

Strategic initiatives to recruit international students existed at the state, national and institutional levels. EducationUSA, which was promoted as the authorized U.S. government source for information about international education, provided a network of advising centers around the world. Supported by the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs at the U.S. Department of State, its mission was to “actively promote U.S. higher education around the world by offering accurate, unbiased, comprehensive, objective and timely information about educational institutions in the United States and guidance to qualified individuals on how best to access those opportunities.” Through its multi-lingual website, publications and more than 450 advising centers, EducationUSA provided information on application, admission, scholarship opportunities, and student visa processes (U.S. Department of State, 2010b, ¶ 2).

At the state level, higher education institutions revealed their interest in international student recruitment through joint marketing collaborative efforts to attract international students. There were a number of statewide consortia that provided opportunities for these institutions interested in international recruitment to work to “increase the name recognition of their respective destinations and educational institutions, to promote their areas to international students, to facilitate partnerships between educational institutions in their areas and those in other countries, and to

capitalize on the services of state and U.S. federal government agencies” (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2010, ¶ 1). At the national level, the Institute of International Education provided placement services that matched international students with U.S. institutions. Each year more than 3,000 students from over 175 countries were placed in undergraduate or graduate program at U.S. colleges and universities (Institute of International Education, 2011d, ¶ 1).

Even with these voluntary efforts at the state and national levels, international student recruitment in the U.S. was managed primarily at the institutional level. Data indicated a few institutions experienced success while the majority of institutions lagged behind in international student enrollments. Of the 4,000 accredited, degree granting colleges and universities in the U.S., only 150 enrolled more than half the international students, and 25 institutions enrolled 19%. In 2008-2009, international students represented 3.7% of total U.S. enrollment. The American Council on Education noted this underutilized capacity and identified the need for “inter-institutional cooperation” in international student recruitment (American Council on Education, 2009, p.12).

As evidenced by the numbers, and the level of interest and activity at the local and national levels, the presence of international students at U.S. higher education institutions was perceived as important. Within this particular marketplace of ideas, international students were viewed as a positive economic, social and political investment. From this perspective, *The Consortium*¹ was an interesting case for analysis as it presented one model for international student recruitment.

¹ *The Consortium* was a pseudonym for a not-for-profit organization made up of five member community colleges. These institutions are referred to by the pseudonyms North College, South College, East College West College and Central College.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to gain an in-depth knowledge about *The Consortium*. It reviewed the important features, benefits challenges and success of implementing an international student recruitment program through membership in *The Consortium*.

Each member institution was a regionally accredited community, junior or technical college with a comprehensive international student service program and committed financial resources for international student services. *The Consortium* was selected as the unit of analysis for this study due to the success of its international student recruitment activities over the past decade. This success was measured by organizational data that reported growth in international student enrollments at the member institutions. *The Consortium* also represented a unique institutional collaboration in its size and geography, limited to five community college members, with each institution located in a different state. This distinguished *The Consortium* from the international education consortia of statewide StudyUSA that had membership ranging from 10 to 43 institutions and a mix of high schools, Associate, Baccalaureate or Doctoral degree granting institutions (U.S. Department of Commerce, 2010).

The leaders of the five member community colleges recognized the need to combine efforts toward recruiting foreign students in their goal towards internationalizing their respective campuses. *The Consortium* was established to increase the presence of foreign students on campus. The bylaws stated, “we envision an innovative and collaborative consortium partnership committed to providing high quality education and services as we work together to recruit and retain international students for our respective colleges.” The bylaws further outlined,

The mission of the [*The Consortium*] is to provide educational opportunities for international students on member college campuses, recognizing that cultural diversity and international awareness and understanding enrich the lives of all students, all communities, and all nations. We commit to excellence in teaching, learning, and international student services, and we recognize our responsibility to the world community.

Research Question

This study sought to gain an in-depth knowledge about *The Consortium*. It was framed by the following research questions:

1. What were the important features of *The Consortium* model?
2. What were the benefits of *The Consortium*?
3. What were the challenges and how were they addressed?
4. What factors influenced the success of *The Consortium*?

Significance of Study

This study was significant in several ways:

- *The Consortium* gained a historical perspective of the organization with an understanding of the factors that contribute to its success in recruiting international students.
- The study served as a reference for community college leadership who sought to develop or expand international student recruitment at their institutions.
- This case study of *The Consortium* was timely as the federal government examined challenges to recruiting foreign students with a view to removing barriers and increasing U.S. competitiveness abroad.
- This study contributed to the academic research literature in the field of international education at the community college level with specific emphasis on collaborations for international education development.

Definition of Terms

The language of international education evolved as higher education continued to shift and respond to the ever changing global dynamics. The following definition served to clarify the use of the terms “foreign student” and “international student” as they applied to this study. The U. S. Department of Homeland Security, (2010), in section

101(a)(15)(F) of the Immigration and Naturalization Act, defined F-1 non-immigrants as individuals who had,

residence in a foreign country which he has no intention of abandoning, who is a bona fide student qualified to pursue a full course of study and who seeks to enter the United States temporarily and solely for the purpose of pursuing such a course of study consistent with section 214(l) at an established college, university, seminary, conservatory, academic high school, elementary school, or other academic institution or in a language training program in the United States, particularly designated by him and approved by the Attorney General after consultation with the Secretary of Education, which institution or place of study shall have agreed to report to the Attorney General the termination of attendance of each nonimmigrant student.

In this study the terms “foreign student” and “international student” were used interchangeably.

Limitations and Delimitations of the Study

- This study was confined to a single organization made up of five member institutions.
- This study was based on qualitative research. It targeted the insights of leadership and administrators at the five member institutions involved in the development and implementation of *The Consortium*.
- The success of the consortium relied on organizational data and did not include comparative information.
- The study was historical and therefore, to some extent, subjective as it relied in part on reported past experiences of participants.
- The researcher had to rely on the accuracy of the organization’s archival documents.

Organization of the Study

The organization of the study begins with Chapter 1 which presents the introduction, background of the topic, statement of the problem, the purpose, research questions and the significance of the study. A brief statement of the definition of terms and the limitations and delimitations of the study follows. Chapter 2 presents a literature

review of international education. The methodology used in the research design follows in Chapter 3. Chapter 4 presents a detailed description of the findings. Chapter 5 concludes with a summary of the study, review of the findings, conclusions with implications for practice, and recommendations for future study.

CHAPTER 2 REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The literature that informed this study focused primarily on international education in the United States. Cummings (2001) noted the “sporadic, non-cumulative” nature of research in international education. Not “a primary concern” of most scholars, the research “tends to be carried out by national organizations as a part of advocacy projects” (p. 2). Urias and Yeakey (2009) commented, “it is surprising that such an enterprise that involves significant amounts of money and millions of students worldwide, and which deals with important issues of knowledge transfer and international relations, has generated only a modest research literature” (p. 75). In spite of the dearth of academic research, the literature in the field of international education was copious and yielded a rich understanding of the issues and trends that were current.

The breadth and scope of the literature included sources such as academic texts and journals, research conducted by national and international organizations (such as American Association of Community Colleges, American Council on Education, NAFSA: Association of International Educators, Institute of International Education and Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development), government reports, congressional testimony, and voluminous reports on international education in professional media such as the *Chronicle of Higher Education* and *Community College Week*. The literature served to illuminate the issues and trends in international higher education and provided both a substantial and essential background for understanding the historical and contemporary contexts of the present study.

This chapter synthesizes the history of international education in the United States. It begins with a review of the literature on globalization and internationalization within the context of higher education. Specific attention is paid to the evolution of the international education policy arena from the early 20th century. Background on the internationalization of community colleges is explored. Since this case study looks at international student recruitment to U.S. higher education, the data and literature on issues related to foreign students are also reviewed.

Globalization and Internationalization: Current Dialogues

Globalization and internationalization provided the broadest setting for our understanding of the development of international education and a necessary context for this case study that focused on one aspect of foreign student mobility across borders.

Globalization

The economic, cultural and political dimensions in the creation of world markets, the simultaneous rise in multiculturalism, juxtaposed with the creation of American world hegemony and the increased global coordination of certain political functions, defined globalization at the beginning of the 21st century. For higher education, the impact of globalization as defined by these dimensions meant competing in the open market for their share of education, increasingly multicultural student bodies and shifting dynamics in the policy environment (Marginson, 2006; Marginson & van de Wende, 2007; Wagner, 2004).

There was “shrinkage of distance and time-delay in communications and travel, leading to increasingly extensive and intense global relations” (Marginson & Rhoades, 2002, p. 288). Distinct economic characteristics of globalization were reflected in

heightened levels of foreign investment, cross-border business activity and interconnected worldwide financial systems. These were supported by the elimination of the boundaries around information, knowledge and culture. Continued innovations in communication technology had impacted the volume of human interactions and created increased capacity to connect regions that were previously disconnected. At the same time, the effects of globalization were not evenly distributed. The inequities in the global environment resulted in asymmetrical engagement across countries and institutions. There was flexibility within the global milieu to determine the levels of engagement established through institutional or national policies and governance; however, the option for complete disengagement was not available (Altbach, 2002, 2006b; Marginson & van de Wende, 2007; Teichler, 2004).

An alternative point of view in scholarly thought about globalization distinguished between globalization as just another stage in the process of evolution versus something completely new that was not connected to history and one in which man must learn completely new ways of doing and learning. It was reflected in radical changes in the relationships between nations, the obliteration of national boundaries and the onset of issues of worldwide significance such as climate change and sustainability (Scott, 2000; Clayton, 2004).

Whatever the perspective, it was apparent that globalization effected higher education (Altbach, 2002). At the same time, active participation in the global environment by higher education institutions around the world was dominated by the research intensive universities, with the notable exception of undergraduate and

vocational training institutions such as community colleges in North America (Levin 2000; Marginson & van de Wende, 2007).

Internationalization

Marginson and van de Wende (2007) offered a literal explanation of internationalization as “inter-national” meaning, “any relationship across borders between nations, or between single institutions situated within different national systems” (p. 11). A process oriented explanation described stages and activities used by institutions to encourage global learning (Olson, Green & Hill, 2006).

Internationalization was considered essential for all levels of institutions, while they simultaneously maintained necessary national, regional and local priorities (Teichler, 2004). It involved forging strategic partnerships, making connections with international institutions for joint research, nurturing faculty collaborations, student exchange, recruiting international students and scholars and pursuing international development activities (Olson, Evans & Shoenberg, 2007). It was no longer the purview of a selected few experts or subject areas, but had to be integrated into broader administrative and academic life of higher education institutions (Teichler, 2004).

Qiang (2003) described the competency, ethos, process and activity approaches to internationalization. Competency emphasized, “the development of skills, knowledge, attitudes and values in students, faculty and staff.” Ethos emphasized a culture that “values and supports international /intercultural initiatives.” Process stressed activities, policies and procedures that integrate or infuse international/intercultural dimensions into teaching, research and service. Activity promoted, “activities such as curriculum, student/faculty exchanges, technical assistance and international students” (p. 250).

Discussions of the key elements of internationalization present in varying degrees at higher education institutions included curriculum initiatives, study abroad programs, institutional commitment through leadership, policy and programs, dedicated funding resources, faculty role and development, foreign language instruction, and the presence of international students (Brustein, 2007; Frost, 2002; Green & Siaya, 2005; Spaulding et al., 2001). Others have noted the overlapping goals of diversity and multicultural education and the need to integrate these two higher education priorities (Olson et al., 2007).

There had been a programmatic response to global forces that resulted in the development of a menu of activities that had become indicators of an institution's strength in internationalization. These included administrative support, programs and activities, and curricular connections and the presence of international students. Additionally, evidence of internationalization was measured at community colleges through articulated institutional commitment, the presence of for credit study abroad programs, staff and leadership support for internationalization efforts, funding, professional development and co-curricular programs that emphasized internationalization (Green & Siaya, 2005; Korb, 2002).

The practice of maintaining a clear separation between local diversity and international education was challenged (Olson et al., 2007; Peterson et al., 1999). The recognition of significant overlap in the diversity and internationalization goals of higher education had led to an articulation of areas of common interest in knowledge, attitude and skill outcomes. Knowledge outcomes related to understanding cultural, economic and political forces that shaped the relationships within global societal systems. Attitude

outcomes related to nurturing an open-mindedness that allowed students to appreciate and manage difference. Skill outcomes related to the development of a full range of interpersonal and communication skills that supported students' ability to work cross culturally (Olson et al., 2007). This dialog was representative of the idea of "glocalization" articulated in Friedman's (2006) "flat world" where graduates of higher education would need to demonstrate both disciplinary expertise as well as the ability to navigate local, regional and global contexts.

Recent research on internationalization within higher education institutions addressed the variety of elements that defined internationalization described above. Burriss (2006) conducted a case study of three institutions in the North Eastern Consortium with a focus on policy, organization and design and institutional support of their individual internationalization activities. Samaan (2005) explored the processes of organizational change in her case study of the "faculty and administrators' experiences and perceptions of the internationalization process" at a community college (p. 10). Another researcher looked at the development of global education programs at a community college and identified twelve themes that contributed to the success of an institutionalized global education program (Dean, 2003). A narrower focus on internationalization of programs and curriculum of community colleges in the Middle States Region was explored. This mixed methods study revealed an inadequate implementation of programs and services in response to globalization. The researcher suggested that "International Education integration at community colleges was much more rhetoric than action" (Beckford, 2003, p. 151).

A History of International Education in United States

There were several substantive and comprehensive reviews that chronicled the history and the context for the development of international education. Among them were Bevis and Lucas (2007), DeWit (2002), Harari (1983), O'Meara, Mehlinger and Newman (2001) and Ruther (2002). This account draws from these and other literature to provide an overview of the evolution of federal policy, higher education organizations and their effects on internationalization objectives. The end of World War I signaled the first coordinated effort to include international dimensions in American higher education. It is the starting point for this historical review which describes the accomplishments and the deficiencies of the era, through the beginning of the 21st century.

Policy and Performance

The period 1900 to 1920 saw an increase in movement of international students to the U.S., the beginnings of study abroad programs and exchanges between higher education institutions. While the imprecise nature of documenting the numbers of international students in the U.S. accounted for uneven reports, by the early 1900s there was a significant enough increase that resulted in the development of a variety of support mechanisms through organizations, policies and services that served to guide the experiences of foreign students in the United States (Bevis & Lucas, 2007).

The underlying motivation was peace and cultivating mutual understanding among peoples of different countries. The Committee on Friendly Relations Among Foreign Students, established in 1911, provided counseling services and documented statistical data on foreign students (DeWit, 2002). The formation of the Institute of International Educators in 1917 was also pivotal to development in this area. Its mission was to promote educational ties between the U.S. and the other countries, serve higher

education scholars and individuals, and build individual and organizational capacity to address challenges at home and abroad (Institute of International Education, 2011b).

During its first twenty-five years, the Institute of International Education facilitated the mobility of over 3,000 international students from Europe, Asia and Latin America to the U.S., and sent over 2,300 Americans abroad (Bevis & Lucas, 2007). It chronicled a shift to a more organized approach to collectively addressing the specialized needs of an emerging profession. One of the many contributions of the Institute of International Educators was its advocacy role in lobbying for a special non-immigrant visa, separate from the national immigrant quota system established by the Immigration Act of 1912. The Institute of International Educators saw as its function encouraging foreign students to study at U.S. institutions (Arndt, 1984).

Financial support for early efforts came in part from international relief funds that paid for Chinese scholars to visit the U.S. and established an exchange program between Belgium and the United States. Private foundations also supported exchange through targeted scholarships and fellowships. The policy rationale for promoting peace continued to dominate during this period.

After World War II, international education became more structured as national security issues took center stage. The cold war, North Atlantic Treaty Organization, the Warsaw Pact, The Marshall Plan and anti-communist sentiment was the ideological backdrop for the development of international education in the post-war period (Guttek, 2006).

The federal government acknowledged the urgent need to address American language and global competency deficiencies. In the following decades several

organizations formed to coalesce interest in varying aspects of international education, a field that continued to gain momentum and importance within higher education. Among them were the Council for International Education Exchange (CIEE) in 1947 and the Community Colleges for International Development (CCID) in 1976. National associations were at the forefront in influencing the federal policy environment for international education. The six largest of these collectively represented almost 95% of the higher education. These organizations included the “American Council on Education (ACE), the Association of American Universities (AAU), the National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges (NASULGC), the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU), the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges (AACJC), and the American Association of Colleges (AAC)” (Ruther, 2002, p. 46).

Simultaneously, the federal government assumed greater responsibility for international education through targeted funding of research and student aid programs. In 1946 the Fulbright program was established. Sixty-four years later the program continued to support the international exchange between students in the areas of science, education and culture with a goal to deepen understanding between the U.S. and other nations. As the largest international exchange program in the U.S., Fulbright awarded almost eight thousand grants annually to students, scholars, teachers, scientists, artists and professionals from the U.S. and other countries. In 2010, the program was funded through congressional appropriation for the sum of \$253.8 million, with additional funds from foreign sources totaling almost \$68.5 million in 2009. It had

supported approximately 300,000 Fulbright grantees since its inception (U.S. Department of State, 2010a).

The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organizations (UNESCO) was established in 1945 to provide support to strengthen capacity through global and regional networks. The organization also served to stimulate dialog on ways in which education systems could adjust to the socio-economic and cultural challenges in the new global environment. It focused on issues of “academic mobility, international exchange, research on education systems and knowledge production, curriculum innovation, leadership roles for women educators, teacher development and the promotion of quality in higher education” (Bevis & Lucas, 2007; p. 112).

The 1957 launching of Sputnik influenced the enactment of the National Defense Education Act (NDEA). Title VI provided support for the development of language and area centers, research in specialized language instruction, advanced training through language institutes and financial support through fellowships. Together with the International Education Act of 1966, the NDEA shaped the federal role in international education. Four decades later the impact of Title VI and the Fulbright legislations was most significantly felt in the amount of private dollars that was leveraged by the relatively modest public support they provided (Hines, 2001).

Later, when the recession in the 1970s caused a decline in the emerging federal leadership, activity at the institutional and individual levels continued. Students pursued study abroad opportunities, international students chose American higher education and efforts to develop international studies curriculum continued to evolve (Ruther, 2002).

The 1980s brought higher education to the forefront once again as a participant in the national response to significant world changing events. The rise of Asian economic power, the end of apartheid in South Africa, and the fragmentation of Russia defined a new global era. There was growing concern about the U.S. ability to compete in the new environment. Higher education responded with increased study abroad, emphasis on curriculum (Ruther, 2002) and increased emphasis on internationalization of campuses (Harari, 1983).

A heightened policy focus on national security re-emerged during the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries as a result of the 1993 bombing of the World Trade center and the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks. The Illegal Immigrant Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 introduced new requirements for tracking, documenting and reporting for institutions and international students. The federal government continued to streamline the regulatory process in response to September 11 which resulted in the introduction of the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (SEVIS) to track international students in America (Bevis & Lucas, 2007). The impact of this and other regulatory conditions will be discussed later.

Although the level of support waxed and waned over the years, Green (2002) criticized the federal government for its neglect of international education. The 1979 President's Commission on Foreign Language and International Studies expressed concern over the lack of country and area experts to meet government needs and the low rate of language learning in education. Twenty years later, President Clinton issued a memorandum on international education that outlined a federal policy that committed government support for international education. Among the recommendations in the

memorandum was the call to encourage international students to study in the United States. The unfunded memorandum lacked resources to impact the field. Later, higher education and international education were not on the agenda of the Bush administration that focused its commitment on K-12 education.

Later, the Obama Administration expressed its support for international exchange in a joint brief issued with China that praised the two-way flow of international students between the countries (White House, 2009).

In a policy document that was endorsed by thirty-five national education associations, the American Council on Education (2002) stated “like the challenge of Sputnik in 1957, the attacks of September 11 have brought America’s international preparedness to a crossroads. The global transformations of the last decade have created an unparalleled need in the United States for expanded international knowledge and skills” (p. 7). The policy paper called for national policy objectives and strategies, with resources and administrative capacity in support of an international education agenda. It identified government and private sector needs as the necessary targets for student preparation, called for an educational framework that met those needs, and highlighted the benefits of having international students and scholars on American campuses. “Their presence enriches the college experience for Americans. It also provides the United States with opportunities to educate the next generation of world leaders and to engage in cooperative research and global problem solving” (p. 7).

Among the strategies recommended for a comprehensive national policy agenda was increased numbers of international students. Without sacrificing national security, the report urged strengthening of the Student and Exchange Visitor Information System

(SEVIS), making the visa process more user friendly, increasing U.S. consular capacity and ensuring the dissemination of accurate information about U.S. higher educational opportunities.

Community Colleges

The local mission of community colleges clearly articulated their mandate to serve their immediate communities, provide access and opportunity to all persons desiring postsecondary education, make connections with other community agencies and build the local workforce through vocational training. Developing the local community was to be their emphasis (Cohen & Brawer, 2002; Gleazer, 1980). Diversity that reflected the full range of differences among the people in a community had been a feature of community colleges from their inception, and the colleges' ability to provide learning opportunities for a broad cross-section of the public was their strength (Gleazer, 1980).

Community colleges were involved in international education since the 1960s. Raby and Valeau (2007) identified four phases of development for community college engagement with international education. In the recognition phase, from 1967-1986, programs for study abroad and international development were initiated. Among the early organizations was the College Consortium for International Studies, formed in 1973, to carry out collaborative study abroad programs. *The Consortium* worked to strengthen international perspectives in academia by providing opportunities for professional development (College Consortium for International Studies, 2010). The Community Colleges for International Development was formed in 1976 to introduce the potential for international education to community college educators (Community Colleges for International Development, 2007). In the 1980s, community colleges underwent a period of expansion characterized by the development of college offices

dedicated to international education, concern and funding for internationalizing the curriculum, and publications focused on aspects of community international education (Raby & Valeau, 2007).

By the 1990s there was a shift in the mission from serving the local community to serving the global economy as community colleges responded to needs of business and industry (Levin, 2000). An increase in study abroad activity, strengthening of international student recruitment, and focus on clarifying international education goals were characteristic of the period 1990-2000, referred to as a period of augmentation. Half of the sixty randomly selected community colleges that participated in a 1992 survey by the American Council of Education reported conducting international business, offering study abroad or internationalizing the curriculum. Seventy percent had international contacts and 30% had sister city relationships (Raby & Valeau, 2007). By the turn of the century, a survey of 1,171 colleges by the American Association of Community Colleges saw 78% offering study abroad opportunities (Blair, Phinney & Phillippe, 2001).

The beginning of the 21st century witnessed the “institutionalization” phase with an emphasis on the need for articulation of international education goals at the national, state and institutional levels (Raby & Valeau, 2007, p. 8). A 2003 study by the American Council on Education that assessed the internationalization at U.S. colleges and universities, comparing community colleges with liberal arts colleges, comprehensive and research universities, indicated progress toward internationalization goals through increases in study abroad and foreign language requirements. More than the other institutions there was support for faculty development, yet community colleges did not

explicitly embrace internationalization in their institutional documents such as the mission statement or strategic plan (Siaya & Hayward, 2003).

An expanded analysis of the data from this study showed efforts to internationalize were unequal when compared across six dimensions of internationalization that included articulated commitment, academic offerings, organizational infrastructure, external funding, institutional investment in faculty and international students and student programs (Green & Siaya, 2005). Community colleges recognized the need to embrace internationalization. However, they had to overcome institutional barriers from a lack of leadership support and inadequate funding, to poor planning and the viewpoint that international education was a co-curricular activity (Green, 2007).

Hanson (2008) offered an alternative perspective on the role of internationalization in community colleges. He suggested that an emphasis on infusing global issues into curriculum served the interests of multinational corporations and were a distraction from the primary focus of the community college. He maintained that the colleges' role was to prepare students to address local issues that impacted their immediate lives.

Yet, as the landscape evolved, new organizations emerged to support the internationalization efforts and increase global understanding of community colleges. The newest of these was the Center for Global Advancement of Community Colleges, established in 2010 to serve as another resource to community colleges (Center for Global Advancement of Community Colleges, 2010).

International Education: Contemporary Issues

As higher education leaders responded to the need to train a more globally competitive labor force, they were challenged to articulate the meaning of global competence (Brustein, 2007; Romano, 2002), and address critical issues within the

contemporary national and global contexts. Key to this study was the impact of the regulatory environment, the global market, the role of consortia in higher education institutions and English language dominance.

The Regulatory Environment

The deficiencies of the foreign student tracking system used by the Immigration and Naturalization Services prior to September 11, 2001 have been documented (Urias & Yeakey, 2009; Skinner, 2006). The resulting inability of the Immigration and Naturalization Service to monitor the movement and compliance of international students after they entered the U.S. was identified as one weakness in the system that allowed for penetration by terrorists (Urias & Yeakey, 2009). September 11, 2001 became a significant turning point in the dialog on international education in the United States. It changed the landscape of the regulatory environment for both international students and higher education institutions. Legislation enacted by Congress that directly impacted students and institutions included the Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism Act of 2001 (USA Patriot Act) P.L. 107-56 (Oct. 26, 2001) and the Enhanced Border Security and Visa Entry Reform Act of 2002 (Border Security Act) P.L. 107-173 (May 14, 2002).

The Patriot Act amended the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) by requiring institutions to disclose education records to federal law enforcement officials without student consent and with no fear of liability. Such information included name and address, visa and enrollment status, and any information regarding disciplinary actions. Section 416 of the Patriot Act shifted responsibility for visas from the Department of State to the Department of Homeland Security. This reflected a change in policy to protect America's security rather than focusing on the diplomatic

mission of the Department of State (Urias & Yeakey, 2009). The Border Security Act provided for an enhanced information gathering system to monitor international students.

Subsequent regulatory changes introduced the SEVIS system, National Security Entry-Exit Registration (NSEERS), U.S. Visitor and Immigrant Status Indicator Technology (US-VISIT) and the Advance Passenger Information System (APIS). Together, these changes allowed for enhanced domestic security, surveillance procedures, border protection and information sharing. Educational institutions were mandated to be in compliance with SEVIS requirements for registering of international students by January 2003 (National Association of College and University Business Officers, 2003; Siskin, 2005; U.S. Department of Homeland Security, 2010; U.S. Department of Justice Immigration and Naturalization Service, 2002).

In spite of the efforts of the Department of Homeland Security to provide support through a SEVIS response team to assist with student entry into the U.S. (Drury, 2003), the Department of State Bureau of Consular Affairs reported delays in visa processing. Officials acknowledged the increased costs in time and inconvenience for visa applicants (Jacobs, 2003).

Additionally, changes in federal laws resulted in an increased burden for educational institutions in collecting and reporting information on foreign students. There were additional costs to the institution in staffing, recertification and technology upgrades to interface with SEVIS where necessary (National Association of College and University Business Officers, 2003).

These laws worked together to create an entry process that was criticized as burdensome and unwelcoming for international students. Government imposition of stringent visa policies negatively impacted the ability of foreign students to get visas. While the anticipated subsequent decline in enrollments of foreign students at U.S. higher education institutions did not persist, the impact of new Homeland Security regulations continued to be an issue of concern for practitioners and advocates of international education (U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2005).

In a joint statement, 25 organizations representing the higher education, science and engineering fields, identified areas of weaknesses related to the U.S. visa system that described the challenges of the regulatory environment. There were long delays caused by repetitive security checks and inefficiency in the visa renewal process. Extending the validity of visas issued to students from one year to the full period of their course of study was suggested to eliminate delays. Lack of transparency prevented visa applicants from getting information on the status of their applications, and an uneven review of visa applications resulted in unequal treatment of applicants. Recommended solutions included enhanced training for consular staff, revised reciprocity agreements between the U.S. and selected sending countries to extend the length of time needed prior to visa renewal and a streamlining of the SEVIS fee collection system (Council on Governmental Relations, 2004).

In a statement before the U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, the Executive Director of NAFSA: Association of International Educators called for a visa process that was time efficient and dependable, with a view to facilitating access for

foreign students and scholars. She noted the importance of re-establishing the U.S. as a preferred higher education destination for foreign students (Johnson, 2004).

The Global Market

Higher education was not impervious to the global marketplace. Increased worldwide competition was one of the challenges, fuelled by an increase in enrollments and accompanying deficiencies in the capacity to meet growing global demand. Growth of for profit institutions' participation in marketplace resulted in competition for international students, as well as intellectual and technological resources (Burriss, 2006). Competition was fuelled by student demands as they sought more flexible learning opportunities. The shift to a more economic model of the student as a consumer was influenced by a greater shift in the burden of cost for higher education toward the student (Green, Eckel & Barblan, 2002).

The global marketplace also created a demand for U.S. students who were globally competent. A survey of 109 international business managers and 31 business school faculty confirmed the need for U.S. nationals to fill positions in overseas offices. (Moxon, O'Shea, Brown & Escher, 2001). At the same time there was demand for personnel with international expertise and language skills in more than 80 federal agencies (American Council on Education, 2002). The effect of this demand was seen in curriculum development.

The Role of Consortia in Higher Education

Increased collaboration among higher education institutions was one response to the increased competition as institutions worked across boundaries to gain an advantage over common obstacles. This new pattern of organizational behavior was characterized by cooperation, collaboration and teamwork (Baus & Ramsbottom, 1999;

Green et al, 2002). Research on and support for collaborative efforts through consortia in higher education was the work of the Association for Consortium Leadership from its inception in 1965. It grew out of a need for higher education leaders to “share ideas, resources, services, projects, and personnel” (Association for Consortium Leadership, 2010, ¶ 1).

The variety of consortia relationships reflected in higher education indicated the importance of increased cooperation as institutions strived to accomplish more with limited resources (Dotolo & Noftsinger, 2002; Korbel, 2007). The literature on consortia collaborations in higher education identified successes and challenges in areas such as curriculum, faculty development, libraries, workforce development and purchasing (Alberico, 2002; Bishop, 2002; Horgan, 2002; Marino, 2002). In other research on collaboration among organizations, Mattessich, Murray-Close and Monsey (2008) identified twenty factors that were essential for successful collaborative practice. These factors were related to the environment, membership characteristics, communication, process and structure. Within these categories there was further breakdown into specific characteristics of success that included factors such as mutual respect, trust, flexibility, and creating informal relationships that resulted in a “more informed, and cohesive group working on a common project.” “Shared vision” and “skilled leadership” were also indicated as essential to successful collaborations (p. 9).

Peterson (2002) raised important issues about measuring the effectiveness of cooperative efforts, and the costs versus the benefits of the collaboration. The evaluation of one organization yielded broader lessons for higher education. Successful consortia engaged in ongoing assessment and remained flexible. There was cost

sharing that alleviated some financial burdens, and member institutions maintained their uniqueness while collaborating across common interests. Success was ultimately measured by the value added to the institution's staff, faculty and students.

In the international education arena, the range of consortia relationships varied from long term partnerships across multiple areas of interest to short term, project focused ventures. Some included members from different countries while others were U.S. based institutions. There was also variety in the models of funding and administrative support for these collaborations. Some had dedicated staff while others relied on dedicated faculty, and revenues sources included public funding from the U.S., international funding, or direct support from member institutions (Godbey & Turlington, 2002).

Among the key ingredients for successful international consortia, Anderson (2002) identified high level leadership, committed staff resources, shared understanding of decision making processes, effective planning, documenting and marketing of the value of consortia activities to the member institutions.

English Language Dominance

Monolingualism in American education was a barrier to international competitiveness (Committee for Economic Development, 2006; NAFSA: Association of International Educators, 2003). There was a decline in enrollment in foreign languages from 16% during the 1960s to less than 9% on the 2000s. In 2001, 27% of four year institutions required a foreign language for all students. That was down from 90% in 1965 and 67% in 1995. There was also a dramatic difference between the percentages of students who were enrolled in critical languages such as Chinese, Russian and Arabic versus Spanish, French, German, Italian and American Sign Language (Welles,

2004). Later research revealed an upward trend in enrollments between 2006 and 2009 with Spanish, French and German maintaining their lead (Furman, Goldberg & Lusin, 2010).

To address this problem of low foreign language enrollment, the U.S. Department of State Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs initiated the Critical Language Scholarships Intensive Summer Institutes in 2006. Since its inception, the program grew from 165 scholarships in six languages to 575 scholarships in 13 languages in 2010 (Critical Language Scholarship Program, 2010). Paradoxically, research has shown support for foreign language study by high school students who are college bound (Green, 2005).

At the same time, data indicated study abroad programs were dominated by English speaking countries, and the majority of Asian students, the largest market for international students, studied in three English speaking countries. English dominance emerged as a cause for concern around issues of equity in the international arena (Hughes, 2008) and issues of national security and competitiveness on the national scene (NAFSA: Association of International Educators, 2003.)

Foreign students had to take a language proficiency test, the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), to gain admission to most institutions. English Language competence was a concern for graduate international students who were required to provide instruction in English as a part of their programs (Haddal, 2006).

Foreign Students

Spaulding, et al. (2001) posed critical questions that highlighted policy issues related to foreign students. These revolved around the optimum number of foreign students an institution should serve, difference in fee structure for foreign students and

concerns over competition between local and foreign students for academic spaces. Additionally, the use of foreign students as teaching and research assistants, and the types of counseling services required to meet their specialized needs were important considerations for institutions serving foreign students. In the dialog on foreign student mobility, concerns about brain drain, compromised quality and increased commercialization of higher education were also expressed (Rivza and Teichler, 2007).

This section explores the broader contexts of the foreign student market, foreign student recruitment and the benefits of hosting foreign students against which these issues had to be considered.

Foreign Student Market

As one component of international education, foreign students were recognized as integral to U.S. economic and foreign policy interests. Increased competition for foreign students in the global market was the topic of discussion for participants at a forum on global competitiveness, convened by the Comptroller General of the United States in 2006 (U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2007b). Competitors included universities from Australia, Canada, Japan, Singapore and the United Kingdom as well as countries of the European Union (Peterson et al., 1999).

The Institute of International Education (2011a) reported as many as 3.3 million foreign students in the international education marketplace. Of the top eight countries hosting foreign students worldwide, the U.S. led with 20%. The United Kingdom was second with 13% and France was third with 8%. Germany, China and Australia each hosted 7% of international students worldwide, while Canada and Japan trailed at 4%.

Within the U.S., total enrollment of foreign students at all higher education institutions had experienced a steady increase from 564,766 in 2005-2006, to 690,923

total students in 2009-2010. Against these worldwide and national trends in international student flows, community colleges also tapped into the international student marketplace with enrollments of 94,175 foreign students in 2009-2010 (Institute of International Education, 2011c).

In spite of these numbers, experts warned that the U.S. had lost its dominance in the world market and called for attention to reducing barriers and increasing access to U.S. education for foreign students. There was a realization that America's higher education response to ever changing global scene had been slow and that international students were no longer limited in their options for higher education. Competitors such as Australia and the United Kingdom had developed coordinated, strategic approaches to attracting foreign students (Altbach & Bassett, 2004; Basile, 2005; Johnson, 2006). The 1987 ERASMUS cooperative, SOCRATES and The Bologna Agreement were such approaches that streamlined the ability of students to move more easily across European states (Teichler, 2004).

The Bologna Agreement is worthy of further mention as it emerged as a significant operative in international higher education. It was designed to facilitate compatibility between the diverse European educational systems by addressing issues such as credits, degrees, and quality to promote mobility for students. The potential to increase the success of European higher education in the international marketplace added to the challenges for U.S. higher education (Schatzman, 2005). With an emphasis on cooperation, Bologna stood in contrast to the increasingly competitive nature of international markets (van de Wende, 2003).

The playing field in international education was not level. The inequities between the developed and developing regions were reflected in the flow between nations and institutions with movement from the developing to the developed. The resulting loss of intellectual capacity and potential for developing countries was a cause for concern (Marginson, 2006) with approximately 80% of foreign students worldwide originating in Asian countries (Altbach & Bassett, 2004). Pan (2010) described the factors that influenced the movement of academics between China and other nations and the efforts of the Chinese government to encourage Chinese nationals trained abroad to return home.

Foreign Student Recruitment

At the national level the U.S. Government Accountability Office (2007a) identified issues that affected U.S. ability to attract international students. These included increased competition from other countries through expanded educational products, increased access to higher education through technology based distance learning opportunities, the growth in the number of branch campuses established by American institutions in foreign countries, the high cost of American educational programs, and restrictive visa policies and procedures since September 11, 2001. Additionally, shifts in global financial fortunes resulted in currency devaluation and impacted affordability (Peterson et al., 1999).

At the institutional level, college and university recruitment efforts varied based on institutional interest and resources. Recruitment strategies included direct mail to high schools in countries of interest, a fee for service contract and passive presence at foreign fairs through print and video materials. The development of outreach materials relevant to a foreign student market, coordination through other established programs

such as sister cities and participation in recruitment fairs coordinated through national associations, government agencies and private companies were recommended strategies for student recruitment (O'Connell, 1994).

With the success of foreign student recruitment and the increasing numbers of international students over the decades, the need to provide coordinated services that addressed unique challenges of this population became apparent by the middle of the 20th century. NAFSA: Association of International Educators was founded in 1948 to promote the professional development of American college and university officials responsible for assisting and advising the 25,000 foreign students who had come to study in the United States after World War II. The academic institutions, government agencies, and private organizations that combined to form NAFSA: Association of International Educators knew that meeting the needs of students from diverse educational and cultural backgrounds required special knowledge and competencies (NAFSA: Association of International Educators, 2008). They were focused on ensuring high quality educational and social experiences for these foreign students in the U.S. (Bevis & Lucas, 2007).

Benefits of Hosting Foreign Students at U.S. Colleges and Universities

A survey of a broad cross section of Americans designed to measure perceptions on international education including global preparedness, study abroad, language learning, knowledge of other cultures, and international students revealed that Americans valued increased opportunities for interaction with international students. They reported an appreciation for the benefits of having international contacts through students at U.S. institutions and participating in study abroad experiences (NAFSA: Association of International Educators, 2006; 2008).

Foreign students supported the campus environment in a variety of ways. They accepted teaching assistant positions that were declined by U.S. students who opt for more financially rewarding employment opportunities in their fields and participated in research efforts at their institutions (NAFSA: Association of International Educators, 2006; Peterson, et al., 1999). Additionally, by taking low enrollment science courses foreign students made it possible for colleges to offer a wider variety of courses (NAFSA: Association of International Educators, 2008).

The presence of foreign students on U.S. campuses increased diversity and enriched the educational experiences of American students through personal contact as well as provided exposure to other cultures, histories and global issues. They helped to create diverse environments where differences could be acknowledged and respected, and stereotypical thinking confronted resulting in an increased understanding of the interdependence of nations and states (American Council on Education, 2002; Lamkin, 2000; NAFSA: Association of International Educators, 2008; O'Connell, 1994; Peterson et al., 1999; Frost, 2002).

A distinction between the benefits experienced by colleges that enrolled significant numbers of foreign students versus low enrollment institutions was reported by Fitzer (2007). Those that enrolled larger numbers indicated academic and financial benefits where those with lower numbers showed no impact in these areas. Academic benefits included increased retention and persistence rate and an enhanced level of academic discourse. Both types of institution identified cultural benefits through a diversified campus and cultural exposure.

The federal government underscored the foreign policy benefits of hosting foreign students at U.S. institutions. The opportunity to understand American political values, nurture individual relationships between future leaders and establish a sense of good will that will accrue to future foreign policy relations was cited as immeasurable benefits (NAFSA: Association of International Educators, 2003). The American Council on Education (2002) pointed to world leaders such as General Kofi Annan who served as the Secretary General of the United Nations from 1997 to 2006, President Vicente Fox who served as president of Mexico from 2000 to 2006 and Jordan's King Abdullah II, who all attended U.S. universities.

Foreign student presence in the U.S. had become a multibillion dollar enterprise. Not the least important was the positive impact to the budgets of higher education institutions through tuition and fees (NAFSA: Association of International Educators, 2010; Peterson et al., 1999; Dellow, 2002). During 2009-2010 academic year, NAFSA: Association of International Educators (2010) estimated a \$18.78 billion economic impact to the U.S. economy from the presence of foreign students and their dependents. This figure estimated the cost of accommodation, tuition, fees and miscellaneous expenses. Funds provided to a student from a U.S. college or university, private sponsor and employer of the U.S. government were considered U.S. support and were not included in the estimate. NAFSA: Association of International Educators collected international student data from the Institute of International Education's *Open Doors 2010* report and figures for tuition, living and other costs from Wintergreen Orchard House. The majority of funds for foreign students, approximately 70%, came from personal or non-U.S. government support. It was evident that foreign students

made a significant contribution to the state and local economy where they chose to study through their spending on accommodations, food, books and supplies, transportation and health insurance for themselves, and for their families (NAFSA: Association of International Educators, 2010).

This chapter synthesized the history of international education in the United States. It began with a review of the literature on globalization and internationalization within the context of higher education. Globalization and internationalization were characterized by increased competition in open markets supported by technological advances that enhanced communication and connected regions that were previously disconnected. Active participation in the global environment by higher education institutions around the world was dominated by the research intensive universities, with the notable exception of undergraduate and vocational training institutions such as community colleges in North America.

Specific attention was paid to the evolution of the international education policy arena from the early 20th century, and background on the internationalization of community colleges was explored. A historical review of international higher education in the United States documented early interest and activity in international students' presence at U.S. higher education institutions. Shifts in policy rationales and the effect of key legislation impacted the development of international education in the 20th century. During this period, national interests moved from peace and mutual understanding of the WWI era, to the heightened focus on national security in the period following WWII, to a blend of public and private financial support for international programs and the rise of national associations as policy advocates on behalf of

international education. At the beginning of the 21st century, concerns continued to revolve around the need for a comprehensive national policy on international education. Community colleges were also active players in the international education arena.

Also reviewed were contemporary issues in international education. These included a regulatory environment that was burdensome and restrictive, a highly competitive global higher education marketplace, the emergence of consortia as a model for maximizing institutional capacity, and the effects of expansion of English as the dominant language of international education in Europe and the United States. Finally, an examination of foreign student mobility, a broad overview of recruitment efforts, and the benefits of hosting foreign student underscored the importance of this component within the larger context of international education.

CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

This study sought to gain an in-depth knowledge about *The Consortium*. It was framed by the following research questions:

1. What were the important features of *The Consortium* model?
2. What were the benefits of *The Consortium*?
3. What were the challenges and how were they addressed?
4. What factors influenced the success of *The Consortium*?

Research Design

Qualitative Research Methodology

To gain an in-depth knowledge about *The Consortium* this researcher selected a qualitative research design. Glesne (2006) described the exploratory and descriptive nature of qualitative research. She highlighted the assumptions of qualitative research where “reality is socially constructed” and “variables are complex, interwoven and difficult to measure” (p. 5). Merriam (2002) talked about the appropriateness of qualitative research in increasing understanding of complex worlds that are not “fixed, single, agreed upon or measurable” (p. 3).

Creswell (2003) built on the work of Rossman & Rallis (1998) in describing the characteristics of qualitative research. He emphasized the “interactive and humanistic” approaches of this method that sought to “build rapport and credibility with individuals in the study.” He noted a fluid process where the questions evolved out of the process as new information was revealed. Interpretive in nature, it required the researcher to “filter the data through a personal lens that is situated in a specific socio-political and historical moment.” Reflection on his/her relationship to the study, that led to introspection and acknowledgement of biases, values and interests was typical of qualitative research where “social phenomena” are viewed “holistically.” Complex

reasoning that was multi-faceted, iterative and simultaneous was critical to this primarily inductive process, although it was necessary to employ both inductive and deductive logic (p. 180-181).

Glesne (2006) explained that most qualitative research adopts a primarily constructivist philosophical approach. In the constructivist paradigm there were many realities, and understanding was created by interaction with the subject in their natural setting (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). In defining the underlying nature of what we know and how we come to know, constructivists view reality as created and ever evolving. Glesne (2006) elaborated, "human beings construct their perceptions of the world, that no one perception is 'right' or more 'real' than another, and that these realities must be seen as wholes rather than divided into discrete variables that are analyzed separately" (p. 7).

Case Study

In a case study the researcher undertook detailed examination of a program, a single entity such as an event, activity, process or individual. The length of time and activities related to the research defined a case study. Typically research was collected over an extended period using a number of different procedures for data collection (Stake, 1995).

Case study offered the advantage of uniqueness, with the capacity to understand complexity in particular contexts. Conversely, it suffered from the disadvantages inherent in making generalizations from a single case. Researchers have agreed on several elements of case study methodology. It had as its purpose describing, interpreting, and explaining a specific case, without making value judgments or effecting change. While findings could be used to initiate change, the researcher's intent was a complete enquiry that did not change the situation (Bassegy, 1999). It allowed

researchers to “retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events” (Yin, 2009, p. 4). Stufflebean & Shinkfield (2007) elaborated on the case study as a method that examined context, goals or aspirations, plans, resources, unique features, important, noteworthy actions or operations, achievements, disappointments and needs.

Because the purpose of this research was to gain an in-depth knowledge about the factors that influenced the success of a single organization the case study was selected as the most appropriate strategy of inquiry. Through the examination of one case, the researcher sought to describe the organization’s important features, benefits, challenges and factors that influenced its success in recruiting international students.

A research paradigm is “a network of coherent ideas about the nature of the world and of the functions of researchers which, adhered to by a group of researchers, conditions the patterns of their thinking and underpins their research actions” (Bassey, 1999, p. 42). In an interpretive research paradigm, the researcher operates from the standpoint that reality is a “construct of the human mind.” While there is similarity in the ways in which people perceive the world, it is not necessarily the same. As a result, “the sharing of accounts of what had been observed is always to some extent problematic.” Usually “richer in language” data gathering methods may include field notes, transcripts diaries and reports (p. 43). In the search for leadership perspectives this study employed a qualitative process of case study research that was grounded in the experiences of its participants. It was conducted from an interpretive research paradigm, aimed at “advancing knowledge by describing and interpreting the phenomena” (p. 43-44).

Limitations of Case Study Design

The ability to generalize findings from a single case study across a broad area of practice has been identified as a weakness of this method of research. Schumacher and McMillan (1993) noted that researchers must use detailed descriptions in one situation to increase understanding in another that is similar, rather than generalize results.

Selection of Case Study Participants

A purposive sampling approach was used to select this case. Creswell (2003) explained the idea of purposefully selecting participants that will best serve to illuminate the problem and the research question. Through formal research and informal inquiry the researcher identified international student recruitment as one aspect of international education that could benefit from further academic research and located *The Consortium* as a unique case for study.

The Consortium was unique in that it was a collaboration between five community colleges located in diverse communities across the U.S. that formed a self-governing organization to collaborate efforts toward international student recruitment. It had experienced some measure of success as defined in terms of the organization's purpose as set out in the organization's bylaws "to actively support enrollment management goals." Evidence of the accomplishment of this goal was gleaned through an analysis of enrollment reports.

Enrollments were the quantifiable measure of success for the organization. They were carefully tracked and used as a basis to inform other decisions. The organization's enrollment data included a variety of spreadsheets that tracked student enrollments by country, by agency, by institution and by new and continuing students.

An analysis of enrollment reports revealed the success of *The Consortium* in increasing its international enrollments. Institutional data tracked enrollments for the period 1999-2000 through 2009-2010. A cumulative assessment of the data indicated an overall increase of 43% from 1999 to 2010.

History and Characteristics of the Case

The Consortium was a unique collaboration between five community colleges located in diverse communities across the U.S. that formed a self-governing organization to collaborate efforts toward international student recruitment. It was a single organization governed by bylaws that outlined its vision, values, mission and purpose and provided for its composition, governance, roles and responsibilities, and recruitment policies.

The Consortium existed for almost a decade prior to becoming a formal self-governing organization in 2003. In its early years, *The Consortium* was not a formal organization, but began as the idea of one individual who reached across the country and connected several institutions to partner together in securing his services to conduct joint international student recruitment on their behalf. There were no organizational documents from that early period. This study was focused on the period 2003 to 2010. It was useful, however, to reconstruct some history of its inception to provide context for the evolution of this new structure. This researcher relied on the recollections of current presidents, mid-level executives and administrators who were with *The Consortium* from its inception.

In its early days *The Consortium* was led by an individual consultant who was a retired vice president from one of the member colleges. There were three original member colleges selected through a network of personal relationships. From all

accounts, the organizational structure was very informal. Work was led by the consultant who was paid to do the recruiting. *The Consortium* membership was later increased from three institutions to five to share the burden of the expenses.

Based on recollections, the self-governed organization was born about a decade later out of a convergence of a series of events that included the retirement of the individual consultant who worked independently on behalf of the institutions, the exiting of one of the original five member institutions, the entrance of another to replace that one, the desire on the part of the staff to become more directly involved in recruitment, and a recognition that there may have been a more cost efficient way to recruit international students. The model was changed from the hired consultant to the formalized, self-governing organization that was established in 2003.

The case under study was this self governed, single organization that was made up of five member institutions. *North College* was a semi-rural, multi-campus college located in Washington State. The unduplicated credit headcount for 2009-2010 was 6,500. It served a county region with a population of 118,000. *North College* offered small classes and individualized support for students as well as options for either on-campus dormitories or home stay housing. The estimated average cost of attendance for international students for 2009-2010 year was \$16,000. This included housing, tuition, fees and books, health insurance and miscellaneous expenses. According to NAFSA: Association of International Educators (2010) economic impact data *North College* hosted 216 international students in 2009-2010. The estimated economic impact of international students from *North College* was \$5.12 million.

South College was a 150 acre, multi-campus college located in Florida with an unduplicated credit headcount for Fall 2009 at 8,313. Serving a regional population of approximately 504,000, *South College* hosted international students from 27 different countries. It offered a range of services that included housing, computer labs with internet and email service, new international student orientation, international student advising, tutoring assistance, career planning, assistance with university transfer, visa and immigration advising, airport pick up service, and opportunities for on campus employment. The estimated cost of attendance for international students for 2009-2010 Fall and Spring semesters was \$16,500. This included housing, tuition, fees and books, transportation and health insurance. According to NAFSA: Association of International Educators (2010) economic impact data *South College* hosted 97 international students in 2009-2010. The estimated economic impact of international students from *South College* was \$2.4 million.

East College was a 123 acre, multi-campus college located in Pennsylvania. The unduplicated credit headcount for Fall 2009 was 12,237. *East College* hosted international students from more than 54 different countries and offered flexible scheduling that included accelerated programs and distance education options. The range of services to international students at *East College* included free airport pick up, a multi-level English as a Second Language program, assistance with securing home-stay or apartment housing through an on-campus housing coordinator, full-time staffed international student services office, free tutoring and a Laptop Lending Program, advising with visas and immigration, academic advising and assistance with university transfers to more than 40 partner Institutions.

The average cost of attendance for international students for 2009-2010 Fall and Spring semesters was \$19,000. This included housing, tuition, fees and books, health insurance and miscellaneous expenses. According to NAFSA: Association of International Educators (2010) economic impact data *East College* hosted 208 international students in 2009-2010. The estimated economic impact of international students from *East College* was \$5.79 million.

West College was a rural, multi-campus college located in California. The unduplicated credit headcount for 2009-2010 was 1,200. It offered a range of support services for international students including tutoring, advising, airport pick-up service, university transfer center and on campus dormitories. The average cost of attendance for international students for 2009-2010 was \$12,418. This included housing, tuition, fees and books and health insurance. According to NAFSA: Association of International Educators (2010) economic impact data *West College* hosted 95 international students in 2009-2010. The estimated economic impact of international students from *West College* was \$1.67 million.

Central College was located on 290 acres in Illinois, close to a large metropolitan area. The unduplicated credit headcount for Fall 2009 was 12,237. *Central College* hosted international students from more than 48 different countries. Its international program services featured free airport pick up, new international student orientation week, housing specialist staff to assist with securing host home or apartment housing, full-time International student advisors, advising with visas and immigration, academic advising and assistance with university transfers, free tutoring, social activities and a conversation partners program.

The estimated average cost of attendance for international students for 2009-2010 Fall and Spring semesters was \$16,000. This included housing, tuition, fees and books, transportation and health insurance. Services to international students included a homestay program. According to NAFSA: Association of International Educators (2010) economic impact data *Central College* hosted 262 international students in 2009-2010. The estimated economic impact of international students from *Central College* was \$6.22 million.

Data Collection

Case studies rely on many sources of evidence with “data needing to converge in a triangulating fashion” (Yin, 2009, p. 18). Research for this study began with a literature review to glean current themes related to international education. Identification of themes guided the research focus toward issues in international student recruitment. Data collection was then guided by the research questions to help to gather information relevant to the objectives of this study. Relevant data was collected through organizations’ documents such as budget reports, annual reports, meeting minutes, bylaws, websites, promotional materials, and presentations.

This study also applied standardized, open-ended, individual interviews with the organization’s key leaders and administrators. “The purpose of interviewing, then, is to allow us to enter the other person’s perspective” (Patton 1987, p. 109). In this study, interviewing provided leadership and administrative perspectives on the factors that influenced the success of *The Consortium*. Ten interview questions were designed to directly address the research questions, thereby maintaining the purpose and clarity of the study (Appendices A, B & C).

Standardized, open-ended, individual interviews were conducted in person and over the telephone from August through October 2010. Each respondent was mailed an informed consent letter (Appendix D) requesting their participation in the study. Interviews were scheduled at the convenience of the respondent. Each interviewee was asked the same core set of nine questions. The presidents were asked one additional question. Interview questions were provided three days in advance of the scheduled interview.

The interview protocol was piloted with a subgroup that included one president, one mid-level executive and one administrator taken from the sample. Based on the pilot the researcher added one question to the president's protocol and edited one question for clarity. A follow up interview with respondents from the pilot study was conducted to address the edits to the interview questions. All other respondents were asked the same questions. During the interview the researcher probed for clarification or elaboration as needed. Each interview began with description of the research question and reiteration of the confidentiality of the interview (Appendix E).

Access

The researcher gained approval from the Executive Council and the Board of Presidents to conduct the study. This approval provided 100% support from the organization's leadership and staff and allowed the researcher access to organization's documents (Appendix F). The researcher worked through an assigned point of contact to assemble organizational documents. The research study was approved through the University of Florida Institutional Research Board Protocol Number 2010-U-0615.

Data Analysis

Patton (1987) explained the two processes involved in analyzing and interpreting qualitative data.

Analysis is the process of bringing order to the data, organizing what is there into patterns, categories, and basic descriptive units. Interpretation involves attaching meaning and significance to the analysis, explaining descriptive patterns and looking for relationships and linkages among descriptive dimensions. (p. 144)

Data analysis for this study was an ongoing process that intertwined with data collection. Patton (1987) noted the improved quality of both collected data and analysis when these processes overlapped. He cautioned researchers to exercise care not allow preliminary analysis to limit additional data collection. Data analysis for this study began immediately after the completion of the each interview. The researcher personally transcribed each recorded interview. The researcher confirmed accuracy by simultaneously listening to the audio while re-reading the corresponding transcript. References to names of people and institutions were removed in transcription to preserve anonymity. Further, transcribed interviews were sent back to the participants for member checking to ensure that their ideas were accurately reported.

The process of transcribing and re-reading allowed the researcher to become fully immersed in the data and begin to develop a heightened understanding of participants' perspectives.

Microsoft Word[®] software was used to transcribe data and Microsoft Excel[®] was used to assist in data management as the researcher grouped and re-grouped, color coded, highlighted, bookmarked and added comment fields for each individual interview. In-vivo coding, descriptive coding and memos were used to identify and sort themes that emerged from the data (Saldana, 2009). This iterative process continued

until the recurring themes were saturated. The researcher conducted a comparison of the data within and across the three groups of interviewees - presidents, mid-level executives and administrators - to identify categories and recurring themes, and distill similarities or differences among the data. The findings from this process are described in Chapter 4.

Reliability and Validity

Franekel and Wallen (1996) defined validity in qualitative research as the “appropriateness, meaningfulness and usefulness of the inferences that researchers make based on the data they collect.” Reliability is “consistency of these inferences over time” (p. 461). Lincoln and Guba (1985) elaborated on the idea of “establishing trustworthiness” suggesting techniques that ensure “credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability” (p. 301-329). Included in those techniques was triangulation through the use of different sources for data collection. Yin (2009) talked about establishing construct validity utilizing more than one source of evidence, establishing a chain of evidence, developing a case study protocol, maintaining a case study data base and having research participants review a draft of the study.

Data for this study was collected from multiple sources including a range of organizational documents (e.g. meeting agendas and minutes, annual reports, bylaws, mission statements) as well as open ended interviews. Study design provided for the compilation of a case study data base to provide an evidentiary base for the findings. Additionally, a random selection of study participants representing the three levels within the organization (presidents, mid-level executives and administrators), were given the opportunity to review research findings (Appendix G). The findings of this study may

be most useful when applied to institutions with a similar mission to that of case members.

Role of the Researcher

In qualitative research, the identity of the researcher impacted the data collection and analysis processes (Gunasekara, 2007). There was a misconception that qualitative analysis could not be neutral because the researcher inevitably carried assumptions and predispositions into the research process (Harper & Kuh, 2007) which devalued this research method. Janesick (2000) suggested that all research had bias. It was therefore important for researchers to explicitly state any potential for bias that may have existed in reference to the work under study (Creswell, 2003) and to affirm researcher attention to objectivity in the conduct of this study.

This researcher's knowledge of a member institution may have been cause for concern. Berger and Kellner (1981) reminded that the "social location, psychological constitution and cognitive peculiarities of an interpreter are inevitably involved in the act of interpretation and will affect the interpretation." Researchers must first understand their own feelings and perceptions and then bracket these so as to listen openly and attentively through the research process. As a result, the researcher was sensitive to and exercised caution at every stage of the data collection and analysis.

Use of Anonymity

Glesne (2006) explained "participants have the right to expect that when they give you permission to observe and interview, you will protect their confidence and preserve their anonymity" (p. 138). Yin (2009) explained the two levels of anonymity that exist within a case. A study may conceal the identity of the whole case or of individual participants in a case. The disadvantage of full disclosure was noted where readers of

the final report would not have the opportunity to review source materials included in citations. On the other hand, the purpose of anonymity is to protect the participants from any unintended consequences that may result from their participation in the study. Attention to anonymity is also important when writing the findings of a study. Fictitious names and/or the modification of descriptive characteristics are therefore used to protect identities of research participants (Glesne, 2006). Anonymity was maintained in this study. *The Consortium* is a pseudonym for a not-for-profit organization made up of five member community colleges. These institutions, also referred to by pseudonyms, are called *North College*, *South College*, *East College*, *West College* and *Central College*. Interview participants were referred to by their level within the organization as president, mid-level executive or administrator. Each institution was a regionally accredited community, junior or technical college with a comprehensive international student service program and committed financial resources for international student services.

CHAPTER 4 FINDINGS

This purpose of this study was to gain an in-depth knowledge about *The Consortium*. It was framed by the following research questions:

1. What were the important features of *The Consortium* model?
2. What were the benefits of *The Consortium*?
3. What were the challenges and how were they addressed?
4. What factors influenced the success of *The Consortium*?

In order to gather a range of viewpoints, these questions were examined from the perspectives at the leadership and administrative levels of *The Consortium*. Data were gathered through 16 in-depth interviews with members from the three leadership levels in the organization. There were five community college presidents who made up the highest level of leadership, three vice presidents, an executive director and an associate dean who served at the mid-level executive leadership and five directors and an assistant director who represented the administrative level.² In this study the interviewees were referenced as “president” in the text and “P” in quotations, “mid-level executive” in the text and “MLE” in quotations, or “administrator” in the text and “A” in quotations as appropriate to preserve their anonymity while indicating their respective level of leadership.

All but one of the interviewees were currently involved with *The Consortium*. Their tenure ranged from 1 to 12 years. One of the interviewees was a recently retired vice president who was actively involved with *The Consortium* from its inception for eight years. Each interview lasted approximately 45 minutes, with some lasting as long as

² In this study the interviewees were referenced as “president” in the text and “P” in quotations, “mid-level executive” in the text and “MLE” in quotations, or “administrator” in the text and “A” in quotations as appropriate to preserve their anonymity.

one hour. In addition, multiple consortium documents were analyzed. These included mission statement, bylaws, marketing materials, website, country reports, enrollment reports, budgets and meeting minutes. A full listing of documents is included in Appendix G.

This chapter presents the findings from the interviews and document analysis. There are four major sections which address the research questions. They are the important features of *The Consortium* model, the benefits of *The Consortium*, the challenges and how they were addressed, and the factors that influence the success of *The Consortium*, respectively.

Important Features of *The Consortium* Model

Throughout the interviews, the researcher listened for interviewee comments that described important features of *The Consortium* model in positive terms. An important feature was identified as something that was structural to the organization's design. An analysis of the organization's most recently revised bylaws and its operating standards and procedures was cross-referenced with interviewee comments to validate the key features that were identified. Among the important features of *The Consortium* model, respondents at all levels described the assets of the three tiered organizational structure, shared costs and composition of the organization.

Organizational Structure

A review of the organization's bylaws revealed *The Consortium* was established with a three-tiered governance structure. It included a board of presidents made up of the presidents of each of the member institutions and an executive council made up of two representatives from each institution. One of the executive council representatives was at or above a dean level position and was the voting member of the council. The

second representative was at the director level and was responsible for the day to day implementation of *The Consortium* program.

The board of presidents provided leadership and guidance to *The Consortium* and was the final approval body for all policy and budgetary matters. The executive council provided direction for day to day operations on all issues related to budget and recruitment. The executive council reported annually to the board of presidents at regularly scheduled meetings. A minimum of one board of presidents' meeting and two executive council meetings per year was prescribed in the bylaws. Each member was required to participate in scheduled annual meetings and consortium recruitment activities. The chair of the board of presidents was elected every two years and served as the liaison with the executive council. The officers of the executive council were the chairperson, vice chairperson and secretary. They were elected every two years by the executive council.

Interviews revealed satisfaction with the structure of the organization. One mid-level executive observed,

the thinking that went into the organization when they formed it and along the way has really been excellent. The bylaws are good. They are not unduly complicated...I think the structural things that could be done to eliminate or alleviate any unhappiness with *The Consortium* have really been done (MLE 1).

Another explained,

we've got five country directors. Each one has a country that he or she is responsible for in terms of directing the marketing and recruitment efforts, doing the market analysis and research, maintaining the budget, developing the budget, reconciling the budget for that country (MLE 2).

One administrator referred to the structure as "an efficient way to operate" (A3).

Not all the administrators agreed with the effectiveness of the structure. With respect to

maintaining balance, one noted the stress placed on the institutions with small staff when country directors have to divert their attention from institutional responsibilities to do consortium travel or work. Another explained,

the way that *The Consortium* gives out responsibility is basically it's done once a year in April. That's when we decide who will do what. We try to forecast what the workload is going to look like for *The Consortium* and if it's doable in the context of the institutional workload. It's not a perfect science (A3).

Shared Costs

Each member was an equal partner in *The Consortium* and contributed equally to the budget and to shared business expenses. The bylaws spelled out a fiscal formula that provided for new members to pay 10% of *The Consortium's* budget expenses for the first year or year and a half of membership, depending on when the institution joined.

After the first year, membership costs were based on an equal division of business expenses. 1) Eight percent of the total approved annual operating budget was allocated to staff support, and that cost was also shared equally among the members. 2) Each institution paid a prorated percentage of recruitment related expenses, based on their total enrollment of consortium students for the previous term. 3) A one time, \$10,000 deposit fee, refundable when the institution leaves *The Consortium*. 4) A 15% commission fee to be paid to agents based on each institution's individual enrollment of students referred through the agent. The fee was calculated as 15% of the tuition earned for the first year of each student's enrollment with the institution.

Additionally, there was a stated expectation that each member would maintain funds in their institutional budgets for consortium related expenses. A mid-level executive observed,

the sharing of the financial burden is very fair...you pay a certain base rate to *The Consortium* for being a part but then there is, the more students you have, the other part of the formula recognizes that some of us get more students than others (MLE1).

There was agreement among the interviewees regarding the financial benefits of cost sharing. It was captured in this statement, “if we had to tackle the countries that we have recruited in over the years as a solo institution, the cost would have been prohibitive” (MLE 2).

Composition

The composition of the organization was defined by its size and the make-up of its members. The bylaws provided for the composition of the membership to retain *The Consortium's* geographic balance. The five members were located in Florida, Pennsylvania, Illinois, Washington and California. All members had to be regionally accredited community, junior or technical colleges. Through an electoral process new members that met consortium criteria could be added. One president commented on the strength of this geographic diversity.

In retrospect it has worked out well given the geographic representation across the country. We don't compete with each other. We all have our different strengths and our locations bring different positives so we don't really compete and we've got the country pretty well covered (P2).

The size was also viewed as a positive by the presidents. Another stated,

I think one of the things that have made us as successful is the small size of *The Consortium*. We only have five members and all five of us can sit around and talk about this pretty easily (P5).

A mid-level executive agreed, “the size of *The Consortium* makes it easy to work things out. In other words you have different viewpoints, but you don't have twenty different viewpoints” (MLE1).

Administrators also commented on the size and geographic diversity of the members.

We are founded on the premise that we would not be competing against each other. We are located in five different states and five areas of the U.S. We're in the East coast and the South, Mid-West and the West coast. When we are overseas doing our outreach we don't have to, we never find ourselves competing against one another. Once a student, or a family, has made a decision as to where they would like to send the student that pretty much takes care of itself (A5).

Among the administrators, comments about the size of the organization revealed an interest in exploring the possibilities of adding new members. Some speculated about the advantages of additional resources if others were invited to join *The Consortium*, for example, one director shared, "in my opinion, quite honestly you would get more resources, if you had six you would have a sixth college paying" (A4). Another administrator pondered on the group dynamics and how that might be impacted by increasing the membership.

But I often wonder what it would be like if there were ten of us rather than five. I mean because in a way we're all used to one another and we, I'm going to use the word friends, we're friends of each other. If you had, as they say when something grows larger and larger that camaraderie could go away and it would become more of a business than a family. It hasn't happened yet but it is something that I often think about (A2).

It seemed that while the size and geographic makeup of the organization had remained stable for more than a decade, and was seen as an important feature and benefit to *The Consortium*, there was interest at the administrator level to explore the possibility of expanding the membership. This interest in expansion was not directly expressed at the mid-level executive and president levels.

Benefits of *The Consortium*

The study explored interviewee perceptions about the benefits of membership in *The Consortium*. Major themes that evolved from interviewees comments were leveraged financial resources and collaboration. Additionally, interviewees were specifically asked to comment on the return on their investment in international student recruitment through *The Consortium*. These themes are discussed below.

Leveraged Financial Resources

The majority of the presidents interviewed commented on the leveraging of financial resources that allowed the members to accomplish more through the power of sharing. They agreed that an important benefit of membership in *The Consortium* was a more cost effective way for them to pursue international student recruitment. One president noted, “if we were recruiting international students on our own I think it will be a much more expensive proposition” (P3). Another president equated the impact that they had collectively through these leveraged financial resources with the potential of big universities,

we do not have the resources of big universities for example, but it allows us, this consortium, to act in many ways with the kind of knowledge and impact that a larger institution might have in the marketplace in terms of advertising, in terms of our website presence, in terms of developing relationships with agents within markets and having the fiscal resources to be able to pursue all of the various things that allow us access to markets that might be a little more difficult for each one of us independently (P1).

Mid-level executives also pointed to cost effectiveness as a benefit of membership and elaborated on its impact on the enhanced scope of their international reach.

Organizational records indicated that *The Consortium* had maintained some recruitment activity in Korea, Hong Kong, China, Russia and the Commonwealth of Independent States, Japan, Sweden, Brazil, Poland, and was actively exploring new markets in

Vietnam, Europe, and China. One mid-level executive noted “we could never afford to go to place like Japan, China, Russia, Sweden, Hong Kong, Brazil and many other countries depending on our college outreach budget” (MLE4). Another agreed, “it provides an opportunity for the college to pool its various resources, financial resources...together in what I would call a very efficient and effective, and even a very credible way” (MLE5).

One mid-level executive offered a slightly different point of view that, while it supported cost effectiveness, minimized the extent of this benefit.

I would say we definitely have an advantage in terms of cost by being in *The Consortium*. I wouldn't say that that is the most compelling reason or that there is a huge benefit in cost. If we were to take the money we put in *The Consortium* and do something else with it, you know we might have fewer students but it wouldn't be dramatically fewer, I wouldn't think (MLE1).

All administrators spoke of cost effectiveness as a benefit of membership. Their comments were summed up in this one remark, “overall the cost of recruiting is quite expensive and our combined efforts reduce that cost significantly” (A2).

There was consensus across all levels regarding the benefit of leveraged financial resources. Interviewees spoke in positive terms of this benefit that resulted in cost savings, broader global reach and greater impact for less financial input.

Collaboration

Collaboration emerged as a major theme throughout the interviews and the organizational documents. It was the foundation of the operational relationships between the member institutions. It was defined in terms of shared responsibilities, shared knowledge, and relationships.

Shared responsibilities

Only one mid-level executive commented on the benefit of shared responsibilities. However, this comment was noteworthy as it provided further insight into the scope of the responsibilities that were shared among the administrators and highlighted the benefit to the institution.

We've got five country directors. Each one has a country that he or she is responsible for in terms of directing the marketing and recruitment efforts, doing the market analysis and research, maintaining the budget, developing the budget, reconciling the budget for that country. That would be a tremendous amount of extra work outside of what each of these individuals does at their home institution, and, frankly, could not be done. If my director had to handle five countries for us, he could not do his own job. I'd have to hire somebody else, and that's not necessarily something that we could do (MLE2).

Not surprisingly, comments about benefits of shared responsibilities came primarily from the administrators. These were the staff most frequently engaged in day to day communication and planning for *The Consortium's* work. Their comments about sharing the responsibilities revealed the complexities of international recruitment work and the value derived from sharing the workload. One administrator explained,

we've been able to have relationships with many new people abroad that we probably would not have been able to achieve as an independent institution. Because we do the group trips and we travel together and share those responsibilities we've been able to cultivate real relationships over a long period of time with some key partners and those relationships have been strengthened and enhanced by the group of us working on those relationship rather than one person. And we've been able to have more relationships because there are more people working on those relationships (A6).

Beyond the benefit of enhanced relationships, another administrator described how "labor intensive" it was to work in a market, having to learn the "demands" and "nuances" of that local market, and manage financial resources effectively to maximize recruitment efforts. This administrator observed that the sharing of responsibility, "allows

each one of the five directors to specialize on several markets rather than trying to be an expert in everything” (A4).

Shared knowledge

Several presidents saw great value in the sharing of knowledge among the member institutions. They described that sharing as a part of the give and take of dialog among the staff both formally and informally, as one president noted, “we can just pick up the phone and call somebody, and of course we have regular meetings on an ongoing basis where we share that expertise and that knowledge and experience” (P4). *The Consortium* afforded them ready access to a support group that provided expertise in the area of international education. One president said, “we can turn to people who may have had some of the issues we have had and that’s a wonderful thing to be able to do” (P5). Others concurred, “it’s not necessarily just one person but really a team of individuals who we can tap into at any given time to assist” (P4), and “they really have an opportunity to talk and know what the other colleges are doing, what are their best practices in terms of working with these students” (P1).

Mid-level executives shared the viewpoint that shared knowledge was an important benefit. One described the variety of areas in which knowledge was shared.

Some directors are very knowledgeable in SEVIS, which is the student exchange visa program and some of them understand a great deal the concept of college program certification, some directors are more familiar with the new policies that are now in place with Homeland Security (MLE4).

Another explained that the sharing of knowledge and expertise extended beyond the specifics of international recruitment to other aspects of international program work in this way:

I think the interchange that occurs among *The Consortium* participants when we meet, not just in formal meetings but socially, at dinners or

lunches and so forth, as basic as that, I think the idea sharing that occurs. Not just about how do we recruit international students more effectively or broadly, but the discussion spills over into other aspects of our institutional service delivery. That idea exchange happens more frequently in that setting. I most likely would not be picking up the phone and calling someone at an institution on the opposite coast of the country to ask about the integration of their student services with regard to admissions and financial aid. If I am sitting down at dinner with that vice president, I very well may have that conversation. I think that's an important spinoff of *The Consortium's* work (MLE2).

Similarly, the value that was placed in their ability to share their expertise was revealed in comments from administrators such as "we're also making our program stronger because we've got these other people to bounce ideas off" (A1), and "we really benefit from the four other colleges who might have a little more long term experience in the field" (A3), or "expertise from one area that I might not necessarily be very versed, one of my other four colleagues may have more knowledge" (A4). Another administrator further highlighted the value of collaboration in the context of the unique nature of international student recruitment within the community college setting.

It's a very challenging task to think about - how do you market an unknown community college in the world. The local PR and marketing office really is geared towards the district and our offices are geared toward the entire world. There are some pretty significant challenges in analyzing the marketplace, so being able to share that information and discuss it and reflect on it and try to build positive strategies is another big benefit (A6).

Relationships

A number of presidents affirmed the importance of collaborative relationships to the work of *The Consortium*. One president declared,

at the end of the day really for all of us it's all about relationships. The relationships that are built between our staff members who are delivering these programs and these services, and the relationships they've built in these countries and with people in these countries (P4).

From their point of view, they attributed successful outcomes to successful relationships among the staff as evident in the comment “the vice presidents and directors, who seem to have a great working relationship. I think that’s what really makes it a success. They seem to get along well, they cooperate well” (P2).

While the strength of relationships within collaboration emerged as a theme across the levels, there were differing perspectives on these relationships. The presidents seemed to be insulated from some of the day to day struggles of relationship building that were identified in comments by mid-level executives and administrators. One mid-level executive admitted to “some pretty intense moments of disharmony because of the disparate personalities” (MLE2). Within the comments there was an implication that it took time for the group to develop a sense of mutual trust and respect that was necessary for successful relationships. Another mid-level executive observed,

so you have to be able to trust each other and you have to be able to confront and if there are issues or concerns you have, either because someone said something or did something, you have to be able to be open about it, discuss it, and try to work through it. And I think the group has done that over the years... And then as people are out on the road together and they’re working together and communicating together, it’s important when issues of trust, integrity, credibility or whatever issues come up and you deal with that (MLE5).

All the administrators spoke to the strength and depth of the relationships that were cultivated among consortium members. This was succinctly described by one administrator this way, “I’m not going to necessarily share trade secrets with a school just north or south of here but sharing best practices with a consortium partner that’s a different issue” (A1). Another administrator affirmed, “we see each other among *The Consortium* as partners; we don’t see each other as competitors or adversaries” (A5).

There was no pretense among administrators that these relationships were without their tensions or that they were developed without due effort. There were several comments that acknowledged “personality conflicts” (A4), and the need to overcome the intrinsic competitive nature of the work. One commented,

there’s not another group like us that we’re quite aware of that we’re recruiting for all five of our institutions at the same time. Usually this is an individual school effort to recruit for their school. So the tradition of being competitive and working for your own school was stronger in the beginning on some level than it is now because over time the culture that’s evolved in our group has been that we put *The Consortium* and our support for each other on some level above our own interest in recruiting for our own institutions only. (A6).

The nurturing of these relationships of trust and respect was described within the context of the way the members worked together. For example, there was a conscious decision to place the collective needs of the group ahead of the individual needs of institutions as described in this way,

we really make the shift internally in our thinking about it, we all get committed to the idea that I’m happy if another institution gets students and that is a value and a priority I think that’s evolved over time and we’ve openly talked about it. That’s one of the interesting things about our group...We’ve actually decided to prioritize our collective goals rather than some of our individual needs (A6).

Another administrator stated,

“it is a really fine line to distinguish between consortium interests versus institution interests. Essentially, many times that I’ve been placed in a situation that I have to decide one or the other I normally have placed *The Consortium* over the institution (A5).

There was consensus across all levels regarding the benefits of collaboration. Themes of shared responsibility emerged as an important feature of collaboration among the administrators. At all three levels, shared knowledge and relationships were identified as other key features of collaboration among consortium members.

Return on Investment

Return on investment was another way to gauge the benefits of membership in *The Consortium*. Interviewees were specifically asked to comment on the return on their investment in international student recruitment through *The Consortium*. Responses fell into two broad categories, financial return on investment and intangible return on investment that came to the institutions as a result of increased enrollments through *The Consortium's* recruitment activities.

Financial return on investment

All the presidents acknowledged a financial return on investment in *The Consortium* but were quick to emphasize the intangible returns as a more important outcome. One president stated explicitly,

in terms of return on investment, in terms of dollars, to tell you the truth I really don't spend a lot of time on that and worrying about it because I'm more concerned about the experience that students receive and the experience that the other students receive and benefit from having an opportunity to interact with these students from different backgrounds and different cultures (P4).

Another reinforced, "our goal was not to make money...we don't want to lose money on this" and went on to explain,

we more than cover the costs of our participation in *The Consortium* so, it is actually a profit center, if you will, in the business sense. And there is a financial return on investment. But that's not what motivated us, at least motivated me. I think our return on investment is the benefit that our native students get. And hopefully the benefit that the international students who come here get from the education that we provide (P3).

A third president reiterated,

I'm going to be real honest with you here, it's a way of increasing operating funds here at the institution...it becomes a way for us to latch onto a little bit more operating funds even after we give the services to the international students (P5).

The presidents' acknowledgement of a financial return on investment was supported by the research and the national data that indicated a significant return on investment for international student recruitment. There was a positive impact to the budgets of higher education institutions as well as the U.S. economy. (NAFSA: Association of International Educators, 2010; Peterson et al., 1999; Romano, 2002).

During 2009-2010 academic year, NAFSA: Association of International Educators (2010) estimated an \$18.8 billion economic impact to the U.S. economy from the presence of foreign students and their dependents. Economic impact data for 2009-2010 in the states where *The Consortium* member institutions were located ranged from a high of \$2.8 billion in California to \$412 million in Washington. Pennsylvania, Illinois and Florida received economic benefits estimated at \$887 million, \$869 million and \$826 million respectively from the presence of international students and their dependants.

The majority of the mid-level executives also commented on the financial return on investment in agreement with statements made by the presidents. One noted,

we're definitely benefiting, just in terms of dollars. Even if you look at the tuition they pay, and the cost, even if you add up all the indirect costs of serving them. So, in that sense, bottom line is, even on a dollar figure a plus (MLE1).

Another mid-level executive quantified, "just looking at our last fiscal year, our return on investment was over 600%" and went on to explain,

I calculated that by looking at the recruitment budget we had set aside and adding the costs of my employee' benefits and salaries and subtracting that from the tuition dollars generated. And that's just tuition dollars. That doesn't even count fees. It was over 600% return on that investment. That's just this past year. So compound that over time, it's been tremendous. It's really self sustaining in terms of the recruitment activities, and it's sustaining for the office and the staff and the benefits costs, so really, in addition to all the outlay of money to support, this certainly, and I hate to sound crass, but

we're reaping quite a profit from the tuition dollars generated by *The Consortium* students, and that's just consortium students (MLE2).

Administrators also acknowledged the financial return on investment. They elaborated on the higher rate of tuition that international students paid compared to local students and how that positively impacted the bottom line. One stated, "they are paying a lot higher tuition so to get just one student brings in a lot more money. It's about three and a half domestic students." (A4). Another explained, "one trip abroad typically could cost, for example five thousand dollars. The work that's done on that one trip is less than one year's tuition cost for a student. It's almost about one semester" (A6).

Intangible return on investment

While there was consensus regarding the financial return on investment, there was an even greater emphasis among the presidents placed on the intangible return on investment to the member institutions. One president stated, "we see *The Consortium* as being that vehicle, that focal point for recruitment of international students and that's the way to diversify not only the student body but the culture and everything else here at the institution" (P5). Another president noted,

that's not one of those things you can put a price tag on, what that brings to an institution when you bring these individuals from different countries and different cultures and the richness that brings to a college campus (P4).

The Consortium was described as,

a good and relatively inexpensive way to be able to pursue what is our objective, a broad range of different countries and cultures to come and interact with our students on our campus. That's the first and most important part (P1).

The use of financial return to help support enhanced programs and services that benefited the whole institution was highlighted in this comment,

those resources are sufficient not just to take care of the needs of our international students but actually build some additional program and support program capacity that we probably wouldn't be able to afford (P1).

The mission statements of the individual institutions and *The Consortium* and interviews with presidents, mid-level executives and administrators all suggested that achieving diversity was a key driver for consortium members in pursuing international recruitment. The mission, vision and/or core values statements of the individual colleges all in some way acknowledged their commitment to a diverse educational environment. One president affirmed, "it's a natural fit given our mission and what we are doing with *The Consortium* is aligned and supports the mission of the college" (P4). Another president added, "more and more businesses are competing globally and exposing native students to more cultures was considered one important way to prepare students for world of the future" (P3).

Phrases like "celebrate diversity, and encourage mutual cultural understanding," "inclusive environment," "global society" and "local and global communities that we serve" were part of different colleges' mission and vision statements and affirmed the individual institutional commitment that was reflected in comments regarding the intangible benefits of increasing the diversity on the campuses.

The literature indicated that the presence of foreign students on U.S. campuses increased diversity and enriched the educational experiences of American students through personal contact as well as provided exposure to other cultures, histories and global issues. They helped to create diverse environments where differences could be acknowledged and respected, and stereotypical thinking confronted resulting in an increased understanding of the interdependence of nations and states (American

Council on Education, 2002; Fitzer 2007; Lamkin, 2000; NAFSA: Association of International Educators, 2006, 2008; O'Connell, 1994; Romano, 2002).

Mid-level executives also described the impact of intangible benefits that accrued to their campuses as a result of increased enrollments of international students through their membership in *The Consortium*.

In terms of the learning environment and the things that are provided by the presence of international students, I think it's difficult to quantify that because there is probably literally no other way to provide that to the number of students that we can. We have very few students who can afford, whether financially, or afford the time away from their families to go study overseas, or even to take a summer trip or whatever. And so this contact with these students is one of the few ways that they would have a direct interaction with people from the rest of the world (MLE1).

Another mid-level executive concurred,

we all realize that a lot of our domestic students who enroll are fairly provincial and not necessarily pre-dispositioned to want to go to these other countries and learn about these other countries, or learn other cultures and customs, so we need to bring it to them (MLE2).

There was agreement among the administrators as well. Their comments reflected similar thoughts as those expressed by the mid-level executives.

A lot of our students might be from more provincial families or cultures. They might be local yokels who have been here all their life and will never leave the community and so the fact that we're bringing students from such dramatically different cultures to the college is an education for those students who will never have the opportunity to travel into those cultures. (A3).

To be able to sit in the classroom with maybe two students from another part of the world with different perspectives and become friends with them and learn something about multi-cultural communication is really good investment in the future of our students. So that is a really big non-material marker (A4).

There was consensus across all levels in *The Consortium* that diversifying the student body was the greatest intangible benefit to members from *The Consortium's* international recruitment activities.

Challenges and How They Were Addressed

The study also explored the challenges of *The Consortium* and how they were addressed. Interviewees were asked about external conditions that impacted positively and negatively on their work and how they dealt with those that presented the greatest challenges. The leaders interviewed in this study perceived a variety of challenges to their work that were beyond their control. These fell into the broad category of the external global environment and included themes such as the economy, socio-political events and the United States image abroad. Several internal organizational challenges were also identified such as availability of housing for international students and administrative challenges.

Global Environment

The economy

The local and international economy loomed as an important theme across the interviews. Many noted the inverse relationship between economic factors and international student enrollment. A “robust” economy was seen as favorable to *The Consortium's* work, while periods of reduced economic activity posed significant challenges.

Presidents pointed to the direct impact any movement in the world economy, whether up or down, had on their enrollment numbers. “Economic factors unquestionably have an impact and we’ve seen that the last couple years, with the global recession” (P3).

Another attributed the drop in enrollments at his institution to the international economy. He stated, “one of the reasons we had 250 international students two years ago and we have 155 this year, I am certain is the more precarious state of the international economy both in Asia and in Europe.” He went on to explain the relationship between enrollments and the economy had to do with the question of

how well people are doing and therefore how many people are there in each of these areas that have the families that have the financial wherewithal to pay the full cost of this kind of American educational experience (P1).

The “ripple effect” of local economic pressures due to state budget reductions was also identified as a challenge by one president in this statement:

in this state we have experienced some pretty drastic reductions in our funding overall and at our institutions and this institution here certainly didn’t escape that. That has a ripple effect across all programs (P4).

The majority of the mid-level executives commented on economic challenges as well. One remarked, “the whole international recruitment scene has changed over the years and will continue to change...it changes based on economics” (MLE5). Another talked about the impact of currency devaluation, “we’ve seen during the economic downturn the Korean currency for example lost a lot in relation to the U.S. currency. That has a huge impact on enrollment...it’s all elastic according to cost” (MLE1).

A number of administrator comments reinforced the theme. One explained the simple equation, “If foreign currency is doing well against the dollar we see more students; if it’s not, we see fewer students” (A3). One pointed to the impact on international students.

When worldwide economic situation was happening the Korean currency just plummeted against the dollar where potential students, current students, they were suddenly having to pay twice as much as what they were a year ago. Not that our costs went up it was just the exchange rate

plummeted so drastically that they were having to send twice as much Korean currency to cover the same amount of costs that it was a year ago. So that can be a negative and a positive depending on which way the exchange rate is going. You get students saying I've got to return home, I don't know if I'm going to be able to come back, is there a payment plan I can do (A1).

This administrator summed it up succinctly, "the recession is hurting us in some places" (A6).

Global socio-political events

Global socio-political environment and the competitive climate in which *The Consortium* operated included political issues related to the U.S. and international regulatory environment, global competition for international students and social issues related to health epidemics.

Some of the presidents addressed the regulatory environment in other countries and how that impacted student mobility. One observed, "they have policies and rules and laws that we have to work within as best we can, in some cases it's very difficult for students to get whatever they need so that they can come here, from their own government" (P4). Another noted that within the United States "things like the visa process, and whether that becomes more or less difficult" (P3) was particularly challenging, especially after September 11.

Mid-level executives also acknowledged the challenges in navigating the regulatory environment. One mid-level-executive noted that challenges in securing visas also occurred as a result of "negative bias about community colleges" (MLE1) compared to big name universities among the U.S. State Department staff who were responsible for granting U.S. visas.

Other challenges identified were health epidemics and competition for international students as other countries enhanced their presence on the world market for international students. One mid-level-executive clearly explained the nuances,

the fact that many countries like Australia and Britain are really doing much more to encourage students to study in their country, establishing country policies and making it easier for them financially to enroll (MLE5).

She also noted that sending countries also worked more diligently to retain their students by increasing local educational opportunities. Other mid-level executives commented on experiences with the global health epidemics such as severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) and the Influenza A virus H1N1.

While presidents and mid-level executives touched on the socio-political and economic issues related to the global environment, it was the administrators who provided greater detail in identifying the variety of global factors that had a direct impact on their recruitment efforts. One administrator enumerated,

we also have external conditions that we have no control of through unpredictable cyclical events including 9-11, SARS, the war in Afghanistan , Swine Flu epidemic, global economic downturn. All of those affect our bottom line and the work that we do overseas and they've all have impacted to a certain degree how productive we can be overseas (A5).

Another administrator explained further,

after 9-11 the U.S. became stricter with issuing student visas, with SARS in Hong Kong several years ago, people weren't travelling. We actually did not go to one of our Spring trips because we too were concerned about getting SARS (A4).

They also elaborated on competition for international students. They identified both the changing demographics of sending countries and the competition from other major international education destinations. One administrator observed,

Japan is now experiencing a point where the college aged population isn't what it used to be; therefore, there is space in the universities within Japan

to educate students rather than, you know, what used to happen was that there weren't enough spaces in the Japanese universities so it was forcing the college aged population to think about other places to study (A2).

Another explained,

in the European Union they have this ERASMUS agreement so there's somewhat less interest in European countries sometimes studying because they can study now in each other's countries for lesser cost. The marketing strategies of other nations, what Australians are doing, what the Canadians are doing, what the New Zealanders are doing, those impact us quite bit. Our competition within the United States, what other colleges are doing, what other universities, English language schools, non- profit and profit schools (A6).

United States' image abroad

The United States' image abroad emerged as a theme primarily among the administrators. It was a challenge they had to deal with first hand in their international contacts. Their comments revealed how precarious the image of the United States had become among potential international students and how that image was influenced by politics and the media.

Some students get turned off. They are not interested in our schools. We've heard first hand in Sweden where they students say "we don't want to go there". Essentially not in these words but you guys are war mongers. We don't want to go to a country that has preemptive military exercises overseas. We will hear that first hand when we go out there (A5).

Another administrator pointed out,

anytime a city gets good press, that influences students' decisions. They might read an article in Hong Kong about Philadelphia and that might peak their interest in attending a school near Philadelphia (A3).

Organizational Challenges

Availability of housing for international students

Housing was addressed as a local challenge that impacted the different member institutions in different ways based on their capacity. One president pointed out that,

we have a person dedicated to finding home stays but it's difficult because we are not near good transportation out here in the suburbs. That creates a problem so we may have some built in limitations of our own (P2).

Mid-level executives and administrators offered more details on the challenges of securing adequate housing for international students and how that was addressed.

Housing is not just a problem for us. It's particularly a problem for my college but also for East College and West College. North College is at a point where they have filled up their residence halls and other options that they have so they are looking at that too. I'm not sure about South College, if they are at that point yet but they certainly could get to that point (MLE5).

Housing became an important consideration as *The Consortium* continued to increase enrollments. One administrator recalled, "we're going to enroll more students, but does each college have the infrastructure to support that? Will they grow out of the housing arrangements? Some almost did in Fall of 2008" (A3).

Another administrator situated the challenge of providing housing in the context of their commitment to providing services to international recruits;

when you recruit students you have to have as strong of a commitment or a stronger commitment to providing the services that these students need. In our case our office is responsible for the housing so when we're successful with recruiting we have more demands to provide services. That's a little bit of a conundrum, if we're successful with recruiting we are challenged more on the home front in providing those services at the same time (A6).

Organizational documents also revealed *The Consortium's* ongoing efforts to analyze and address this challenge. *The Consortium* conducted an extensive national survey of community colleges that provided housing for international students in an effort to identify alternative solutions. They also conducted detailed analysis of member processes that revealed different approaches to addressing housing for each member institution. Differences included housing guarantees to international students provided by some institutions and dedicated staff assigned to addressing housing needs during

peak periods. The type of housing arrangements also differed from college owned dormitories, to host families, to arrangements with local apartment complexes. While housing continued to be an individualized challenge for each member institution, *The Consortium* adopted a collaborative approach to problem solving as they worked together to find solutions.

Administrative challenges

Several administrators discussed the challenges that were particular to their role within the organization. These included communication and workload management. Communication challenges resulted from the geographic distance between the member institutions. One administrator explained,

sometimes I would just long to walk out of my office and talk to somebody instead of writing an email or leaving a message or knowing that if I want to talk to a colleague in another time zone I have to wait the time frame (A4)

Another described the impact of distance on the group dynamic, “because of the fact that we are spread across the United States and when we get back to our own campuses the synergy that’s created when we are together sort of dissipates.” (A2).

Other administrative challenges arose from workload management. In addition to the scope of responsibilities outlined in the country director job description that each administrator performs, they also have responsibilities associated with their roles as international education officers at their institutions. One administrator described the stress of balancing those roles;

we’re doing it over time, on a shoestring, sometimes we’re doing it while we are meeting students housing needs and a lot of other demands. I do believe we need to stay connected with students and the student experience and we need to always have that connection with the person doing the marketing but there’s a lot more to do and we probably need more staff in order to help us do it (A6).

Another administrator explained,

We are a two person office, if one or the other of us is out of the office or working on consortium matters the entire rest of the responsibilities of the office falls on one person. And you know, it is actually a source of conflict right now within the office and you know recently there was a trip that fell over the beginning of the semester and it was extremely stressful for me because I was the one left in the office trying to deal with 238 students with no support (A2).

Dealing with the Challenges

In describing how they dealt with those conditions that posed the greatest challenge, interviewees revealed several strategies that allowed them to be resilient in a changing environment. Some reinforced a lack of control over the conditions and seemed resigned that they could do nothing to directly impact those factors. An analysis of interviewee comments revealed that *The Consortium* was quite proactive in developing a strategic response to the vagaries of the global environment.

This study identified specific strategies described by the interviewees that coalesced into a targeted recruitment approach. These included exploration of new markets, being responsive and flexible, image management and the use of international education agencies. These were all confirmed through further analysis of strategic planning documents, meeting minutes and recruitment schedules.

Exploration of new markets

The presidents talked about the exploration of new markets. Through an ongoing monitoring of market trends and analysis of consortium data market strategies were evaluated and adjusted. One president stated, “based on the data analysis and watching the trends and what’s happening with our recruitment efforts, we make decisions to either continue pursuing those countries in those areas or not” (P4).

Another president explained how they monitored shifts in the world economies in order to identify potential new markets. He added, “we keep looking at what other nations are in a position where they may be seeking opportunities and we can create new markets and awareness of us as an opportunity” (P1).

This deliberate effort toward market diversity was reflected in the comments of this president,

I would hold up starting a recruiting effort in Brazil for example as one of those countries where we’re trying to see if we can make some headway for students coming here. We’ve been pretty open. We tried Mexico without a lot of success yet and we tried some places in Eastern Europe without a great deal of success but I would say that we keep hunting for those places that look like there’s potential and that is one of the ways that we’re trying to adapt together and figure out where there might be markets that could help us despite our traditional markets having a tougher time because our traditional markets are having economic troubles (P1).

Mid-level executives also talked about new markets. They identified new markets as one of the critical and very deliberate decisions they make. One mid-level executive explained, “when countries stop producing students, or there are problems with agents or whatever, we bring it up and talk about it...we make very conscious decisions about where to allocate resources” (MLE1).

I think the decision to establish a research and development period for new markets has been a good decision on our part because we realize you can’t make a difference necessarily in one year when you’re going into a new market. You really need to begin, year one, in getting the lay of the land, getting the sense of the culture, what’s the best way to reach students and families, what are the barriers, what are the benefits of operating in a market. And we all agreed that we need to give a new country three years. If in three years the market is not producing or showing signs of potential, cut your losses and move on. That was important. That was a systematic decision (MLE2).

Administrators noted that shifts in the global environment moved them to explore new markets for international students as traditional markets yielded fewer students.

“We are looking at other countries where we can potentially say if things are going bad in Hong Kong, or if there is a demographic shift in Japan occurring, then maybe we can be working in Turkey or in India” (A5). Another explained, “we are moving from that paradigm which was, continue working closely with established partners in established markets, to *The Consortium* courting people in new markets, courting new agents” (A3).

Exploration was not limited to uncharted territory. Even in a mature market such as Japan, efforts to expand to different parts of the country demonstrated another approach to dealing with the challenges through market expansion. One administrator described this approach in Japan.

For years we've been doing two group trips to Japan, and it was decided this past meeting that Japan is such a mature market and it's a market that has changed a bit, where years ago Japan used to be one of the highest countries for enrollment and now its dropped just because of their changing demographics... Let's do one group trip, but let's keep the other trip a country director trip and allow the director the chance to go to Japan and because of the changing demographics ...explore a different area of Japan. Maybe going up to Hokkaidō or to Sapporo because we have a couple agents that have branch offices up there, maybe the country director goes up to Sendai, and does an exploratory to see if those areas in an already established market might be beneficial for later on, the whole group to come on (A1).

Responsiveness and flexibility

Administrators most frequently highlighted the need to be responsive and flexible as they addressed challenges. Flexibility was reflected in comments about the members' response to challenges such as the economic crisis. One administrator commented, “It's like being on a rocky boat and trying to keep it steady, trying to keep it afloat. I think each instance requires its own flexibility (A3).

Interviewee comments revealed a flexible approach that also included the decisions about the types of programs offered. Administrators noted that

responsiveness to the changing global environment required the ability to adjust their services to accommodate the needs of the students as reflected in this comment, “we’re are noticing in some countries the market for ESL training is very high and so we want to market our schools as intensive ESL programs” (A4). Another administrator commented,

one thing that *The Consortium* is doing to respond to that is looking into different types of programs. Because the Japanese students can get into the universities that ten years ago they could never get into, they’re only interested in doing short term programs to some extent. The way we’re responding is by investigating some of these short term programs, we’re looking into summer programs for them so they can still come over and experience our colleges and return (A4).

Image management

Already discussed above, interviewee comments revealed how precarious the image of the United States had become among potential international students and how that image was influenced by politics and the media. Image management emerged as an important strategy in dealing with the challenges posed by the unpredictable nature of the global socio-political environment. An analysis of organizational documents revealed an emphasis on refining marketing efforts as a future strategy in the strategic plan. Marketing materials for each of the five member colleges as well as joint consortium materials were also analyzed. Materials were produced in multiple languages. They included student testimonials, tuition comparisons with four year institutions and descriptions of unique services offered by member institutions such as conversation partners programs and airport pick up and housing.

Presidents acknowledged the new marketing emphasis and direction. One stated, “we’re going to move in some different directions in terms of how we do our marketing and our advertising and all those things and we made some decisions recently about

how best to do that” (P4). Mid-level executives and administrators discussed the various ways they worked together to manage the image of *The Consortium*. A mid-level executive noted, “the name change, the emphasis put on the website, creating the video, gives the information that people need and it also gives them a chance to see the colleges, to see the type of students” (MLE3). Another explained,

just as the United States students are not using the same methods of gathering information, they are using social networks, they are using ipads and iphones, we are finding we need to beef up the use of technology as a consortium (MLE2).

Across all levels there was consensus that the recent name change of *The Consortium* was a most effective marketing strategy. One administrator commented,

so far all the feedback we have received has been very positive so this, too, in itself was a really important decision because it gives a lot more visibility and credibility to our mission and to what we are doing as far as our work overseas (A5).

The administrators placed this strategic marketing emphasis on image management in the context of their need. One explained,

It is very difficult at this point in the game to court new partners without good marketing materials. Fifteen years ago there weren't as many competitors, we didn't need to court people with really good marketing materials, but when you talk about going into a market like Sweden or Brazil or even Vietnam where there are already lots and lots competitors, we need something to get their attention (A3).

Another administrator observed,

for a very long time we were behind the eight ball. We were still using very outdated methods of marketing tools. So I think that's where a lot of the focus is for improvement over the next year or so (A2).

Use of international education agencies

Mid-level executives and administrators highlighted the central role of agents.

International education agencies were used both as a response to global challenges

and a proactive recruitment strategy. One mid-level executive admitted “There would be no way going there even as a consortium, just because of the language barriers and everything else. There would just be no way to function without agents (MLE1). In describing one example of new market exploration another mid-level executive explained,

that’s one of the challenges of starting in a country, is that you have to find that reliable source that knows the school system, that knows the government well enough that you can trust them...I think the key was not having that agent or that connection that could get past road blocks, or make relationships that will help (MLE 3).

There seemed to be some consensus that in selecting which agents to work with *The Consortium* had developed “a very good process for analyzing, vetting them, being sure that they are appropriate, that their motivation and their ethics are something that we are comfortable with” (MLE1).

Agents also helped *The Consortium* with its image management. One administrator described the implementation of the agent visitor program where consortium schools coordinated a multi-state tour of all member institutions for selected agents from targeted countries.

it was really important to get an agent that we felt was a strong agent to come here and actually see firsthand what we’ve been talking about. Sometimes you can talk till you’re blue in the mouth on how great community colleges are; unless they actually are seeing it for themselves, it just doesn’t sink in. And so they’re able to see the facilities, to see the size of the classrooms, they’re able to see the dedication of the teachers and you can’t talk about that, it’s something they almost have to see (A1).

Administrators emphasized the benefit of first-hand experience and face to face contact. One commented, “the idea that group trips are essential, and that means face to face connection with agents abroad, that’s a key decision” (A6). Others reinforced the face to face connection with parents and students. “There’s also something very

comforting to parents, and students saying, ok I met that person at that school and I want to go there” (A4). Administrators acknowledged the critical role that agents played in connecting them to potential students, “they know where students are going to get information, they know what websites they’re going to, they know what magazines they’re looking at” (A1).

While the advantages of recruiting through agents were unanimously described among administrators, caution was also expressed. “Basically anywhere from 50 to 100 different agencies approach us throughout the year looking for a partnership with us. So we need to do our due diligence and vet them.” (A3). Interviewee comments identified the reputation of agents, their ethics, and ease of working with them as important considerations. “sometimes we will just have an agent that is just very difficult to work with....or sometimes they just have been unethical” (A4). One administrator noted however, “at the end of the day to have one strong agent who we feel will work hard for us is definitely a benefit” (A1).

Administrators pointed out that working with agents was a two way relationship that required trust. One administrator stated, “at the end of the day we have to trust that agent to go back and represent us well” (A1). Another elaborated,

considering that we work in Asia where trust is a major factor for business success, it can take years and years and years to develop good business relationships and to develop that trust. I think our partners really like us and that matters a lot, and they trust us, and we have a good working relationship (A3).

These specific characteristics gleaned from interviewee comments described a philosophy behind *The Consortium’s* targeted recruitment approach. They included the exploration of new markets, responsiveness and flexibility, image management and the use of international education agencies. These were all confirmed through further

analysis of strategic planning documents, meeting minutes and recruitment schedules. Some interviewees provided examples of the activities that were undertaken in the context of this philosophical approach which included the utilization of international trips, seminars, recruitment fairs, specialized advertising materials and research and development.

Factors That Influence the Success of *The Consortium*

The study sought to identify the factors that influenced the success of *The Consortium*. There was no consensus on any one factor that emerged as a singular and most compelling driver of success. Instead, interviewees offered a variety of factors that included shared organizational values, relationships with agents, diversity, experience and leadership support.

Shared Organizational Values

For mid-level executives and administrators, one feature that emerged as critical to success was shared values. For these interviewees, the idea of collaboration extended beyond merely the sharing of resources and the division of labor to impact cost effectiveness. It was undergirded by relationships built on mutual trust and respect. There were many comments in the interviews that indicated the importance of feelings of mutual trust and respect that existed between and among the levels. Administrators made several remarks such as, “Our vice presidents trust us” (A3). Another commented, “the vice presidents and presidents do really trust our judgment” (A2) and, “They seek out our judgment and our opinions” (A1). In a similar vein one mid-level executive remarked of the administrators “if they didn’t trust each other and know each other that would be a problem. The success of *The Consortium* is as good as the trust and the communication that goes on between these people” (MLE3).

An administrator confirmed, “I think the biggest thing is to respect what can and cannot be done as a consortium” (A4) while another affirmed, “that trust is key to anything we do in *The Consortium*” (A 3).

Interviewee comments mirrored the values of “respect for all” and “collaboration in action” that were included in the values and philosophy statement of *The Consortium’s* bylaws. This respect appeared to have cultivated an environment that facilitated cross pollination of ideas and careful and deliberate reflection and dialog about the work. This was consistent with the literature that identified respect and understanding for the individual operations, cultural norms, limitations and expectation of each partner in a collaboration (Mattessich et al., 2005).

Relationships with Agents

Interviewees spoke of relationships as a benefit of *The Consortium* and as key to their success. They attributed successful outcomes to successful relationships among the staff and agents. One administrator explained,

if you’re an agency in Asia, or anywhere in the world you have 4,000 options in the U.S. in terms of who you’re going to work with, so we need to do our best to develop good relationships, to have people like us, and us like them and trust each other, I would say that’s key (A3).

Some mid-level executives and administrators identified the role of the agents as key to the success of *The Consortium*. One mid-level executive stated, “there is no question that they (agents) provide a number of students that we could not get otherwise” (MLE 1). An administrator elaborated,

once they sign an agreement, after that is really when we try to develop a good working relationship with them and it can take years to really reach a certain comfort level with them and it’s been the case in the past where we thought we had good partners and after two or three years the relationship just fizzled out because we found out we weren’t compatible. That was ok, and we just moved on and focused on a different agency (A3).

The importance of that agent relationship to the success of *The Consortium* was further highlighted in this comment,

you really can't be in a country like Korea and not use an agent. Hong Kong is like that. Japan has been like that in the past. And even a lot of the European countries are that way so it's really, a lot of times it's the agent that's even directing them to the school that they're gonna go to. We joke, is it the parent or the agent making the decision, oftentimes it's really the agent that leads that discussion (A1).

Diversity

The diversity of membership that was built into the organizations' design at its inception was identified as a factor of its success. Some interviewees remarked on the strength of that diversity. One president noted, "I think it's the diversity of the institutions that is a part of it (the success). They are diverse in the sense that they're in urban areas, suburban areas, rural areas" (P3). A mid-level executive explained that this diversity was integral to their composition and would be retained, even if the membership was expanded, "that was a very strategic decision and they haven't added to that original core, the core of five...if another college wanted to get in *The Consortium* it would really have to be different than the other ones" (MLE3). Another elaborated,

the diversity of the members and the geographic diversity we all bring to the table in that respect as well. For example if we were in a consortium with all schools from our geographic area, we would be very limited in terms of the appeal, plus we would be competing for the same students because we are all in the same region. Whereas, the fact that we have this nice array of choices from very different parts of the United States makes us stronger and richer for the students abroad (MLE2).

Beyond the geographic diversity, the diversity of the staff was also identified as an important component of success. One administrator observed,

the different skills that each director brings to the group. You have everyone that's had a slightly different background and history. You have someone that's been in international programs for over 20 years, you have someone that's traveled abroad and done a Fulbright, someone who has been on the

agency side, I think we have five directors with very different backgrounds that bring strong, very good experience to the group and I think that influences how we succeed or don't succeed (A1).

A mid-level executive agreed,

in talking about the diversity of the group we have 11 very different people. Everybody is coming with a different background and experience and perspective and when we get into our discussion in meetings, whether it is teleconference or in person meetings, there is a lot of give and take and there are a lot of ideas that are put forth and we wouldn't have if it were just a small group of one two schools, or just the vice presidents trying to figure this out. That would be a disaster (MLE2).

Experience

Added to the diversity of perspectives was the depth of experience of the staff. Many interviewees discussed this experience both in terms of years in the field and scope of expertise. One mid-level executive spoke of the "expertise within the group; we've got quite a few folks who have been at this for a while" (MLE2). Another noted that the "long history is obviously a plus, a long history with a lot of twists and turns, which for the most part are an advantage in the sense that we had to make changes. And we learned from that" (MLE5). The advantages of the depth of their expertise in multiple countries around the world was highlighted and another remarked, "we rely very heavily on the folks who are primarily involved in the recruitment and directing these country activities for their expertise and their opinions" (MLE2).

Leadership Support

The administrators identified support from the leadership as another factor that influenced *The Consortium's* success. One administrator observed,

because of the way we're set up with the presidents' council and the executive council and the directors, because of the way we're set up the directors really feel like we have the support of those two upper tiers (A1).

Another confirmed, “I don’t think our consortium could be successful without that type of process, that stamp of approval coming from the very top” (A3). Other comments further reinforced the strength of the support that the administrators thought was critical to their success.

I’ve had several community college directors and staff members call to ask how we run this consortium and what has made it successful and I always say the number one thing you need, absolutely, is the support from administration (A5).

Mid-level executives acknowledged the support of the presidents with comments such as, “certainly the support of the college presidents. If they didn’t want this, it wouldn’t happen” (MLE2) and “another major one [factor of success] is the commitment of the presidents” (MLE3).

CHAPTER 5 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This chapter presents a summary of the study which includes a review of the purpose of the study, the methodology and a discussion of the findings in terms of the research questions. It then draws conclusions with implications for practice and offers recommendations for further research.

Summary of the Study

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to gain an in-depth knowledge about *The Consortium*. The study was framed by the following research questions:

1. What were the important features of *The Consortium* model?
2. What were the benefits of *The Consortium*?
3. What were the challenges and how were they addressed?
4. What factors influenced the success of *The Consortium*?

Methodology

Because the purpose of this research was to gain an in-depth knowledge about a single organization, the qualitative case study was selected as the most appropriate strategy of inquiry. Research for this study began with a literature review to identify current issues of interest related to international education. This led to a research area of focus on international student recruitment.

The Consortium was selected as a unique case based on its documented success in recruiting international students to its five member colleges. Enrollments were the quantifiable measure of success for the organization and were carefully tracked by country, by agency, by institution and by new and continuing students. An analysis of enrollment reports revealed the success of *The Consortium* in increasing its international enrollments defined by a 43% increase in international student enrollments

over a ten year period. Institutional data tracked enrollments for the period 1999-2000 through 2009-2010.

Data collection was guided by the research questions to help gather information relevant to the objectives of this study. Relevant data was collected through the organizations' documents such as budget reports, annual reports, meeting minutes, bylaws, websites, promotional materials, and presentations.

Sixteen standardized, open-ended, individual interviews were conducted with presidents, mid-level executives and administrators in person and over the telephone. Prior to the interview, each interviewee was given a short overview of the study. Additionally, each interview began with an oral review of the study's purpose and a confirmation of confidentiality of the interviewee's responses.

Interviewees were all asked the same set of standard questions (Appendix A & B). Where necessary, the researcher probed for clarification and elaboration. Interviews were recorded and were subsequently transcribed by the researcher. All identifying references were removed from the transcribed interviews. Audio recordings were deleted as agreed in the protocol. Interview transcripts were preserved for future reference. Analysis of the data included in-vivo and descriptive coding and the use of memos to sort themes that emerged from the data. Throughout the process, the researcher adhered to best practices of qualitative research.

Review of Findings

Important Features of *The Consortium Model*

The study revealed a very structured organizational model with established guidelines for its governance, policies and procedures. The first important feature built into the model was a three-tiered reporting structure with clearly defined roles and

responsibilities. The board of presidents provided leadership and made policy decisions, an executive council provided managerial oversight and upper-level decision making, and administrators engaged in day to day operations. There was participation at every level of the organization from each of the five member institutions, with responsibility for leadership rotating among the members according to prescribed policies. This structure was congruent with the literature which confirmed that successful collaborations included participation from all levels within partner organizations (Mattessich et al., 2008).

A second feature of the model was the financial arrangement for cost sharing established through the bylaws, which provided for an equal division of the fixed operational costs among the members. There was an additional prorated percentage based on each member institution's total enrollment of international students recruited through *The Consortium* for the previous term. Each member institution was also responsible for the agreed upon 15% commission to be paid to agents based on the institution's individual enrollments. Interviewees applauded the cost sharing as a fair and equitable way to cover expenses.

A third key feature of *The Consortium* was the selection of five members that represented diverse geographic regions across the United States. It was believed that the geographic diversity worked to eliminate competition among members while it also provided a variety of educational choices within the U.S., making *The Consortium* more attractive to prospective students. There was agreement that limiting membership to five institutions had served the organization well. At the same time, administrators expressed interest in exploring the possibility of inviting new members. Among the

organizational documents there were provisions in the bylaws for adding new members. There was a general consensus among the presidents, mid-level executives and administrators that these were important features of the organization's structure that served them well in the pursuit of their goals.

Benefits of *The Consortium*

Leveraged financial resources and collaboration were identified by the presidents, mid-level executives and administrators as benefits of membership in *The Consortium*. Additionally, interviewees reported significant financial and intangible returns on their investment.

Leveraged financial resources

Leveraging their financial resources was a more cost effective approach to pursuing international student recruitment. It allowed *The Consortium* members to have a greater reach into more global markets than each institution could accomplish individually. Collectively, not only could they recruit in more countries, but their recruitment efforts yielded better results.

Collaboration

Collaboration emerged as the common theme across all interviews as a benefit. This was supported in the literature that identified increased collaboration among higher education institutions as one response to the increased competition as institutions worked across boundaries to gain an advantage over common obstacles (Baus & Ramsbottom, 1999; Green et al., 2002). Collaboration was characterized by interviewees specifically as shared responsibilities, shared knowledge and establishing strong relationships. Administrators described specific examples where the members' sharing of responsibilities and knowledge provided individual benefit to their institutions.

As the frontline staff engaged in day to day communication and planning for *The Consortium's* work, they identified the complexities of international recruitment work and the value derived from sharing the workload. There was also recognition among the presidents and mid-level executives that the pooling of expertise made them a stronger organization.

The importance of relationships within the collaboration emerged. Presidents spoke of relationships in positive terms while mid-level executives and administrators acknowledged the challenges experienced in nurturing those relationships. Their comments revealed the deliberate effort required to develop a sense of mutual trust and respect. *The Consortium* was able to establish a culture of collaboration, and nurture productive relationships that satisfactorily promoted mutual reward within the sphere of international student recruitment work which was, by its very nature, competitive.

Return on investment

The study revealed financial and intangible benefits as a return on investment in *The Consortium*. Interviewees confirmed the significant financial return on investment, but were reluctant to share detailed financial data. Their comments were congruent with the national data that reported an \$18.8 billion economic impact through the presence of international students.

There was an even greater emphasis placed on the intangible return on investment in the form of enhanced diversity to the member institutions' student body. Interviewee comments suggested that there were significant benefits to the diversifying of their campuses through international student recruitment, but these comments were not supported by any specific data that was collected through this study.

Challenges and How Were They Addressed

The study also sought to identify challenges and how they were addressed. Findings revealed a set of challenges to the organization that were beyond the members' direct control and an approach to addressing those challenges to mitigate the negative impact on the organization's outcomes. These fell into the broad categories of the external global environment and internal organizational challenges.

Global environment

While the presidents focused on the global challenges, mid-level executives and administrators acknowledged global challenges, but added organizational challenges as well. These included addressing the availability of housing for international students and administrative difficulties.

Outcomes of international student recruitment were particularly sensitive to global currency devaluation and the impact of the worldwide recession, especially for countries that sent international students to America. Locally, the "ripple effect" of economic pressures due to state budget reductions also impacted member institutions.

Consistent with the literature that explored challenges in the regulatory environment and the resulting increased burden for educational institutions, interviewees noted the struggles around working with students to secure visas.

Global competition for international students came from the sending countries working to retain their students as well as from competing nations positioning themselves to attract a greater share of the market.

Social issues were also discussed. Unpredictable world events such as health epidemics, war and terrorist attacks added layers of complexity that had to be negotiated as *The Consortium* responded to the challenges of its global environment.

Administrators pinpointed the United States' image abroad as a challenge they had to deal with first hand while working abroad. Their comments revealed how precarious the image of the United States had become among potential international students and how that image was influenced by politics and the media.

Organizational challenges

At the organizational level, all interviewees discussed the challenges of providing for the housing needs of international students. *The Consortium* guaranteed housing assistance to new students. As enrollments increased there was an increase in the need to identify and secure adequate housing for students as some members began to reach their capacity. When there was a slight downturn in the economy, the pressure was alleviated; however, housing continued to loom as a potential limitation that, if not addressed, could have eventually impacted the ability to grow their programs.

From the perspective of the administrators, communication presented another organizational challenge. As discussed earlier, geographic diversity worked to eliminate competition among members while it also provided a variety of educational choices within the U.S., making *The Consortium* more attractive to prospective students. At the same time, the geographic distance between the member institutions presented some communication challenges for administrators and strained their ability to maintain the group "synergy" that was created when they were face to face.

Administrators also reported the stress of managing their workload. Striking a balance between the institutional responsibilities and their roles as country directors for *The Consortium* emerged as an area of conflict.

Dealing with the challenges

In describing how they dealt with those conditions that posed the greatest challenge, interviewees revealed several strategies that allowed them to be resilient in a changing environment. These included exploration of new markets, being responsive and flexible, image management and the use of international education agencies.

As the economy changed, *The Consortium* made a conscious decision to diversify their markets and not rely on the traditional Asian countries that were their original source for international students. They maintained that a responsive and flexible posture was necessary in dealing with the global environment. A strategic marketing approach was developed to help shape a positive image of *The Consortium* and mitigate negative impressions of the U.S. abroad.

There was a heavy reliance on international agencies as a central part of *The Consortium's* recruitment strategy. This gave them the advantage of having an advocate and representative in the targeted countries on a year round basis, versus a limited presence when they made recruitment trips abroad. At the same time, interviewees reported challenges working with agents and the need for a sound system to "vet" selected agencies.

Factors that Influenced the Success of *The Consortium*

The study also sought to identify the factors that influenced the success of *The Consortium*. Each interviewee had a different perspective about what was central to success. Collectively, their comments revealed a variety of factors that included shared organizational values, relationships with agents, diversity, experience and leadership support.

Shared organizational values

There was agreement that the foundation of relationships, built on mutual trust and respect, was essential to their success. These values were outlined in the organization's bylaws and manifested in its operations. Noteworthy were the comments made that evidenced a level of trust placed in the administrative staff by the leadership. This seemed to have empowered the staff in day-to-day performance of their duties. This mutual trust and respect cultivated an environment where open dialog, careful and deliberate reflection, and problem solving about the work thrived.

Relationships with agents

Relationships among staff and agents were also vital to success. It was striking to note the level of influence agents had over a student's selection of what country or institution to attend. Some interviewees discussed the effort required to cultivate those relationships with agents. One can appreciate the challenges described in working across cultures in the international arena and the need for cross-cultural savvy in establishing and maintaining effective relationships. One interviewee also described the competition in the global marketplace that afforded agents a range of choices in selecting higher education institutions with which to partner.

Diversity

Success of *The Consortium* was further enhanced by the diversity of membership that was built into the organization's design at its inception. That diversity added value to *The Consortium's* offerings when competing for students. Interviewees also talked about diversity of skills and perspectives among the staff that added a layer of strength to the organization. These varied perspectives enhanced the success of their decision making process.

Experience

Another important success factor to emerge from this study was the role of the collective experience that shaped the organization as it evolved over the course of its history. Interviewees spoke of the experience learned as they journeyed through their development, as well as the individual expertise that key staff accumulated. This expertise in targeted recruitment, focused on specific international regions, became an important resource for the organization and contributed to its success.

Leadership support

It was evident that the presidents were not figure heads in this organization. They participated actively in the organization through the board of president and engaged in policy decision making. This level of support was recognized by the mid-level executives and administrators as essential to the success of *The Consortium*.

Conclusions

There were several conclusions that could be drawn from the findings in this study that can also serve to inform practice for community colleges interested in expanding international student recruitment efforts.

First, the three-tiered, self-governance model was an effective framework of operation for *The Consortium*. The geographic diversity of the membership promoted non-competitiveness and supported a spirit of collaboration. The small size of the organization seemed to have served it well up to that point. Interest in expanding the membership expressed by administrators was worthy of attention. Was that interest driven by a need to share the burden of the workload or the costs? Legitimate concerns expressed over the impact that adding members would have on group dynamics needed to be examined. This presented an area for Consortium review. Additionally,

pooling efforts toward international student recruitment was a cost effective approach to addressing member institution's goals for increasing international enrollments on their campuses.

Second, *The Consortium* provided benefits of leveraged financial resources that allowed member institutions to have a greater reach into more global markets than each institution could accomplish individually; collaboration resulted in enhanced international relationships, shared expertise over more global markets and a ready resource of best practices among colleagues. Additionally, there was a very high financial and intangible return on investment for members of *The Consortium*. This was supported by national research that indicated significant economic benefits to institutions and communities that hosted international students (NAFSA: Association of International Educators, 2010; Peterson et al., 1999; Dellow, 2002). The positive impact of international students on the diversity and internationalization of the campus climate was also supported in the literature (American Council on Education, 2002; Fitzer, 2007; Lamkin, 2000; NAFSA: Association of International Educators, 2006; 2008; O'Connell, 1994; Frost, 2002).

Third, international student recruitment was very susceptible to internal challenges and external, global conditions that were beyond the control of the organization. The influence of global dynamics on international education was found to be true across the literature (Altbach, 2006a, 2006b; Marginson & van de Wende, 2007; Peterson et al., 1999; U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2007a, 2007b; Wagner, 2004).

Fourth, factors that were most critical to *The Consortium's* success were the relationships among members built on shared organizational values of mutual trust and

respect, the relationships cultivated with international agents, diversity, organizational experience and leadership. There was evidence in the literature that supported the importance of these factors in effective collaborations (Anderson, 2002; Mattessich, et al., 2008).

Based on the findings of this case study it is reasonable to conclude that community colleges interested in diversifying their campuses by increasing the numbers of international students could benefit from participation in a collaborative enterprise that is based on the structure and tenets of *The Consortium*. Such a situation would additionally enhance the ability of small institutions to develop an effective vehicle for recruiting international students.

Implications for Practice

In addressing the underutilized capacity at U.S. higher education institutions to accommodate international students, the American Council on Education (2009) encouraged cooperation among institutions toward a shared goal of international student recruitment. Community Colleges interested in beginning international student recruitment through participation in a collaborative partnership could benefit from best practices employed by *The Consortium*. Colleges that are already engaged in international student recruitment could further expand their global reach through similar partnerships.

Colleges will need to be thoughtful in developing the framework to guide the governance, policies and procedures of the partnership. It would not be sufficient to simply have a common goal of increased international student enrollment or to be singularly motivated by financial reward. It would be imperative for community colleges

interested in collaborating on international student recruitment to establish core values to which they all subscribe as a foundation for practice.

A focus on building strong relationships at all levels in the institution will be critical to success. Colleges would need to develop a model of collaboration that transcended self-interest. There would need to be a high level of agreement among the leadership and administrators that revealed common philosophies and direction. Additionally, active involvement by college presidents and participation from multiple levels within partner organizations will be important ingredients for success.

Community Colleges will have to be strategic and resilient in their approach to developing a targeted recruitment strategy in order to maintain a competitive advantage and navigate the unpredictable global environment.

Recommendations for Future Study

This study provided an in-depth look at *The Consortium* from the perspectives of its leadership and administrators gleaned through personal interviews, as well as an analysis of organizational documents. It suggested a number of recommendations for further study on international student recruitment.

- International student recruitment is a specialized activity within international education. A cross analysis of consortium member campuses with community colleges that conduct independent recruitment activities would add value to understanding the impact of membership in an international student recruitment consortium.
- The voices of the international students who were recruited through *The Consortium* were not included in the scope of this study. Additional research that explored the experiences and perceptions of students who were recruited through *The Consortium* could lend another layer of detail to the effectiveness of recruitment strategies.
- Similarly, further study into the experiences and perceptions of international agents who were identified as central to *The Consortium's* recruitment strategy

could provide insight into best practices in nurturing the agent-institution relationship.

- The activity of recruiting international students raises the question of what happens once the student is admitted. Another area for future study would be to explore any differences in the retention rate of international students who are recruited through *the consortium* compared to those who are recruited through passive armchair methods.
- Based on interviewee comments regarding intangible return on investment, the ways in which increased presence of international students directly influenced campus diversity is worthy of further investigation.
- Based on the level of activity and interest in international student recruitment, further research on policy implications at the local, state and national levels is warranted.
- Finally, an analysis of the practice among higher education institutions to use commissioned international agents in international student recruitment is worthy of study.

APPENDIX A
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR PRESIDENTS

1. How does your institution benefit from membership in *The Consortium*?
2. What is the return on your investment in international student recruitment?
3. From your perspective what factors influence the success of *The Consortium*?
4. What are the most critical external conditions that impact positively and negatively on your recruitment strategy?
5. What are you doing internally to deal with those that have given you the greatest challenge?
6. How do you strike a balance between the individual needs of member institutions and the collective goals of *The Consortium*?
7. What have been the most important decisions made as a consortium in relation to international student recruitment?
8. What are *The Consortium's* future goals for improving its international recruitment strategies?
9. Thinking back to the very beginning of *The Consortium*, please share with me some history on how it began, and how it fits into mission of your college.
10. Is there anything else you would like to share with me related to *The Consortium's* work in recruiting international students?

APPENDIX B
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR MID-LEVEL EXECUTIVES AND ADMINISTRATORS

1. How does your institution benefit from membership in *The Consortium*?
2. What is the return on your investment in international student recruitment?
3. From your perspective what factors influence the success of *The Consortium*?
4. What are the most critical external conditions that impact positively and negatively on your recruitment strategy?
5. What are you doing internally to deal with those that have given you the greatest challenge?
6. How do you strike a balance between the individual needs of member institutions and the collective goals of *The Consortium*?
7. What have been the most important decisions made as a consortium in relation to international student recruitment?
8. What are *The Consortium's* future goals for improving its international recruitment strategies?
9. Is there anything else you would like to share with me related to *The Consortium's* work in recruiting international students?

APPENDIX C
DESIGN OF INTERVIEW QUESTIONS IN RELATIONSHIP TO THE RESEARCH
QUESTIONS

Research Questions	Interview Questions
What were the important features of <i>The Consortium</i> model?	3, 6, 9, 10
What were the benefits of <i>The Consortium</i> ?	1, 2, 7, 10
What were the challenges and how were they addressed?	4, 5, 6, 8, 10
What factors influenced the success of <i>The Consortium</i> ?	3, 4, 6, 7, 10

APPENDIX D
INFORMED CONSENT LETTER

Dear Interview Participant:

I am a graduate student at the University of Florida School of Human Development and Organizational Studies, Higher Education Administration. I am in the research gathering phase of my dissertation which focuses on international education. Specifically, I am looking at the recruitment strategies employed by *The Consortium* that impact international students' access to US higher education at its member institutions. I am interested in the perspectives of the leadership about the factors that influence the success of *The Consortium* in carrying out its objectives.

I am requesting an interview with you as the president, vice president or program director of one of the five member institutions of *The Consortium*. The interview will last approximately 45 minutes. The interview questions will be sent to you prior to the scheduled appointment. You will not have to answer any question you do not wish to answer. Your interview will be conducted by phone after I have received a copy of this signed consent from you in the mail. With your permission I would like to audiotape this interview. Only I will have access to the tape which I will personally transcribe, removing any identifiers during transcription. The tape will then be erased. Your identity will be kept confidential to the extent provided by law and your identity will not be revealed in the final manuscript.

There are no anticipated risks, compensation or other direct benefits to you as a participant in this interview. You are free to withdraw your consent to participate and may discontinue your participation in the interview at any time without consequence.

If you have any questions about this research protocol, please contact me at (352) 284-3782 or my faculty supervisor, Dr. David Honeyman, at (352) 273-4315. Questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant may be directed to the IRB02 office, University of Florida, Box 112250, Gainesville, FL 32611; (352) 392-0433.

Please sign and return this copy of the letter in the enclosed envelope. A second copy is provided for your records. By signing this letter, you give me permission to report your responses anonymously in the final manuscript to be submitted to my dissertation chair and committee as part of my final dissertation.

Sincerely,

Jillian Daniel Ramsammy
UF Doctoral Student

I have read the procedure described above for the dissertation research on international students' access to US higher education. I voluntarily agree to participate in the interview and I have received a copy of this description.

Signature of participant

Date

I would like to receive a copy of the final "interview" manuscript.

_____ YES

_____ NO

APPENDIX E INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

I appreciate you taking the time to share your perspectives with me on the work of *The Consortium*. As you have agreed, I will be tape recording our conversation today. I want to reassure you of the confidentiality of our conversation. In reporting my data I will remove all individual and institutional identifying references and will keep the audio and written transcripts of our interview in a secure place. The audio files will be erased after transcription.

The focus of my research is what factors influence the success of *The Consortium*. In our conversation I am interested in learning your perceptions about *The Consortium's* features, strengths and challenges in recruiting international students. I am interested in as much rich detail as you can share.

APPENDIX F
LIST OF ORGANIZATIONAL DOCUMENTS

- Bylaws of Incorporation
- Standard Operating Procedures
- Guidelines and Procedures for New Entrants into *The Consortium*
- Strategic Plan 2008
- *The Consortium* Goals/Accomplishments for 2004-05
- Roles and Responsibilities for Country Directors
- Minutes of the Executive Council
- Minutes of the Board of Presidents
- Recruitment Schedules
- Enrollment Reports 2000-2010
- Annual Budget History 2000-2010
- Country Reports
- Agent Reports
- Marketing and Promotional Literature (Brochures, Correspondence etc.)
- Consortium Website/Web-Brochure

APPENDIX G
PARTICIPANT THANK YOU LETTER

Dear [Interview Participant]:

I would like to thank you again for taking the time to share your perspectives of *The Consortium*. When we spoke, I indicated that I would forward a copy of the findings of my research to you.

One of the ways the validity of qualitative research is enhanced is by providing the subjects of the study the opportunity to review the findings and determine their accuracy, fairness, and validity. Basically, are the findings credible?

I am enclosing a copy of the findings of my dissertation study for your review. Please take the opportunity to review these findings and let me know what you think.

You may contact me by phone at (352) 284-3782 or e-mail at jramsammy@ufl.edu. Again, I thank you for your assistance on this project.

Sincerely,

Jillian Daniel Ramsammy

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

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Combining her interests in the arts and education she served in the field of community arts development first as a Grants Administrator and then as the Chief of Education and Outreach for the Miami Dade County Department of Cultural Affairs. She returned to the field of education in 2002 to serve at the College of Central Florida, first as the Manager of Operations for the Cultural and Conference Centers, and then as the Director of the Hampton Center. Ms. Daniel Ramsammy is the Executive Director of College and Community Relations at the College of Central Florida. She obtained her Doctor of Education from the University of Florida School of Human Development and Organizational Studies in Education in May 2011.