A Dissertation

entitled


by

Andrew Cox

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy Degree in Higher Education

_________________________
Dr. David Meabon, Committee Chair

_________________________
Dr. Renay Scott, Committee Member

_________________________
Dr. Thomas Stuckey, Committee Member

_________________________
Dr. Mary Ellen Edwards, Committee Member

Dr. Patricia R. Komuniecki, Dean
College of Graduate Studies

The University of Toledo
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Community Colleges are regarded as important providers of workforce training in America, yet the role of community colleges in the public workforce system is not well understood. This exploratory study examined the perceptions of community college state association chief executives (SAEs) regarding the Workforce Investment Act of 1998. SAEs are a group of policy entrepreneurs who advocate for community colleges on the state and federal level. A Likert-type survey containing closed and open ended questions was administered to the universe of 23 community college state association executives who are members of the National Council of State Association Chief Executives. Responses were tabulated electronically using descriptive statistics appropriate for Likert-type scale research. The open ended questions were content analyzed for key points and emerging themes. A document analysis of state workforce plans found that every state referenced community colleges in WIA, yet the perceptions of the survey respondents indicated that community colleges should have a greater role. Agenda-setting theory provided insights and broader implications for research and practice as policy makers consider the evolving role of community colleges in the workforce system and on the American higher education landscape.
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Chapter One

Introduction

As the United States recovers from the most significant economic recession since the Great Depression (Hill 2013) and community colleges experience a renewed prominence on the American higher education landscape, this national study aimed to better understand the perceptions of Community College State Association Chief Executives (SAEs) regarding the role of community colleges in the implementation of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998. No prior empirical research exists on this group of executive leaders who advocate for community colleges on both the state and federal level. A better understanding of their perceptions will help inform workforce policy and community college practice, and improve workforce system infrastructure.

This study is timely as President Obama signed into law the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) on July 22, 2014 – bipartisan and bicameral legislation that supersedes WIA and is intended to improve the nation’s workforce development system. WIOA is the most significant job training legislation since the passage of WIA in 1998. While this study focused on the perceptions of SAEs regarding WIA, it will be instructive as policy makers implement WIOA which becomes effective on July 1, 2015. The Department of Labor (DOL) will provide guidance and accept stakeholder input leading up to implementation (http://www.doleta.gov/wioa/).

This chapter serves as an introduction to the study. The remaining sections address the background of the problem, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, significance of the problem, research questions to be examined, proposed methodological
approach, theoretical framework, limitations of the study, delimitations, definitions, assumptions and a summary.

**Background of the Problem**

Community colleges are major providers of workforce training, enrolling millions of people each year in credit and non-credit programs that prepare students for living wage employment, serving traditional college students as well as adults seeking to upgrade skills. Community Colleges account for about 45% of the 20 million students currently enrolled in undergraduate education, yet questions remain among policy makers about how these ubiquitous institutions can best serve the workforce training needs of America in an evolving global economy (American Association of Community Colleges, 2013).

Workforce training is a broad term that encompasses any training or educational program that leads to employment. It refers to both credit and non-credit education delivered through formal and informal means designed to enhance the skills of people to gain or maintain socio-economic status (Katsinas, 1994).

In the book, *The Next American Economy*, Holstein (2011) shares the story of a middle-aged autoworker named James Lambert who lost his job when the Great Recession of 2008 hit. For months Mr. Lambert struggled to find work and to make ends meet to support his family. Through an innovative short-term advanced technology training program offered at a mid-western community college, Mr. Lambert secured gainful employment in a job he enjoyed with opportunity for growth in the burgeoning bio-tech industry. This is just one example of the difference community colleges can
make in training and re-training workers for the emerging economy. These types of success stories are happening at community colleges across the nation.

Community colleges can be found in every state in the union from coast to coast. The American Association of Community Colleges lists the current number of community colleges at 1,132. Figure 1 shows a visual depiction of community college locations (see Figure 1).

![Community College Locations](image)

*Figure 1.* Community college locations in the United States. Copyright 2013 by the American Association of Community Colleges. Reprinted with permission.

Community colleges are seen by policy makers as important vehicles for the delivery of workforce training and economic development. It is common for governors and state legislators to reference community colleges as important components of economic development initiatives. On the federal level community colleges have been
mentioned in every presidential State of the Union Address but one since 1996 (Katsinas, 2012, p. 5).

In July of 2013 the Obama Administration called for an $8 billion “Community College Career Fund” to train workers for good-paying jobs in high-growth and high-demand industries. The money would be used to create a more skilled workforce by linking community colleges with the private sector, supporting programs that invest in apprenticeships, entrepreneurial training and on-the-job training opportunities as well as industry skill consortia that help identify and respond to pressing workforce needs (The White House, 2013).

This latest proposal follows the Obama Administration’s 2009 American Graduation Initiative, which advocated for $12 billion in community college funding. That initiative failed but managed to secure $2 billion in U.S. Department of Labor funding for workforce development activities at community colleges. According to community college officials this money has led to lasting, ambitious change, particularly around career services (Fain, 2013).

The American Association of Community Colleges (AACC), the leading national organization and proponent for the nation’s community colleges, proclaims workforce development as an area of strategic focus. In its 2012 report entitled Reclaiming the Dream, the result of a year-long commission studying the future of community colleges, the AACC suggested that America’s network of community colleges provide the nation with a capacity few other advanced nation’s enjoy; the ability to rebuild the workforce, reinforce connection between education and the economy, and reverse the decline of the middle class (AACC, 2012).
On the state level, some states have a community college association that works to advance the community college agenda. Membership includes community college presidents and members of community college boards of trustees. Funding comes from institutional membership dues as well as state and federal grants.

These associations are non-profit entities that serve a vital function of advocacy and information on behalf of community colleges in a particular state. In Ohio, for example, the Ohio Association of Community Colleges (OACC) says that workforce development is an important component of the community college mission and that the “OACC is committed to advancing state and federal policies which assist community colleges in meeting the workforce education and training needs of Ohio employers and workers (Ohio Association of Community Colleges, 2011, p. 2).

Twenty-three states with a community college association are also members of an organization called the National Council of State Association Chief Executives (NCSACE), which is loosely affiliated with the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) and the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT). NCSACE works to bring together the voices of these associations (see figure 2).

The following states are listed as members on the NCSACE website (the number in parenthesis after each state is the number of community colleges in that state):
Arkansas (22), California (122), Florida (22), Georgia (28), Illinois (48), Iowa (15), Kansas (19), Maryland (16), Michigan (28), Mississippi 13), Missouri (12), Nebraska (10), New Jersey (19), New Mexico (14), New York (29), North Carolina (58), Ohio (23), Oregon (17), Pennsylvania (14), South Carolina (15), Texas (50), Washington (30) and Wisconsin (16) (http://ncsace.org).
A Chief Executive, hired by the board of the state association, runs the daily operations of the association. This study refers to these individuals as State Association Executives (SAEs). SAEs in this study are part of NCSACE. The bylaws of this group, adopted on February 13, 2012, state that NCSACE is an unincorporated group organized under the auspices of the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) to:

- Initiate, review and monitor the development of state and federal legislation affecting community colleges and in their respective jurisdictions
- Provide a forum for the exchange of ideas and information among state association chief executives
- Establish and promote cooperation and coordination among various state associations serving community colleges

*Figure 2. States with a community college association with membership in the National Council of State Association of Chief Executives (NCSACE).*
• Promote and advance the scope and quality of services provided by Member state associations (The Bylaws of the National Council of State Association Chief Executives, 2012).

The SAEs lend an important voice to the community college movement because they are on the ground working with a diverse range of community college constituencies, including college presidents, staff members, trustees, faculty, students, business leaders, and elected and appointed official on the state and federal level. In total, SAEs represent about 640 community colleges in twenty three states, more than half of the 1132 community colleges nationwide.

This study will examine the perceptions of the SAEs regarding the role of community colleges in the implementation of WIA. A greater understanding of the perceptions of this unique group of leaders will help inform policy and practice related to community colleges and the implementation of WIA.

Statement of the Problem

The literature review for this study concluded that no empirical research exists on the perceptions of SAEs toward the role of community colleges in the implementation of WIA. This is a problem because SAEs serve as a significant source of advocacy and information for community colleges on both the state and federal level. This is a problem because millions of tax payer dollars are invested in workforce training through the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (and WIOA); community colleges are major providers of workforce training; and policy makers, community college leaders, business leaders, families and millions of students are looking to community colleges in unprecedented ways to prepare individuals and the nation for the emerging economy. A
better understanding of SAE perceptions will workforce inform policy, community college practice and improve workforce system infrastructure. The SAEs have the potential to impact the way community colleges are utilized in the overall workforce system of the United States.

It is documented that community college involvement in WIA has been problematic since the passage of this legislation. George R. Boggs, former President and CEO of the American Association of Community Colleges, wrote that many community colleges, either by choice or circumstance have not been active in the WIA system, citing burdensome requirements to be listed on the Eligible Training List (ETPL) and too little funding allocated to training (Visher & Fowler, 2006, p. 6).

Karen Horn, Deputy Director of the State of Ohio’s Office of Workforce Development Office, which administers the state’s WIA funding, said that “Community colleges are very important to WIA and workforce training, but that some colleges do a better job than others. We need to better understand the participation of community colleges in the implementation of WIA. No model exists (personal communication, August 17, 2012).”

A 2009 study by Lawrence of perceptions of statewide workforce investment board members toward community college workforce investment programs concluded that how community colleges fit into a given state’s overall workforce investment plan is not well understood. Lawrence recommended that a follow-up study should be done to determine if community colleges should be considered more as “strategic partners” or as typical vendors and what impact this understanding would have on the routing of funding to community college job training programs (iii).
Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to fill a gap in the research by gaining an empirical understanding of the perceptions of SAEs regarding the role of community colleges in the implementation of WIA. As Bardach (2009) suggests, policy analysis lays open the opportunity for creative policy improvements. Policy analysis is participatory. It has serious limitation without the broad involvement and participation of key stakeholders (Moja 2001). SAEs are key stakeholders in the community college movement yet no empirical research has been done on this group of policy entrepreneurs. A better understanding of the perceptions will help inform workforce policy and community college practice.

Significance of the Problem

The Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998 allocates millions of dollars each year to states to address local and regional workforce needs. In 2012 for example, WIA allocated $770.8 million for adult employment and training activities and $1.2 billion for dislocated worker activities (Federal Register, 2012). This legislation is all the more important as America recovers from a difficult economic era and Congress considers reauthorization of WIA (United States Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, n.d.).

WIA created a comprehensive workforce system that brought together multiple federally funded employment training programs into a single system, called the one-stop system. WIA provides flexibility to states and local areas to develop approaches that best meet local needs. Prior to the enactment of WIA, services were often provided through a fragmented system. Under WIA, one-stop centers serve two customers – job seekers and
employers. WIA requires that each state have one or more local investment areas designated by state governors, each governed by a local workforce investment board (WIB). The WIBs manage the WIA funding and programs in each area under the guidance of the statewide WIB (U.S. GAO 2008).

Community colleges participate in WIA in several ways, such as providing occupational skills training leading to certificates and degrees, serving on local and state Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs), and in some cases operating One Stop centers. An important policy issue is how community colleges can be better utilized under WIA to improve the workforce system infrastructure (GAO 2008).

The American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) lists the reauthorization of WIA as a legislative priority. According to the AACC, WIA is in need of a number of modifications to help the system function better and serve workers in an economy that has evolved since the legislation was first enacted in 1998. For example, AACC’s top legislative priority is to refocus workforce development on education and training that provides workers with postsecondary credentials. To do so, community colleges must be true partners in the workforce system (American Association of Community Colleges 2013).

**Research Questions to be examined**

The research questions that guided this study were: 1) What are the perceptions of SAEs regarding the role of community colleges in the implementation of WIA; 2) What should the role of community colleges be in the implementation of WIA according to SAEs; and 3) How do SAEs advocate on behalf of community colleges regarding the implementation of WIA?
The Methodological Approach

This national study used a descriptive methodology to survey the universe of SAEs based on an instrument developed by Stephen G. Katsinas (2003). Versions of this instrument were used in previous studies by Rankin (2008), Lawrence (2009) and Katsinas (2003, 2012) related to community colleges and workforce training. The survey was modified to fulfill the purposes of this research and included Likert-type scaling and open ended questions. The methodological approach also included document analysis of state workforce plans of the 23 states with NCSACE membership.

Descriptive research is a way to describe phenomena and answer basic informational questions that are important to a particular constituency or the general public. For example, many reports by the federal government are descriptive in nature, such as the U.S. Census report or reports from the National Center for Education Statistics (Lunenburg & Irby, 2008, p. 31). A descriptive study determines and reports the way things are, and is usually concerned with the assessment of attitudes, opinions, demographic information, conditions and procedures (Konz, 1997, p. 61).

According to Merriam (2009), research questions drive methodology. Based on the research questions in this study, a descriptive approach was appropriate.

Theoretical/Conceptual Framework

A theoretical framework is a worldview, paradigm or set of beliefs that a researcher brings to a project (Creswell 2007). As Butin (2010) points out, everyone has a theoretical framework, and they use it all the time.

Multiple stream theory – what Cohen, March and Olsen (1972) call the “garbage can” model of organization choice and further modified by John Kingdon (2003) – offers
a theoretic lens through which to approach this study. Kingdon’s seminal work in this area describes the agenda setting and policy making process as a mix of multiple streams of problems, solutions and politics pouring into a garbage can. The outcome depends on the level of resources, time, energy and attention an issue or problem receives (Garson 2008).

Kingdon’s model has been used in many social science research studies to explain why some ideas make it to the public agenda and why others do not. It provides a useful framework for this study to examine the perceptions of SAE’s regarding the role of community colleges in the implementation of WIA.

Limitations of this Study

A limitation of this study is that the data is cross-sectional; meaning it provides only a point-in-time description of the perceptions of SAEs regarding the role of community colleges in the implementation of WIA. The policy process is a fluid one, and the community college agenda continues to evolve in response to workforce needs, funding, and policy issues occurring on the state and federal level. All of these and other variables may impact perceptions of SAEs.

Another limitation of this study is the use of a Likert-type scale to measure the perceptions of SAEs. Likert scales fall within the ordinal level of measurement, meaning response categories have a rank order, but intervals between values cannot be presumed equal. This type of measurement provides a measure of attitudes and perception, but does not lend itself to quantify intensity of feeling between categories (Jamieson 2004).

Delimitations of this Study
This study is limited to states with community college state associations that are official members of the National Council of State Association Chief Executives (NCSACE). States without community college state associations may have other informal networks by which community colleges organize, but this study focuses on those states with SAEs who are members of NCSACE.

Assumptions of this Study

This study assumes that the SAEs will be honest in responding to the survey, accurately reflecting their perceptions regarding the role of community colleges in the workforce system. The researcher will ensure the participants that every effort will be taken to keep their responses confidential.

Definitions Used in this Study

To provide a common understanding of the terms and acronyms used in this study, the following definitions are offered:

**Community College State Association**: A non-profit organization that represents the community colleges in a given state. Membership includes the community college presidents and members of community college boards of trustees.

**Community College State Association Chief Executive (SAE)**: The executive in charge of a particular community college state association.

**Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL)**: A list of state-approved organizations permitted to offer training to clients with WIA Individual Training Account vouchers.

**Fiscal year (FY)**: The period of time covered by an annual budget.

**Individual Training Account (ITA)**: A voucher used by eligible WIA clients to purchase training services from a provider of their choice.
Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA): Federal legislation, preceding the Workforce Investment Act, to provide training and other services to youth and adults facing serious barriers to employment.

National Council of State Association Chief Executives (NCSACE): An organization made of community college state association chief executives that work to bring together the voices of community colleges.

Program year (PY): The annual period of time in which a program operates. This does not always coincide with the fiscal year or calendar year.

United States Department of Labor (USDOL or DOL): The department that administers federal labor laws and workforce development programs.

Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA): Federal legislation designed to coordinate and streamline all components of the U.S. workforce development system serving youth ages 14–21, adults, and dislocated workers.

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA): Federal legislation signed into law on July 22, 2014 that supersedes WIA. This Act is designed to improve the nation’s workforce development system and is the most significant job training legislation since the passage of WIA.

Workforce Investment Board (WIB): At the state level, a strategic planning and governing body for WIA; at the local level, a body providing oversight for area organizations participating in WIA (Visher, p. 5).

Summary

The Workforce Investment Act of 1998 marked an important policy watershed in the history of the community college movement. Never before had such a large and
comprehensive federal law been created assuming the participation of community colleges, yet questions still remain about the experience and participation of community colleges within the framework of the legislation (Jacobs, 2001, p. 93).

Based on the literature no empirical research exists regarding the perceptions of SAEs regarding the role of community colleges in the implementation of WIA. SAEs are an important voice in the community college movement as they are advocating on behalf of community colleges on both the state and federal level. A greater understanding of their perceptions will fill a gap in the research and help inform policy and practice regarding the role of community colleges in the implementation of WIA.

This dissertation is organized into five chapters. Chapter I provides the background information related to the study. Chapter II reviews the literature pertinent to this research project. Chapter III describes the proposed methodology by which to carry out the research. Chapter IV analyzes the results of the study and presents the findings. Finally, Chapter V provides a discussion of the results, conclusions and recommendations for future study.
Chapter Two

Review of the Literature

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter was to review literature pertinent to this study, namely literature on community colleges, the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), the link between higher education and jobs, higher education advocacy and the theoretical framework that informs this study. While a significant amount of research exists regarding these topics in general, much less was found on community college state associations.

This chapter begins with a brief history of community colleges and their evolving role in American higher education, followed by a summary of WIA in the current policy context. The chapter then discusses higher education advocacy and the emergence of state associations in the community college movement. Finally, this chapter concludes with a discussion of Cohen, March and Olsen’s (1972) garbage can model of organizational choice, further modified by Kingdon (2003), to help explain the agenda setting process.

A Brief History of Community Colleges in America

The history of community colleges is well documented. Cohen and Brawer (2003, 2008), Mellow and Heelan (2008) chronicle the emergence of community colleges, and the societal forces which led to their explosive growth. Thelin (2004) provides a comprehensive history of American higher education, and the context in which community colleges developed. The American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) lists Joliet Junior College, founded in Illinois in 1901, as the oldest
existing public two-year college. The AACC provides a plethora of sources related to the
history of community colleges (www.aacc.nche.edu/AboutCC).

Various terms have been used interchangeably over the years to describe
community colleges, such as junior college and technical college. Cohen and Brawer
(2003) define a community college as any public institution regionally accredited to
award the associates degree in arts or the associates in science as its highest degree.
Although private junior colleges and two year proprietary institutions could be included
in the above definition, this study focuses on publicly supported institutions, which are
the dominant form of community colleges.

In simplest terms, the mission of community colleges is to serve all segments of
society through an open-access admissions policy that offers equal and fair treatment to
all students seeking higher education (www.aacc.nche.edu/AboutCC). Workforce
training and development is embedded in the community college mission, offering
students access and opportunity to training and credentials required in the emerging
economy (Mellow & Heelan, 2008, p. 211).

Reasons for the rapid rise of community colleges during the twentieth century are
broad and complex, and have been examined by several commentators, notably Cohen
and Brawer (2008), who suggest that the need for workers trained to operate the nation’s
expanding industries and the drive for social equality were among the contributing
factors. Other factors include the population boom of the mid-twentieth century and the
American ideal that higher education fostered individual upward mobility, and that
anyone who wished should have access to higher education.
Various theories have been advanced to explain the rapid rise of community colleges. One contention (Cohen 2001) is that community colleges were not an egalitarian effort to create opportunity for all, but rather a construct of the upper classes wishing to maintain their social position by restricting access of the masses to the traditional universities that they and their offspring attended. Accordingly, a powerful and influential upper class supported institutions that would deflect the aspirations of lower-class youth. This argument is bolstered by quotations from university presidents who sought to convert their institutions into research and graduate schools exclusively, and to move away from providing remedial education (p.4).

Mellow and Heelan (2008) suggest that the development of the community college is a distinctly American impulse that democratized higher education with its commitment to open enrollment and social justice, reflecting the ebb and flow of the American story as the nation evolved from a country that educated only its elite up until the mid-nineteenth century to one that now promotes higher education as a necessity for all citizens.

In the first part of the 20th century, community colleges focused on general liberal arts studies. During the Depression of the 1930s, community colleges began offering job-training programs in response to widespread unemployment. After World War II, the transition of military industries to consumer goods created jobs requiring a new set of skills. This economic transformation along with the GI Bill created the demand for more higher education options than what was provided by traditional colleges and universities of that era (AACC website).
In post-World War II America, the 1948 Truman Commission, charged with re-examining the structure of higher education and assessing its ability to deliver a post war workforce, determined that a new system of colleges was needed to expand access beyond what was provided by the land-grant colleges. The Commission recognized that the existing junior and technical colleges provided a model to create a national system to meet the growing demand for an educated workforce. These “community colleges” were supported by a combination of state and local resources aimed at individuals who in the past could support a family if they had just finished high school or were returning home after military service (Mellow & Heelan, 2008, p. 6).

In 1950 enrollment at public two-year institutions in the United States was 168,043. Over the course of the decade that figure more than doubled to 393,553. By the early 1960’s, the community college movement was in full-swing across the United States, fueled by the baby boom, and quickly becoming the national network envisioned by the Truman Commission with the opening of 457 public community colleges – more than the total in existence before that decade. By 1970, enrollments in community colleges jumped to about 2.1 million. One estimate was that on average, a new public community college campus opened each week during the decade starting in 1960 (Thelin, 2004, p. 299-300).

Community colleges began primarily as providers of general education and technical training. As the educational needs of society evolved, so have the functions of community colleges, which now include academic transfer to four year institutions, vocational and technical training, continuing education, developmental/remedial education, community service, and life-long learning (Cohen and Brawer, p. 22-25).
Mellow and Heelan (2008) outline the main challenges community colleges face in the 21st century, such as underprepared students requiring remedial education before they can begin college level work. By some estimates, 80% of students require remedial math courses and 60% require remedial English. Many students struggle to balance the responsibilities of home, work and life outside the classroom. Funding at the local, state and federal level is a constant concern, especially as community colleges are being asked to do more with less.

Despite these challenges, community colleges seem to have a resiliency embedded in their nature to respond to these challenges. Through their mission of accessibility and affordability, and commitment to the communities and students they serve, community colleges provide viable pathways to higher education and job training for millions of students who may otherwise be shut out due to soaring costs and stringent admission standards at traditional four year institutions (Mellow and Heelan).

Today community colleges educate nearly half of the 30 million students currently enrolled in undergraduate institutions. Undeniably, community colleges are major providers of career and technical training to those seeking, sustainable, living-wage work in the global economy of the 21st century.

**Workforce Development and Community Colleges**

Jacobs and Dougherty (2006) cite workforce preparation as a major contribution of community colleges to American higher education. The workforce development mission includes all the institutional programs, courses and activities that prepare students for work. This major institutional function cuts across specific organizational
units and is present in credit and non-credit programs, career and technical areas, and contract training units.

Workforce development is a broadly used term to describe an extensive array of job training, educational and employment programs at the local, state and federal level and across various sectors of the economy. In proposing the need for a more integrated view of workforce development, Jacobs (2002) offered the following definition:

Workforce development is the coordination of school, company and governmental policies and programs such that as a collective they enable individuals the opportunity to realize a sustainable livelihood and organizations to achieve exemplary goals (p.13).

Workforce training and development is embedded in the mission and culture of community colleges. The most effective community colleges are able to either innovate or replicate best practices in workforce development in service to students, employers and communities (Mellow & Heelan, 2008, p. 233).

At the first White House Summit on Community Colleges held on October 5, 2010, United States Secretary of Education Arne Duncan said that community colleges never have been more important as they are today in educating the American workforce of the future. President Barak Obama asked his Economic Advisory Board to reach out to employers across the country to come up with new ways for business and community colleges to collaborate and to train citizens for the jobs of a new century (The White House, 2011, p. 12-13). Some of the workforce recommendations resulting from the summit include:

- Create formal partnerships and reciprocity between community colleges and businesses to ensure that the skills that are taught are skills that are relevant
- Build evaluation into the partnership programs
• Be flexible about course delivery

• Increase offerings for accredited training

• Create clear, accessible pathways from community-based and adult education training programs to community college certificate and degree programs (The White House, 2011, p. 26).

Ideally, community colleges offer programs correlated to jobs in demand in their regional economies, and hire faculty who maintain active links to business and industry. The best community college programs go beyond just meeting local workforce needs, to forecasting them. This is especially critical in down economic cycles, when high performing community colleges are able to work closely with government and business to help drive emerging industries. The ideal community colleges leverage education and workforce development in many forms to enhance the economic viability of not just the individual student, but the entire community. In this very fundamental way, community colleges deliver on the American promise of economic mobility (Mellow & Heelan, 2008, p. 211).

The notion of community colleges as major providers of workforce training and economic development is nothing new. Katsinas (1994) cited over 2300 entries cross-indexed to the keywords community colleges and economic development. That same review suggested that no subject within the community college arena has sparked more interest as economic development. As of June 2013, a Google scholar search with the same key words produced 17,600 entries in .08 seconds (http://scholar.google.com).

Community colleges and workforce development are an active area of research for federal agencies, scholars and foundations. Horn, King, and Smith (2011) reviewed
workforce research funded by several federal agencies, including the U.S. Departments of Labor, Education, Agriculture and Health and Human Services among others. The authors also cited research supported by the major national and regional foundations such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Ford, Annie E. Casey, Alfred E. Sloan and others.

In a report commissioned by the DOL, Jacobson, Focarazzo, Sacchetti and Benus (2011) describe ways in which the public workforce system is collaborating with community colleges to address the training needs of America’s workforce. The report provides a detailed description of community colleges in the context of the workforce system as established by WIA.

According to the Government Accounting Office (2012), community colleges, through their workforce education programs and mission of affordability and accessibility continue to be an important part of a responsive and effective workforce system for millions of people. The anecdotal evidence is unmistakable as many thousands of workers turn to community colleges for re-training, upgrading of skills, or pursuing new careers. A newer trend is the return of boomers to community colleges seeking new careers or second and third careers. The American Association of Community Colleges even has a major initiative aimed at this population.

**The Workforce Investment Act of 1998**

The Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA; P.L. 105-220) is the primary federal program that supports workforce development activities across the United States until WIOA takes effect on July 1, 2014. The main provisions of WIA provide job search
assistance to the unemployed or under-employed, adult education and literacy services, and employment-related services to individuals with disabilities (Bradley, 2013, p. 1).

The Workforce Investment Act created a comprehensive workforce investment system that brought together multiple federally funded employment and training programs into a single system, called the one-stop system. The aim of the one-stop system was to provide services for jobseekers, workers and employers at a single location. The intention of WIA was to make the federal workforce system more customer focused and flexible so that individual states could tailor their programs to best meet local workforce needs (GAO, 2012, p.3-4).

Prior to WIA, the federal workforce system was run under the auspices of the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA), which had existed since the early 1980’s. Over time, the JTPA came to be viewed as too fragmented, confusing, and inefficient to both business and those seeking employment (Visher & Fowler, p. 4).

In the redesign of the workforce system, WIA created new programs to serve adults, dislocated workers and youth. Participants could receive job search assistance, assessment, and training for specific jobs in demand and for which there may be openings. WIA provided employers a variety of tailored services, including customized screening and referral of qualified participants, thus connecting both employers and job seekers at one location (GAO, 2008, p. 4).

To increase flexibility in implementation at the local level, WIA required each state to have one of more workforce investment areas (designated by state governors), governed by local workforce investment boards (WIB). Approximately 600 local workforce investment areas exist throughout the nation. A requirement of WIA is that
these local boards must consist of representatives from one-stop partner programs, local educational entities, labor organizations, community based organizations and economic development agencies. Another requirement of WIA is that a majority of WIB board members must be representatives of local businesses, and that the board chair is a representative of local business. Through these requirements, WIA ensures that the business sector plays a key role in deciding how services are provided at the one-stop centers (United States Accountability Office [GAO], 2008 p. 5-6).

Between fiscal years 2000 and 2013 about $73.2 billion in federal funding was provided through WIA Title I for Adult, Dislocated Worker and youth programs (see Table 1). In 2009, Congress also passed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (Recovery Act), which included a one-time addition of $3.5 billion for the three programs through program year 2010. Compared to Fiscal Year 2000, annual WIA funding declined by about 14% in fiscal year 2013 (Bradley 2013, p. 40-41).

Another important aspect of WIA is accountability and performance measures. States must report on the effectiveness of their WIA programs in order to receive full funding allocations. Financial sanctions and incentive funding are tied to performance. Areas of measurement include results for job placement, retention, earnings and skill attainment. WIA requires measures of customer satisfaction for job seekers and employers (GAO 2012, p. 8).
Table 1

WIA Title I, Appropriations for FY 2000 – FY 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fiscal Year (FY)</th>
<th>WIA Title I Grand Total (dollars in thousands)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FY 2000</td>
<td>$5,379,297</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY 2001</td>
<td>$5,480,253</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY 2002</td>
<td>$5,649,355</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY 2003</td>
<td>$5,150,210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY 2004</td>
<td>$5,157,762</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY 2005</td>
<td>$5,356,754</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY 2006</td>
<td>$5,117,526</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY 2007</td>
<td>$5,131,730</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY 2008</td>
<td>$5,186,387</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY 2009</td>
<td>$5,313,649</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY 2010</td>
<td>$5,544,875</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY 2011</td>
<td>$5,145,892</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY 2012</td>
<td>$4,909,236</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY 2013</td>
<td>$4,674,597</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>$73,197,523</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Current status of WIA. The Workforce Investment Act expired at the end of FY 2003. Since that time, WIA programs have been funded through the annual appropriations process. Efforts were made in the 108th, 109th and 112th Congresses to reauthorize WIA, but the bills never made it to conference committee (Bradley and Collins 2013).
On January 3, 2014, the 113th Congress enacted H.R. 803, cited as the Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act (WIOA). The legislation amended WIA to “strengthen the United States workforce development system through innovation in, and alignment and improvement of, employment, training, and education programs in the United States, and to promote individual and national economic growth, and for other purposes (https://beta.congress.gov/113/bills/hr803/BILLS-113hr803enr.pdf).”

President Barack Obama signed the WIOA into law on July 22, 2014. This Act supersedes WIA and takes effect on July 1, 2015. Like WIA, this legislation is designed to help job seekers access employment, education, training, and support services to succeed in the labor market and to match employers with the skilled workers they need to compete in the global economy. Congress passed the Act by a wide bipartisan majority and it is the first legislative reform in 15 years of the public workforce system (http://www.doleta.gov/wioa/).

**WIA and Community Colleges.** Visher and Fowler (2006) provide a description on how community colleges plug into WIA. First, community colleges can serve as local one-stop eligible training provider (ETP), thus providing jobs seekers with occupational skills training leading to employer recognized certificates or short-term training to upgrade skills. In some situations, community colleges can offer contract training to groups of job-seekers, by-passing ITAS as payment. Second, Community colleges can offer job readiness training and career counseling. Community Colleges can also compete to become one-stop operators or join with other organizations to run one-stops. Local WIBS are sometimes required to invite college presidents or other administrators to
serve on the board. Finally, community college state associations are often invited to represent community colleges on State-wide WIBS (Visher and Fowler, p. 4).

While community colleges play an important role in the one-stop system created by the WIA, a 2008 General Accounting Office (GAO) report and a study by Jacobson Focarazzo and Benus (2011) found it is uncertain whether efforts to build linkages between community colleges and the workforce system have been successful. Further research in this area is needed. A 2012 GAO report concludes that it is particularly important for policy makers to consider ways to better connect the workforce investment system with employers to meet local labor market needs (p. 28).

Bray, Painter and Rosin (2011) examine the divide between the business sector that creates jobs and educational professionals who provide students with the knowledge and skills they need to become successful employees. The authors argue that the WIBS provide the nationwide infrastructure to bridge this divide. Community colleges are a part of this nationwide infrastructure.

Hopkins, Monaghan, and Hansman, C. A. (May, 2009) investigated the impact of WIA funding on the providers and planners of programs for incumbent workers. This study suggests methods for stakeholders to collaborate and address the needs of incumbent worker development. In a similar study, Van Noy (2013) suggests better collaboration between one-stops and community colleges can transform community college programs.

A study by Katsinas, D’Amico and Friedel (2012) on perceptions of State Community College leaders regarding workforce training in a recovering economy found that business leaders expect community colleges to train workers, but concluded that
progress will be difficult if state continue to cut operating budgets and WIA funds are exhausted. This study suggested that serious consideration should be given to creating formal preferences for community colleges in WIA and other federal workforce training programs as congress reauthorizes these programs (p. 13).

In reviewing a Lumina Foundation pilot study to link community colleges and the workforce system toward the goal of college completion, McKay (2013) suggests that policy changes at the local and state level can be essential in improving the link between community colleges and the workforce system. McKay found that cultures in both the community college and workforce systems are strong, but data systems can be a barrier to effective coordination. Better collaboration would breed success for both systems.

Similarly, Mullen (2012) affirmed the growing need to develop a reliable data system by which to measure workforce outcomes of educational pursuits. Mullen found that within community colleges there is a growing realization that administrative data needs to be repurposed to build a culture of evidence to best inform institutional effectiveness (p. 76).

**Higher Education and Jobs**

The correlation between education and jobs is well established (Kane and Rouse 1999). Even the founders of the nation understood the need for public investment in education to ensure a qualified workforce. Writing about American prosperity, Friedman and Mandelbaum (2011) name government support for public education as one of the pillars that fostered unprecedented economic growth throughout the history of the United States. As America recovers from the great recession of 2008 and faces new challenges
in a 21st century, Friedman and Mandelbaum (2011) argue that America must continue to
invest in public education to ensure a qualified workforce and prosperous future.

In previous decades (Foroohar and Saporito, 2013) it used to be that workers
could graduate high school and secure a living wage job in manufacturing. That reality is
now gone. In today’s economy, 53% of those working in manufacturing have at least
some college. One in ten has a graduate or professional degree (p. 25).

For much of the twentieth century one could reasonably expect that a high school
diploma or less would suffice to secure sustainable, middle class employment. Times
have changed. Anthony Carnevale (2013), of the Georgetown University Center on
Education and the Workforce, estimates that one-third of all job openings in the United
States between 2010 and 2020 will require at least a postsecondary certificate, industry
based certification, some college credits, or an associate degree.

In 1970, for example, 76% of workers in the middle class had a high school
degree or less. By 2008, however, only 36% did. In 1970, 24% of workers in the middle
class had at least some college. By 2008, 64% did. Level of education is becoming
increasingly important in the workplace (see figure 3).

Embedded in the American mores is the notion of social equality, and that if you
work hard and play by the rules, you can achieve great success in life, bound only by the
limits of your imagination and work ethic, regardless of the circumstances into which you
were born. Equal access to higher education is seen as a key component to achieving
social equality – a value that Cohen and Brawer (2003) suggest was a major factor that
fueled the explosive growth of community colleges in the 20th century.
Friedman and Mandelbaum (2011) cite Harvard University’s Claudia Goldin and Lawrence Katz, who note that first the steady expansion of primary education, then the high school movement, and then the expansion of two and four-year colleges and universities, enabled each generation of Americans to achieve a level of education that greatly exceeded the previous one. As a result, racial and regional differences in educational resources and attainment, and economic outcomes narrowed substantially.

With each succeeding generation, more and more Americans have had access to higher education. As technology improved, the country prepared a workforce to exploit new inventions – from cotton gins, to steamships, to assembly lines, to computers, to the Internet (Friedman, p. 35).
At the dawn of the twentieth century, an estimated 6 percent of teenagers graduated from high school. At that time about 2 percent of Americans age eighteen to twenty-four were enrolled in two or four year colleges. By the beginning of the 21st century, 85% of teenagers graduated from high school, and about 63% were going from high school to some postsecondary institution. According to Goldin and Katz, American investment in mass education ensured that American workers could handle each new advance in technology (Friedman, p. 37).

While more Americans than ever before are accessing higher education, the United States is under-producing college talent. According to Carnevale (2013), the supply of college-educated workers has grown by 1% each year, while demand has grown by 3% since 1983 (see figure 4).

*Figure 4. Supply and demand of college educated workers. Adapted from “The Undereducated American,” by A.P. Carnevale, S.J. Rose, 2011, p. 4. Copyright 2011 by Georgetown Center on Education and the Workforce. Reprinted with permission.*
Because supply has not kept pace with demand, the college wage premium over high school grew from 40% in 1989 to 74% in 2010. In addition, jobs requiring high school or less have declined from 72% of all jobs in 1973 to 41% in 2010, to become only 35% by the year 2020 (see Figure 5).

![Share of Jobs by Educational Requirement](image)

*Figure 5. Share of jobs by education requirement. Adapted from “Recovery 2020: Job Growth and Education Requirements through 2020,” by, A.P. Carnevale, L. Smith, J. Strohl, 2013, p. 15. Copyright 2013 by Georgetown Center on Education and the Workforce. Adapted with permission.*

As America continues a slow recovery from the recession of 2008, the jobs that are coming back are not the same jobs that were available pre-recession. According to Hill (2013) this is different from previous recessions, in which workers who lost jobs just had to wait it out until the economy rebounded. In this recovery, jobs are available, but employers have a difficult time finding employees with the skills and education needed to fill available jobs. Community colleges could play an even greater role in training individuals for the jobs that are available (Torraco, 2008). The jobs that are returning now require some college. Translation – the ability to do math, English and problem solve
above the high school level is required for most of the jobs in the current and emerging economy (see figure 6).

![Figure 6. Number of months required to regain pre-recession employment. Adapted from “The Sluggish rebound from the Great Recession, by N. Hill, 2013. Reprinted with permission.](image)

**Higher Education Advocacy and Community Colleges**

It is well known that the higher education community attempts to influence and/or advocate for policy on the state and federal level, represented by hundreds of organizations and associations in state capitals and in Washington, D.C. In this context, the terms influence and advocacy are used interchangeably and are about using ethical strategies to advance the interests of an institution or cause in the public policy arena. Vance (2012) describes influence as the process of getting to yes on something you want in the real world.
The task of advocacy in the higher education sector is diverse and complex. More than 3,600 colleges and universities operate across America, ranging from two-year public community colleges granting associate degrees to large research universities granting doctoral degrees. Some institutions are private liberal arts colleges supported primarily by tuition and donations, while others receive a larger share of state dollars. Great variation exists in terms of constituencies, students and issues represented by the higher education sector (Cook 9).

Cook (1998), names the following associations, often referred to as the Big Six, as the major higher education associations at the federal level:

- The American Council on Higher Education (ACE),
- The American Association of Community Colleges (AACC),
- The Association of American Universities (AAU)
- The American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU)
- The National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (NAICU)
- The National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges (NASULGC).

The primary national advocacy organization for community colleges is the AACC. Founded in 1921, AACC represents nearly 1,200 two-year, associate degree-granting institutions and more than 13 million students. AACC promotes community colleges through five strategic action areas: recognition and advocacy for community colleges; student access, learning, and success; community college leadership development; economic and workforce development; and global and intercultural education. Governed by a 32-member board of directors elected by the membership, AACC is a nonprofit organization whose overriding mission is to "Build a Nation of Learners by Advancing America's Community Colleges."
As a member of the Big “Six” presidentially based associations, AACC collaborates with a wide range of entities within the higher education community to monitor and influence federal policy and to collaborate on issues of common interest. The association has ongoing interaction with key federal departments and agencies including the U.S. departments of Labor, Education, Energy, Homeland Security, and Commerce and the National Science Foundation. AACC supports and promotes its member colleges through policy initiatives, innovative programs, research and information and strategic outreach to business and industry and the national news media (http://www.aacc.nche.edu/About/Who).

Another major national organization that represents community colleges is the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT). The main focus of ACCT is to advocate on behalf of community college boards of trustees. ACCT exists to foster greater appreciation for community colleges and their boards; support community college boards in their efforts to develop policies that meet community needs; build community college board leadership and advocacy capacity through education and training programs; and assist community college board in the recruitment and retention of chief executive officers.

ACCT represents 650 state, district and local boards, 6,000 individual trustees and nearly 1200 community and technical colleges. America’s community college trustees oversee combined annual operation revenues of over $31 billion dollars and 600,000 employees (http://www.acct.org/about-association).

Both the AACC and the ACCT work closely together, each maintaining staff dedicated to advocacy, policy analysis and lobbying on the federal and state level. The
organizations produce regular legislative updates and e-newsletters that monitoring policy issues and legislation that may impact community colleges. The organizations also sponsor annual conferences in Washington D.C., in which community college leaders and trustees interact with legislators and policy makers on issues pertaining to community colleges.

While it is common to consider community colleges as “local” institutions, the modern community college is heavily influenced by the federal government. Lovell (2001) and Gladieux and Corrigan (2011) suggests that federal influence will continue to grow and has the potential to significantly affect community colleges. Major areas of influence, according to Lovell, include research funding, tax policies, student financial aid and mandates (p. 24).

An example of federal influence on community colleges is the subject of this study – The Workforce Invest Act (WIA) of 1998. As described earlier, community colleges are principal players in WIA. Both the AACC and the ACCT closely monitor WIA. When the legislation was signed into law in 1998, community colleges were guaranteed a role in the local one-stop centers and a seat at the table on the local and state workforce investment boards (WIBS). It has been documented that unfunded mandates and reporting requirements for the institutions that receive federal funds are very extensive, and in some cases burdensome to community colleges (Lovell, p. 24).

McGuinness (2011) expounds on the role of state government in higher education. Essentially, states provide the legal framework within which both public and private institutions operate. McGuinness concludes that state leaders are too preoccupied with the fiscal crisis and short-term political agendas, and higher education leaders appear far
more concerned about the future of their own institutions in turbulent economic times than about the need for establishing policy structures that respond to public priorities. In this scenario, SAEs will be all the more important in advocating for their member community colleges on both the state and federal level.

Community College State Associations

While a great deal of literature exists regarding community colleges in general, none was found concerning community college state associations. Dr. Ron Abrams, Executive Director of the Ohio Association of community colleges, indicated that he is not aware of any journal articles that have focused on the work of community college state associations (personal communication, May 6, 2013).

Twenty-three states have an association representing community college trustees, CEOs, and/or both (see chapter 1, figure 2). The associations are associate Members of the American Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT), and enjoy a good working relationship, particularly in the area of advocacy and membership support. The association executives maintain their own organization, the National Council of State Association Chief Executives (NCSACE), which typically meets during ACCT's Annual Leadership Congress and NLS (http://www.acct.org/state-community-college-associations).

Mike Hansen, Executive Director of the Michigan Community College Association, indicated that SAEs rely heavily on the national organizations such as AACC and ACCT to advocate for community colleges on the federal level, but SAEs do participate in national meetings when appropriate. Community college state associations vary from state to state in terms of mission and priorities, but sometimes there are
national issues around which they coalesce. Workforce training is once such issue since WIA is a federal program that implemented on the state level (personal communication, September 5, 2013).

The state association CEO’s interact with community college presidents, trustees and business leaders, as well as policy makers on the local, state and federal level. They serve as a conduit of advocacy and information for community colleges yet no empirical data exists regarding their perceptions of WIA.

Regarding WIA, Visher and Fowler (2006) found that community colleges tend to have more leverage with WIA in states where community colleges are represented by a strong, cohesive statewide organization. When community colleges go it alone in working with their local WIA systems, they often become mired in local problems or find that they are not heard at the state level. When community colleges within a state are unified enough to have a strong, cohesive voice at the state or regional level, local problems are more easily resolved. This unity is often provided through a well-organized statewide community college association (p. 47).

**Theoretical Framework**

The “garbage can” model of organizational choice – described by Cohen, March and Olsen (1972) – offers a theoretic lens through which to approach this study. Building upon influential work by Lindblom (1959) and others to explain how governmental policy is made, the garbage can model emerged as part of a critique of rational and neo-rational models that described the process as incremental. Rather than portray the decision making process as rational, Cohen et al. (1972), Kingdon (2003) and others in this school describe it as a mix of multiple streams of problems, solutions and politics.
pouring into a garbage can. The outcome depends on the mix, and is a result of the level of resources, time, energy and attention an issue or problem receives (Garson 2008).

In illustrating the garbage can model of decision making, Cohen et al (1972) referred to organizations as “organized anarchies” characterized by problematic preferences, unclear technology and fluid participation. They referred to an organization as a “collection of choices looking for problems, issues and feelings looking for decision situations in which they might be aired, solutions looking for issues to which there might be the answer, and decision makers looking for work” (p. 2).

In their seminal 1972 study Cohen et al. examined decision making in universities. Using a computer program the authors ran simulations based on a set of observations of some university organizations, and found that:

The garbage can process is one in which problems, solutions, and participants move from one choice opportunity to another in such a way that the nature of the choice, the time it takes, and the problems it solves all depend on a relatively complicated intermeshing of the elements. These include the mix of choices available at any one time, the mix of problems that have access to the organization, the mix of solutions looking for problems, and the outside demands on the decision makers. (p.16)

Cohen et al. (1972) concluded that:

It is clear that the garbage can process does not resolve problems well. But it does enable choices to be made and problems resolved, even when the organization is plagued with goal ambiguity and conflict, with poorly understood problems that wander in and out of the system, with a variable environment, and with decision
makers who may have other things on their minds…The great advantage of trying to see the garbage can phenomena together as a process is the possibility that the process can be understood, that organizational design and decision making can take account of its existence, and that, to some extent, it can be managed. (p. 16-17)

John Kingdon (2003) adapts the general line of thought in the Cohen-March-Olsen (1972) model to better understand agenda setting in the federal government. In Kingdon’s version, the federal government is seen as an organized anarchy. The three major process streams are (1) problem recognition, (2) the formation and refining of policy proposals, and (3) politics. These streams are coupled at critical junctures, and that coupling produces the greatest agenda change (Kingdon, p. 86-87).

Kingdon describes the agenda setting process in the following way. First, various problems or issues capture the attention of people in and around government. For his original study, Kingdon examined case studies involving health care and transportation issues. For the purposes of this study, the issue could be the role of community colleges in the implementation of WIA and helping the United State recover from the recession by training people for high demand living wage wok.

Second, there is a policy community of specialists – politicians, bureaucrats, people in the agency budget offices, Hill staffers, academics, interest groups, researchers – who concentrate on generating proposals. They each have their ideas or axes to grind, and float these ideas around the policy communities. In the selection process, some ideas are embraced while others are rejected (p.87).
In this study, the community of specialists or “policy entrepreneurs” includes individuals from legislative offices, from the Department Labor, Employment and Training and Department of Education. Interest groups may include staff from the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC), Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT), American Council on Education, community college presidents and SAEs (executives of the community college state associations).

Third, the political stream is composed of things like elections, changes of administration, swings of national mood and public opinion, and partisan or ideological shifts in Congress. According to Kingdon, events in this stream occur independently of the streams of problems and proposals. In the political stream politicians may discern a change in mood among constituents, election results may bring a new administration to power, or an influx of new and different legislators may change the dynamics of Capital Hill, thus serving as a catalyst to change on the national agenda (Kingdon, p. 87).

Each of the streams and the actors in the streams can operate either as an impetus or as a constraint on agenda setting. As an impetus, an actor or an interest group can push for inclusion of a given item on the government agenda, or the recognition of a problem or the development of a solution can propel an issue higher on the agenda. Likewise, an actor or interest group can work to constrain the agenda setting process. Perhaps the cost is too high or there is significant public opposition to a particular issue, either from the general public, other public officials, interest groups or activists. The political forces that Kingdon describes can operate either as an impetus or a constraint (p. 88).

Kingdon explains how these streams of processes develop and operate largely independently of one another. Solutions are developed whether or not they respond to a
problem. The key to understanding agenda setting and policy change, says Kingdon, is their coupling.

The separate streams come together at critical times. A problem is recognized, a solution is available, the political climate makes the time right for change, and the constraints do not prohibit action. Advocates develop their proposals and then wait for problems to come along to which they can attach their solutions, or for a development in the political stream like a change in administration that makes their proposals more likely to be adopted. (p. 88)

Kingdon labels an opportunity for pushing one’s proposals a “policy window” – open for a short time when the conditions to push a given issue or topic higher on the policy agenda are ripe. The window is only open for a short time, and then the window closes. Opportunities come and go. If policy entrepreneurs have an understanding of the process, and they are able to recognize these policy windows, then an issue or subject has a better chance of making it to the agenda (Kingdon 88).

Critique of the Garbage Can Model

According to Weinblatt (2012), the garbage can model in Cohen et al.’s seminal 1972 work has not faced significant critique, but it was criticized by Bendor, Moe and Shotts (2001) as “complex and confusing,” “seriously flawed,” and lacking the “rigor, discipline, and analytical power needed for genuine progress” (p.169). Bender et al.’s main criticisms include a difference between Cohen et al.’s verbal theory and the computer simulation used in the 1972 model, and an assertion that streams of solutions and problems cannot possibly be independent of one another as espoused by Cohen et al. (p. 172).

In analyzing this criticism, Weinblatt cites Olsen (2001), who notes that the original 1972 Cohen et al. study was a “model,” not a “theory.” The original authors
themselves acknowledged that their research was simply an option for examining organizational choice, not the definitive means for analysis.

Bender, Moe, & Shotts (2001) acknowledge that since 1972, the original authors of the garbage can model (primarily March and Olsen) have moved beyond their initial formulation to assemble a larger, more general theoretical apparatus (p. 184). March and Olsen’s 1976 *Ambiguity of Choice* expanded on the 1972 theory, received considerable attention, and solidified the garbage can’s new status as a major school of organizational theory (p.169).

In considering the lineage of garbage can theory, Cohen et al.’s 1972 article has had considerable influence in political science and in institutional theory more generally. Notably, Kingdon’s *Agendas, Alternatives and Public Policies* (2003) is one of the most highly regarded treatments of policy making in the last two decades (Bender et al. 2001, p. 169).

Regarding Kingdon’s model, some readers have concluded, notably Mucciaroni (1992), that the processes in Kingdon’s model are basically random and that the separate streams come together just by chance. Responding to this criticism, Kingdon points out that there is actually quite a bit of structure in the process as he describes in Chapter 9 (2003). Kingdon does acknowledge, however, that, “neither scholars nor practitioners are able to predict with great certainly what will happen…but they can quote the odds, sometimes quite reliably and sometimes less so…there is room for residual randomness as is true of the real world (Kingdon, p. 222).”

Despite critique of the garbage can model, it continues to serve as a framework for a wide range of research topics and studies in the social science arena. Weinblatt’s
2012 examination of academic decision making during two university mergers is one example. Another example is a policy study by Tierman and Burke (2002) in which Kingdon’s model of agenda setting provides an explanatory framework for understanding the complex combination of factors by which rent assistance became a favored policy in Australia. Mazarr’s 2007 study on the Iraq war and agenda setting concluded that Kingdon’s model offers a useful template for how and why national security and foreign policy decisions get made.

Likewise for this study, Kingdon’s agenda setting framework provides a useful theoretical lens through which to examine the perceptions of SAEs regarding the role of community colleges in the implementation of WIA.

Summary

The Workforce Investment Act of 1998 forms the backbone of workforce training in America, yet it had not been reauthorized until 2014 with the passage of WIOA, even as America recovered from the largest recession since the Great Depression. Confusion remains about how community colleges can best be utilized in WIA, though these institutions are heralded by policy makers, business leaders and the media as vanguards of workforce training.

A review of the literature revealed that a significant amount of information exists about community colleges and WIA in general, yet no empirical research was found regarding the perceptions of SAEs – important policy entrepreneurs in the community college agenda setting and policy making process. This national study attempts to address this gap in the research. Chapter III describes the methods used to investigate the research questions and to carry out this study.
Chapter Three

Methodology

Introduction

This chapter presents the methodology used to conduct this study on the perceptions of State Association Executives (SAEs) regarding the role of community colleges in the implementation of the Workforce Investment Act. The methods included a survey instrument administered electronically containing Likert-type statements and open-ended questions, and a document analysis of state workforce plans. The chapter is divided into the following sections: description of the participants, research questions, instrumentation, testing of the survey, data collection and analysis, and chapter summary.

Participants

The participants were the universe of 23 community college state association chief executives (SAEs) with membership in the National Council of State Association Chief Executives (NCSACE) at the time of the study. The NCSACE website can be found at http://ncsace.org/. As stated in Chapter I, twenty-three states have community college state associations that meet this criteria. They include: Arkansas, California, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Maryland, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, Nebraska, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Texas, Washington, and Wisconsin (see Figure 2).

A review of the literature revealed that no empirical research existed related to SAEs, yet they are on the front lines seeking to influence the community college agenda on both the state and federal level. They were surveyed because of their knowledge of community colleges, and for their unique role in advocating for community colleges as
CEOs of community college state associations. A better understanding of their perceptions will help inform community college involvement in workforce policy.

Research Questions

The research questions that guided this study were: 1) What are the perceptions of SAEs regarding the role of community colleges in the implementation of WIA; 2) What should the role of community colleges be in the implementation of WIA according to SAEs; and 3) How do SAEs advocate on behalf of community colleges regarding the implementation of WIA?

Instrumentation

This study used a survey instrument developed by Dr. Steve Katsinas (2003, 2012) to measure perceptions of state directors of community college systems. Permission was granted by Dr. Katsinas to use his survey as a basis for this study. The instrument was modified to fulfill the purpose of this research, and approved by the University of Toledo’s Institutional Review Board prior to distribution. The name of the modified instrument was the Survey of Community College State Association Chief Executives. Appendix B contains the survey in the format in which it was electronically sent to the participants.

This survey used Likert-type scaling as well as open ended questions. Likert-type scales are commonly used to measure attitudes and perceptions, providing a range of responses to a given question or statement. Typically these scales contain five response alternatives (Jamieson 2004). In this study for example, 1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Agree, 3 = Undecided, 4 = Disagree, and 5 = Strongly Disagree.
A Likert-type scale was chosen for this research because the intention of the study was to ascertain the perceptions of SAEs regarding the implementation of WIA. Likert scaling presumes the existence of an underlying (or natural) variable whose value characterizes the participant’s attitudes and opinions (Clason & Dormody 1994). In this study, the dependent variable is the perception of SAEs regarding the role of community colleges in the implementation of WIA.

In addition to the Likert-type statements the survey included open ended questions to provide participants the opportunity elaborate on responses and to raise issues not covered by the scales of the statements. This enabled the researcher to compare and corroborate responses and data between the scaled statements, open ended questions, and state workforce plans.

**Testing of the Survey**

The survey originally developed by Dr. Steven Katsinas (2003) was reviewed by an advisory panel made up of members of the National Council of State Directors of Community Colleges (NCSDCC) and national experts. Potential biases and validity issues were minimized by this review (http://uaedpolicy.weebly.com/national-access--funding-surveys).

The modified survey for this study was further pre-tested and reviewed by a panel of experts, including: Dr. Ron Abrams, former Executive Director of the Ohio Association of Community Colleges; Michael Hansen, Executive Director of the Michigan Community College Association and past chair of the National Council of State Association Chief Executives (NCSACE); Susan Muha, Executive Vice President of the Workforce and Economic Development Division of Cuyahoga Community College, and
Linda Woodard, Vice President of Workforce and Economic Development at Cuyahoga Community College.

The survey was designed to gain a better understanding of the perceptions of SAEs regarding the role of community colleges in the implementation of WIA. Upon the recommendations and approval of the experts who pre-tested the survey, it was determined that the survey would contain both Likert-type survey statements and open ended questions. To the Likert-type statements participants were asked to answer Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral/Don’t Know, Disagree, or Strongly Disagree. The Likert-type statements from the survey were:

**Statement 1:** In my state, formal responsibility to administer programs funded by the WIA is assigned to a community college.

**Statement 2:** In my state, the role of community colleges in the implementation of the WIA is well understood.

**Statement 3:** In my state unemployed workers can attend community colleges tuition-free for re-training purposes.

**Statement 4:** Increased numbers of unemployed/displaced workers have exhausted available workforce training dollars via WIA and other sources for colleges in my state.

**Statement 5:** Concerns over high numbers of unemployed workers are pushing community colleges to offer or expand “quick” job training programs in non-credit areas in my state.

**Statement 6:** Funding is needed to expand high cost programs in areas such as health sciences, engineering, and information technology in my state.
Statement 7: Business leaders see community colleges as primary workforce training providers in my state.

Statement 8: Community colleges are a formal preferred provider of WIA programs in my state.

Statement 9: Increasing attainment of industry recognized credentials is a priority in my state.

Statement 10: In the recession, my state’s community colleges have seen more enrollment growth in transfer programs than in higher cost career-focused for-credit programs.

Statement 11: In my state, funding is insufficient to hire full-time faculty to staff programs in high-wage careers/fields including nursing, engineering, technology, etc.

Statement 12: The statewide workforce investment plan is clearly communicated in my state.

The open ended questions in the survey provided the respondents an opportunity to augment responses from the Likert-type scale statements and/or to raise issues that were not covered in the Likert portion of the survey. The open ended questions were:

- What should the role of community colleges be in the implementation of the Workforce Investment Act;
- Do you as a community college state association advocate on behalf of community colleges regarding the implementation of the Workforce Investment Act? If yes, please describe your advocacy activities in this regard;
- What do you see as the top five priorities of community colleges in your state?
Please provide any additional thoughts you have on the role of community college in the implementation of the Workforce Investment Act:

**Data Collection**

The data for this study came from the results of the Survey of Community College State Association Chief Executives (SAEs) and a document review of state workforce plans. This data was collected simultaneously and then integrated to address the research questions.

**Survey.** The survey of Community College SAEs was distributed and collected electronically using Survey Monkey. Other software was considered but Survey Monkey was used for convenience and accessibility. Electronic surveys have both pros and cons. Advantages include low cost to administer, potential for rapid turnaround and program functions that can tabulate results automatically. Disadvantages include questions may be misinterpreted by the respondents and e-mails may be ignored (Creswell 2014).

The electronic correspondence contained all the necessary information to complete the survey including: a description of the research, the date by which to respond and informed consent information. Participants were asked to respond as honestly as possible. The SAEs were told that no personal identifiers would be used, participation was voluntary, results would be presented in aggregate format, and that every effort would be made to keep the responses confidential. The contact information of the researchers was provided to facilitate any questions or concerns.

The current and past presidents of the National Council of State Association Chief Executives (NCSACE) wrote a letter of support to accompany the initial distribution of the survey (See Appendix A). The survey was sent in February 2014 and data was
collected through March of 2014. The researcher followed up by phone and e-mail to the participants to encourage participation.

**Documents.** Data included a review of the WIA mandated workforce plans for the twenty three states with NCSACE membership. These plans were analyzed and coded for community college participation in state workforce systems. This process is typically useful in generating common and emerging themes that appear as findings in the results sections of similar studies (Creswell 2014). Selected passages from these plans can be found in Appendix E. Links to all of the state plans can be found on the U.S. Department of Labor website (http://www.doleta.gov/performance/results/AnnualReports/annual_report.cfm).

**Data Analysis**

The results from the Likert-type portion of the Survey of Community College State Association Executives were tabulated electronically. Standard calculation methods were performed to gather descriptive statistics appropriate for Likert-type scale research, such as frequencies and percentages of response in each category. These scales fall within the ordinal level of measurement, meaning that response categories have a rank order, but the intervals between them cannot be presumed equal (Jamieson 2004).

The responses to the opened-ended questions on the Survey of Community College State Association Executives and the data from the state workforce plans were reviewed and coded for common themes. This data was then analyzed to address the research questions.
Validity. Triangulation is a common strategy to increase the reliability and trustworthiness of a study (Merriam, 2009, p. 270). In this strategy, researchers use multiple sources and methods to corroborate evidence (Creswell, 2007, p. 208).

This study used triangulation by analyzing the closed and open-ended data from the survey and state workforce plans relative to the research questions. For example, the Likert-type responses were cross-checked with the open ended responses for corroboration and elaboration on various issues and outcomes.

The data was read and analyzed by this researcher for common themes and key findings. These data, tabular output from the survey, and a review of the state workforce investment plans are presented in Chapter IV to support findings and to draw conclusions presented in Chapter V.

Summary

This chapter presented the methods used to carry out this study. A cross-sectional assessment questionnaire called the Survey of Community College State Association Chief Executives was used to gain a better understanding of the perceptions of SAEs regarding the role of community colleges in the implementation of WIA. A review of the literature revealed that no empirical research existed on this group of policy entrepreneurs prior to this study.

The Survey of Community College State Association Chief Executives was based on an instrument originally developed by Katsinas (2003, 2012) and modified to fulfill the purposes of this study. The survey contained Likert-type scale and open-ended questions and was administered electronically.
The data included the results of the Survey of Community College State Association Chief Executives and document analysis of WIA mandated workforce plans of the 23 states with NCSACE membership. This data was then analyzed to address the research questions. The results of the study are presented in Chapter IV.
Chapter Four

Results

Introduction

This chapter presents the results of this study that examined the perceptions of SAEs regarding the role of community colleges in the implementation of WIA. The key findings were based on data collected from the Survey of Community College State Association Chief Executives and a document review of WIA mandated state workforce plans. This data was then analyzed and synthesized into coherent themes related to the research questions.

The research questions that guided this study include: 1) What are the perceptions of SAEs regarding the role of community colleges in the implementation of WIA; 2) What should the role of community colleges be in the implementation of WIA according to SAEs; and 3) How do SAEs advocate on behalf of community colleges regarding the implementation of WIA?

The remaining sections of this chapter provide the survey response rate and demographics, results of Likert-type survey data, review of state workforce plans and key findings. Chapter V follows with a discussion of these findings and a conclusion to this study.

Survey Response Rate and Demographics

The survey was sent in electronic format via Survey Monkey to the universe of 23 SAEs who were members of National Council of State Association Chief Executives (NCSACE). The initial survey was sent on February 3, 2014, and data was collected through March 2014. The researcher followed up with phone calls and additional e-mails.
to the SAEs to invite their participation and to answer any questions about the survey. In total, 19 of the 23 SAEs responded to the survey. Of the 19 responses, 15 SAEs completed the survey, 3 clicked on the survey but did not answer the questions, and 1 SAE directed the researcher to the Governor’s office of Economic and Workforce Development to complete the survey. The usable response rate was 65% (see Table 2).  

Table 2

Survey Response Rate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Universe of SAEs</th>
<th>Responded to e-mail request</th>
<th>Clicked on the survey</th>
<th>Answered questions</th>
<th>Usable Response Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The demographic data of the respondents indicated that the SAEs represented states that have different structures for the way in which community colleges are coordinated statewide (see Table 4). In this study 33% (or 5) of the respondents represented a state that had a separate state-level community college board; 6.7% (or 1) was in a state in which the community colleges had the same coordinating board as K-12, separate from universities; 33% (or 5) of the respondents came from a state in which community colleges were under the same coordinating board as universities; and 26.7% (or 4) of the respondents were operating in states that had no state-level coordination (see Table 3).
Table 3

Organizational structure for state-wide community college coordination

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Separate state level board</th>
<th>Same as k-12 state board</th>
<th>Same board for universities</th>
<th>No state level coordination</th>
<th>Total responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>33.3% (5)</td>
<td>6.7% (1)</td>
<td>33.3% (5)</td>
<td>26.7% (4)</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: The number in parenthesis to the right of the percentage is the number of responses in that category.*

Only one participant represented a state where the coordinating board for community colleges was the same as the k-12 state board. That SAE chose responses that no other SAE selected in statements #4, #6, #7, #9 and #12. As the data is cross-sectional and the population size is small, it is not possible to determine if statewide community college coordination has an impact on SAE perception of the role of community colleges in the implementation of WIA based on the results of this study.

Summary of Likert-Type Survey Responses

The Likert-type portion of the survey contained 12 statements in which participants were asked to select response alternatives on a 5-point scale that most closely corresponded to their role as a leader of a community college state association. The responses were assigned the following values: Strongly Agree (1), Agree (2), Neutral/Don’t Know (3), Disagree (4), Strongly Disagree (5).

The rating average indicates the average sentiment among respondents to a particular statement, and is calculated as follows, where:

\[
W_1 = \text{weight of ranked position} \\
X = \text{response count for answer choice} \\
X_1W_1 + X_2W_2 + X_3W_3 + \ldots + X_nW_n \\
\text{Total number of respondents}
\]
For example, a rating average of 5 would indicate that as a cohort the SAEs strongly disagree to a particular statement. A rating average of 1 would indicate that as a cohort the SAEs strongly agree with a statement.

Table 4 provides a summary of the results of the SAE responses to the Likert-type statements based on rating average in ascending order. The rating averages range from 1.47 to 3.93.

Based on the results of the rating averages the strongest consensus is reflected in statements #6, #9 and #7 respectively; (6) funding is needed to expand high cost programs in areas such as health sciences, engineering, and information technology in my state; (9) increasing attainment of industry recognized credentials is a priority in my state; and (7) business leaders see community colleges as primary workforce training providers. Statement #1 also had strong consensus as 12 of the respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed that formal responsibility to administer programs funded by the WIA is assigned to community colleges. While the rating average was 3.93 two of the respondents were outliers by responding with “agrees.”

The remaining statements yielded rating averages between 2.2 and 3.47, suggesting a lack of consensus on those statements. The researcher considered scores of 2 or below or 4 and above as indicating consensus around a particular statement (See Table 4).
### Table 4

**SAE Survey Responses Categorized by Rating Average**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement Number</th>
<th>Likert-type scale statement</th>
<th>Rating average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Funding is needed to expand high cost programs in areas such as health sciences, engineering, and information technology in my state.</td>
<td>1.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Increasing attainment of industry recognized credentials is a priority in my state.</td>
<td>1.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Business leaders see community colleges as primary workforce training providers.</td>
<td>2.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>In my state, funding is insufficient to hire full-time faculty to staff programs in high-wage careers/fields including nursing, engineering, technology, etc.</td>
<td>2.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Concerns over high numbers of unemployed workers are pushing community colleges to offer or expand “quick” job training programs in non-credit areas in my state.</td>
<td>2.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Community colleges are a formal preferred provider of WIA programs in my state.</td>
<td>2.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Increased numbers of unemployed/displaced workers have exhausted available workforce training dollars via WIA and other sources for colleges in my state.</td>
<td>2.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>In my state, the role of community colleges in the implementation of the WIA is well understood.</td>
<td>2.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>The statewide workforce investment plan is clearly communicated in my state.</td>
<td>2.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>In the recession, my state’s community colleges have seen more enrollment growth in transfer programs than in higher cost career-focused for-credit programs.</td>
<td>3.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>In my state unemployed workers can attend community colleges tuition-free for re-training purposes.</td>
<td>3.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>In my state, formal responsibility to administer programs funded by the WIA is assigned to a community college.</td>
<td>3.93</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Review of State Workforce Plans

The Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998 required that the governor of each state submit a WIA Title I state plan to the U.S. Department of Labor that outlines a five-year strategy for its workforce investment system. States must have approved plans in
place to receive formula allotments under WIA or financial assistance under WIA Section 112(a), W-P Section 8(a).

A review of the WIA mandated workforce plans for the twenty three states with NCSACE membership found that every plan specifically referenced community colleges as having a role in the workforce system. The researcher coded for key words and phrases related to the roles community colleges in these plans. Key words and phrases that were mentioned in two or more state plans were then grouped into common themes or roles (see Table 5).

In analyzing the state workforce plans the major roles that emerged included the community college as 1) partner/collaborator in providing WIA mandated services; 2) resource for unemployed and displaced workers; 3) provider of industry recognized credentials; 4) provider of high demand fast track programs; 5) educational resource for post-secondary and life-long learning. Table 5 provides examples of the language used in these plans that describe the major roles of community colleges.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role of Community College</th>
<th>Examples of language in state workforce plans</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Partner/collaborator in providing mandated services</td>
<td>California state law requires the State WIB Board to collaborate with the Chancellor of the California Community Colleges, the State Department of Education, other appropriate state agencies, and local workforce investment boards to develop a comprehensive state plan (California Workforce Investment Board, 2013).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource for unemployed and displaced workers</td>
<td>The community colleges across Iowa are also working with the department to reach out to unemployed Iowans and promote retraining programs in the local area (Iowa Workforce Development, 2012, p. 38).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provider of industry recognized credentials</td>
<td>Community colleges are critical sources for workforce skills and credentials. While community colleges are not the only resource, they are a large provider of postsecondary education; therefore, working in partnership with community colleges is vital to the success of workforce development. (New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions, 2012, p. 45)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provider of high demand fast track programs</td>
<td>One major workforce development effort involved charging community colleges with developing new and/or modified courses that can fast-track workers into careers in high-growth industries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The North Carolina Department of Commerce and the Community College System jointly recommended that participating community colleges be allocated $10 million for the initiative (North Carolina Department of Commerce [NCDC], 2012, p. 5).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational resource for post-secondary and life-long learning</td>
<td>Georgia’s technical colleges provides a unified system of technical education, adult education, and customized business and industry training through programs that use the best available technology and offer easy access to lifelong education and training for all adult Georgians and corporate citizens (Georgia State Workforce Investment Board, 2013, p. 9).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The themes or roles identified in the state workforce plans related to community colleges were compared to the responses in the Survey of Community College State Association Executives. This data was then analyzed for common themes. For example, if the survey data revealed that SAEs perceived that increasing industry recognized credentials is a priority, and the state workforce plans corroborated that community colleges should be major providers of industry recognized credentials, then that issue was affirmed as a finding. The results of this analysis are explored further in the key findings section.

**Key Findings Related to the Research Questions**

The key findings were based on the data collected from the Survey of Community College SAEs and the review of state workforce plans. In analyzing this data the following key findings emerged:

1. SAEs perceive that increased funding is needed to expand high cost high demand programs in health sciences, engineering technology and informational technology;
2. SAEs perceive increasing attainment of industry recognized credentials is a priority;
3. SAEs perceive that business leaders see community colleges as primary providers of workforce training;
4. SAEs perceive that state workforce plans are communicated well and understood in some states but not in others;
5. SAEs perceive that formal responsibility to administer WIA programs is not assigned to community colleges but that community colleges should have a greater role in the implementation of WIA;

6. SAEs have divergent opinions and levels of participation regarding advocacy related to WIA and community colleges.

Finding I. SAEs perceive that increased funding is needed to expand high cost high demand programs in health sciences, engineering technology, and informational technology. The Likert-type scale responses affirmed this perception with 93% of the respondents either agreeing or strongly agreeing that funding is needed to expand high cost programs in areas such as health sciences, engineering technology and information technology. The rating average for this statement indicated the strongest consensus at 1.47. Furthermore, 73% of SAEs felt that funding is insufficient to hire full-time faculty to staff programs in these areas.

The need for increased funding in general was mentioned by 8 of the SAEs in their open ended responses regarding priorities for community college, but the responses were not specific. Some state workforce plans affirmed the need for increased funding. For example, the Florida plan stated, “The current funding crisis faced by public educational institutions including community colleges and universities provide an incentive for them to partner with the workforce community to tap into that funding resource (State of Florida, 2012, p. 32).”

The New York workforce plans provides another example of a state workforce plan affirming the need for increased funding:
The Governor’s budget included $31.3 million in support for local community colleges, raising base aid from $2,122 to $2,272 per full-time equivalent student. This is the first base aid increase for community colleges since 2007-08. Additional base aid support will allow community colleges across the state to expand class offerings, ease the burden on county sponsors, assist business partners, keep tuition affordable, and hire additional faculty (New York State Department of Labor, 2013, p. 8).

Finding II: Increasing attainment of industry recognized credentials is a priority in my state. Technical education and increasing attainment of industry recognized credentials were priorities identified by SAEs. In the Likert-type survey 93% (or 14 out of 15) SAEs affirmed that increasing attainment of industry recognized credentials was a priority. In the open ended responses section of the survey one SAE stated that “funding for technical program creation and expansion, creating stackable credentials, developing regional strategies funding in general were a priority for community colleges.”

The state workforce plans also identified community colleges as important providers of industry recognized credentials. New Mexico provides an example of language related to community as providers of industry recognized credentials, stating “Community colleges are critical sources for workforce skills and credentials. While community colleges are not the only resource, they are a large provider of postsecondary education; therefore, working in partnership with community colleges is vital to the success of workforce development (New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions, 2012, p. 45).

Finding III. SAEs perceive that business leaders see community colleges as primary providers of workforce training. The results of the survey of SAEs survey found that thirteen of the SAEs (or 86%) perceive that business leaders see community
colleges as primary workforce training providers in their state. The North Carolina State workforce plan reflects the role of community colleges in collaborating with business to meet industry needs with language such as,

North Carolina has also established a science and technology training consortium known as the N.C. STEM Learning Network. This collaboration brings together the University of North Carolina System public schools, and community colleges along with state government and industry to work together to ensure alignment of education with the critical STEM skills required by the state’s private employers. Each of the 58 community college campuses form industry advisory boards for key programs of study offered at those campuses in the STEM verticals. These boards proactively help keep the community college program curricula relevant to needs of locally served industries (NCDC, 2012, p. 33).

Workforce training was mentioned in five of the open ended responses by SAEs as a priority for community colleges. The SAEs also suggested that community colleges should have a strong leadership role in facilitating partnerships with employers. This finding aligns with language in the state workforce plans that community colleges need to link closely with the business sector in the implementation of WIA. In response to the question “What should the role of community college be in the implementation of WIA,” one SAE suggested community colleges should gave a strong leadership role due to the close ties of community colleges with industry.

**Finding IV. SAEs feel that state workforce plans are understood and communicated well in some states but not in others.**

Based on the survey results there is wide discrepancy in response to the statement, “In my state, the role of community colleges in the implementation of WIA is well understood. The data shows that 46% of respondents strongly agree or agree that the role of community colleges is well understood, while 62% either do not know or disagree that the role is well understood. The rating average of statement 2 was 2.73, approaching a
neutral sentiment. This rating average suggests that there is not strong SAE consensus that state workforce plans are understood and well communicated.

As the document review of state workforce plans revealed, every state plan mentions a role for community colleges in the workforce system, yet based on the survey of SAEs, nearly half of the respondents were either neutral or disagree that the role community colleges in the implementation of WIA is well understood. In the open-ended questions one SAE stated “visibility of WIA needs to be raised in most states.”

Furthermore, based on the survey data, 33% of the SAEs felt that the statewide plans are not communicated very well. Another 26.7% are neutral or don’t know if the plans are communicated well, while 43% either agree or strongly agree that statewide plans are well communicated. The rating average for this question was 2.87, suggesting a neutral response to this statement.

**Finding V: SAEs perceive that formal responsibility to administer WIA programs is not assigned to community colleges but that community colleges should have a greater role in the implementation of WIA.**

The results of the survey indicated that 80% of the SAEs either disagree or strongly disagree that formal responsibility to administer programs funded by WIA is assigned to community colleges. While SAEs perceived that community colleges do not have a formal responsibility to administer WIA programs, the open ended responses indicated that SAEs felt that community colleges should have a much greater role in the implementation and administration WIA. Two respondents said that community colleges should have a primary role in WIA, including administration, and that they should be the lead agency. Other similar responses included the following phrases, “community
colleges should be the ‘preferred/default’ providers of training,” and community colleges should be the “provider of first choice.”

Another SAE said that they like the approach that AACC and ACCT are taking in conversations about reauthorization of WIA - namely, allowing WIBs to contract directly with community colleges to provide training and that community colleges should be automatically eligible as training providers since they are already monitored for quality through accreditation, state licensure, and other state/federal programs.

While SAEs perceive that community colleges should have a greater role in the implementation of WIA, there is no consensus on how that role should be defined. The state workforce plans, however, all affirm that community colleges have a role to play in the implementation of WIA. As reflected in Table 5, the roles for community colleges include: 1) partner/collaborator in providing WIA mandated services; 2) resource for unemployed and displaced workers; 3) provider of industry recognized credentials; 4) provider of high demand fast track programs; 5) educational resource for post-secondary and life-long learning.

**Finding VI. SAEs have divergent opinions and levels of participation regarding advocacy related to WIA and community colleges.**

Based on the open-ended responses, there was no significant consensus on how or if SAEs advocate for WIA. Seven SAEs work closely with national associations such as AACC and ACCT, 4 SAEs participate on statewide WIBS and interact closely with state agencies, while 3 indicated that WIA was a not a current focus and they seldom advocate for WIA. These results indicate is that there is not an organized advocacy strategy among the SAEs who have membership with NCSACE.
Out of 14 responses, 3 SAEs indicated that advocating for WIA is not a focus. Four SAEs suggested that their WIA advocacy is focused on the state level. Seven indicated that they rely heavily on the national associations such as AACC/ACCT for WIA advocacy. Table 6 provides a side by side comparison of SAE responses to the survey question, “Do you as an executive of a community college state association, advocate on behalf of community colleges regarding the implementation of the Workforce Investment Act? If yes, please describe your advocacy activities in this regard.” The column on the left provides comments related to advocacy focused on the state level. The column on the right provides comments related to advocacy focused on the federal level.
### Table 6

**SAE Comments Regarding Advocacy and WIA**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advocacy focused on state level</th>
<th>Advocacy focused on national level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>We work very closely with State Department of Labor, on behalf of our colleges. This complements local cooperation between colleges and the WIBS/One-Stops.</td>
<td>Only through the AACC organization as a member. Local WIA Boards are under the auspices of the [state] Department of Jobs and Family Services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work as part of the Governor's Workforce cabinet to develop the plan for the state</td>
<td>We work with state agency that administers WIA; we advocate for WIA in DC in coordination with national association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I and my staff coordinate with the State Dept. of Employment Security to communicate the appropriate roles of the community colleges with regard to workforce training and to help identify braided funding opportunities to support training programs throughout the state.</td>
<td>We depend on AACC Presidents and also advocate with Federal reps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I serve on the state board for WIA</td>
<td>A bit, but much of the implementation is governed by statute through the State agency. Overall advocacy on WIA is chiefly organized by the national associations (AACC/ACCT) but we follow their lead on national advocacy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes though our national associations and personal visits with our federal representatives and meetings with US DOE and USDOL.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>It is on the federal plate--reauthorization of WIA. Probably not the political will in the state to move it through other agencies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes, but mostly just in Washington. The state-level dynamic is not viable for reform politically.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Summary

Chapter Four presented the results of this study on perceptions of SAEs regarding the role of community colleges in the implementation of WIA. Based on a synthesis of the survey data, open ended responses, and a document review of state workforce plans,
the following key finding emerged: 1) SAEs perceive that increased funding is needed to expand high cost high demand programs in health sciences, engineering technology and informational technology; 2) Increasing attainment of industry recognized credentials is a priority; 3) SAEs perceive that business leaders see community colleges as primary providers of workforce training; 4) SAEs perceive that state workforce plans are communicated well and understood in some states but not in others; 5) SAEs perceive that formal responsibility to administer WIA programs is not assigned to community colleges but that community colleges should have a greater role in the implementation of WIA; 6) SAEs have divergent opinions and levels of participation regarding advocacy related to WIA and community colleges.

Chapter Five provides a discussion of these results through Kingdon’s theoretical model of agenda setting. It discusses implications for practice, recommendations for future research, and conclusions to this study.
Chapter Five

Discussion, Recommendations, and Conclusions

Introduction

As community colleges experience a renewed prominence on the American higher education landscape, this national study aimed to better understand the role of community colleges in the implementation of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998. Specifically this study examined the perceptions of Community College State Association Chief Executives (SAEs) regarding the implementation of WIA.

The passage of WIA in 1998 signaled a new era for community colleges in the public workforce system. It was the most comprehensive workforce legislation to date assuming the participation of community colleges (Jacobs 2001). As the literature revealed, however, questions remain about the role of community colleges within the framework of this law. This study is timely as community colleges are increasingly called upon to provide education and training in the emerging economy and Congress amended WIA with the passage of the Workforce Investment Opportunity Act (WIOA) in the spring of 2014, the first major workforce legislation in fifteen years.

This chapter begins with a summary of the study followed by a discussion of the findings and implications for practice applied through the theoretical lens of Kingdon’s garbage can model on agenda setting. The chapter closes with recommendations for further research and conclusions that can be drawn as a result of this research.

Summary of the Study

This study examined the perceptions SAEs regarding the role of community colleges in the implementation of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998. A
thorough review of the relevant literature found no empirical evidence of the perceptions of this group of policy entrepreneurs who advocate for community colleges on both the state and federal level.

This is a problem because SAEs serve as a significant source of advocacy and information for community colleges. Millions of public tax payer dollars are invested in the public workforce system through WIA (and now WIOA) yet the role of community colleges in the workforce system is not well understood. Policy makers, business leaders, and millions of students are looking to community colleges in unprecedented ways to prepare individuals and the nation for the emerging economy. A better understanding of SAE perceptions will inform policy, community college practice and improve workforce system infrastructure.

The research questions that guided this study were: 1) What are the perceptions of SAEs regarding the role of community colleges in the implementation of WIA; 2) What should the role of community colleges be in the implementation of WIA according to SAEs; and 3) How do SAEs advocate on behalf of community colleges regarding the implementation of WIA?

The instrument used to carry out this study was the Survey of Community College State Association Chief Executives, which was based on an instrument developed by Katsinas (2003) and was modified to fulfill the purposes of this study. The survey consisted of closed and open-ended questions.

A document analysis of statewide workforce plans found that every state with NCSACE membership referenced community colleges in their state plans. Based on an analysis of the survey data, open-ended responses and state workforce plans, key finding
emerged related to the research questions. This chapter discusses these findings through the lens of Kingdon’s model of agenda setting. In summary, the data finds that:

1. SAEs perceive increased funding is needed to expand high cost high demand programs in health sciences, engineering technology and informational technology;

2. SAEs perceive increasing attainment of industry recognized credentials is a priority;

3. SAEs perceive business leaders see community colleges as primary providers of workforce training;

4. SAEs perceive state workforce plans are communicated well and understood in some states but not in others;

5. SAEs perceive formal responsibility to administer WIA programs is not assigned to community colleges but that community colleges should have a greater role in the implementation of WIA;

6. SAEs have divergent opinions and levels of participation regarding advocacy related to WIA and community colleges.

Discussion

The “garbage can” model of organizational choice – described by Cohen, March and Olsen (1972) and further developed by John Kingdon (2003) offered a useful theoretical lens through which to discuss the findings. In this model the policy environment is described as “organized anarchy,” – a mix of multiple streams of problems, solutions, and politics pouring into a garbage can. The outcome depends on the
mix and is a result of the level of resources, time, energy, and attention an issue or problem receives (Garson 2008).

Kingdon (2003) adapts this line of thought to better understand agenda setting in the federal government and why some issues rise on the governmental agenda and others do not. In his version, the policy environment is an organized anarchy of policy problems, solutions, and advocates. Three major process streams, (1) problem recognition, (2) the formation of policy proposals, and (3) politics; are constantly swirling around in this policy environment. When these streams are coupled together at critical junctures to address problems or issues that is when agenda change happens or issues rise on the agenda (Kingdon, p. 86-87).

Viewed through Kingdon’s theoretical lens of agenda setting, WIA is major federal legislation that seeks to put in place a workforce system that meets the needs of the country. The problem, and as the literature revealed, the role of community colleges in the implementation of WIA is not well understood in the workforce system.

Regarding the policy stream, this study concludes, as does Katsinas (2012) that community colleges may be considered providers of workforce training, but as a matter of policy community colleges are not formally recognized as such in WIA state plans or in federal WIA fund allocations. Community colleges are referenced in all the state WIA plans reviewed in this study, but the language stops short of creating a formal preference for community colleges in state plans and federal workforce legislation.

Regarding the political stream, and discussed in the introduction of this study, the national mood is supportive of community colleges. Community colleges are seen by state and federal policy makers on both sides of the isle, by governors, and the current
administration as important vehicles for the delivery of workforce training and economic development. This political support for community colleges provides a policy window for community colleges to rise on the governmental agenda on both the state and federal level. Community colleges are uniquely positioned to receive both local and federal support and funding.

Kingdon labels an opportunity for pushing one’s proposals a “policy window” – open when the conditions to push a given issue or topic higher on the policy agenda are ripe. The window is only open for a short time, and then the window closes, allowing opportunities to come and go. If policy entrepreneurs (those willing to invest time, resources and energy into an issue for a return) have an understanding of the process, and they are able to recognize these policy windows, then an issue or subject has a better chance of making it to the agenda (Kingdon 88).

In applying Kingdon’s model to this study, this researcher suggests that a policy window is open for community colleges to rise on the governmental agenda and to better define their role in the public workforce system infrastructure. Workforce training is at the forefront of the domestic policy agenda as evidenced by the passage WIOA and the signing of the bill by President Obama on July 22, 2014. This is the first time Congress has passed major workforce legislation in fifteen years.

Great opportunity is open for SAEs, community college stakeholders and other policy entrepreneurs to weigh in with the DOL on the best way to utilize community colleges in the implementation of the WIOA. Most provisions of the act will take effect on July 1, 2015 and the DOL is seeking and inviting recommendations.
The DOL has indicated that input from the state and local workforce leaders and practitioners, as well as other stakeholders, is critical to the success of WIOA implementation. DOL, in collaboration with the Departments of Education and Health and Human Services, “will provide workforce system partners and stakeholders with opportunities to provide input in-person and virtually throughout the implementation period (http://www.doleta.gov/WIOA/).”

The SAEs are policy entrepreneurs advocating for community colleges on both the state and federal level. Based on Kingdon’s garbage can model of governmental agenda setting SAEs can help raise the role of community colleges on the workforce policy agenda by recognizing the policy window that is open for community colleges, and then pushing the community college agenda on both the state and federal level.

The results of the study revealed that SAEs perceive that increased funding is needed for community colleges to provide training in the health sciences, engineering and information technology. The literature revealed that these are high growth industries but that the nation is under producing the talent needed to fill the job openings in this sector. Community colleges can help train workers for these in-demand high growth jobs but it will take a deliberate, concerted effort from community colleges to help clarify the need.

The state workforce plans affirmed that community colleges need to link closely with the business sector in the implementation of WIA. The White House Summit on Community Colleges and the Workforce highlighted the need for community colleges and the business sector to collaborate. The coupling of the government sector, business sector and community college sector could open doors for community colleges to be better utilized in the workforce system.
The findings of this study indicate that SAEs perceive that WIA is communicated well in some states but not in others. In order for the community colleges to be better utilized these communication issues need to be addressed. SAEs have a unique opportunity to participate in the DOL comment period regarding implementation of WIOA, and to suggest strategies and tactics to better improve communication.

The findings of this study indicate that SAEs feel that community colleges should have a greater role in the implementation of WIA, but based on this study there is a lack of consensus among SAEs on what that role should be. The state workforce plans affirm that community colleges are expected to play various roles in the implementation of WIA, but that role is not clearly defined in the plans either. In order for SAEs to advance the role of community colleges in the new WIOA which takes effect in July 2015, SAEs need to reach consensus on a viable role for community colleges in the workforce system.

The findings of this study indicate that a unified advocacy strategy among the SAEs with NCSACE membership does not exist. Advocacy is a focus for some SAEs and not for others. As community colleges are competing for scarce federal and state dollars a coordinated advocacy effort among the SAEs should become a priority. Based on Kingdon’s model, SAEs as policy entrepreneurs have a better opportunity to help raise the profile of community colleges on the federal workforce policy agenda by working together and developing a unified advocacy strategy then going it alone during this open window of opportunity.

Implications for Practice
The key findings of this study have implications for people interested in higher education, workforce policy and the community college movement. The results of this research provide an aggregate snapshot of the perceptions that SAEs hold regarding the role of community colleges in the implementation of WIA. SAEs can use this information to aide in making decisions on how they wish to proceed in addressing the role of community colleges the workforce system, and how much time, energy and resources to invest in advocacy efforts.

Other policy entrepreneurs within the higher education and workforce arena can also use the results of this study to better collaborate with SAEs on education and workforce policy. Collaborating partners include elected and appointed public officials on the state and federal level, DOL, Employment and Training Administration (ETA) staff, community college presidents and trustees, national associations such as AACC and ACCT, state and local WIBS, and representatives of the business sector.

A better understanding of the perceptions of SAEs regarding WIA enhances the possibility that community colleges are utilized to their fullest potential in the workforce system. These findings are timely as WIA was amended with the enactment of WIOA and major provisions of WIOA Act will take effect on July 1, 2015.

**Recommendations for Further Research**

Additional empirical research is needed to quantify the link between community colleges and the workforce system. For example, currently no centralized state or federal data base exists to track the participation or outcomes of those accessing WIA services through community colleges. This data would provide a useful way to measure the effectiveness of community colleges in the workforce system.
Another recommendation for further research is to examine if WIOA should mandate that community colleges serve as local WIB operators. Research is needed to determine if local WIBS operated by community colleges are more effective in serving displaced or unemployed workers than WIBS in which community colleges are simply providers. This data currently does not exist.

Another topic for recommended research is to examine if WIOA should mandate a formal preference for community colleges in the workforce system as training providers. Katsinas (2012) reported that respondents by a better than 10 to one margin felt that business leaders expect community colleges to train workers in public workforce programs, yet training funds from WIA for community colleges were exhausted. Likewise, this study found that SAEs perceive that business leaders see community colleges as primary providers of workforce training. Business leaders could be key allies for community colleges on the workforce policy agenda. Additional qualitative and quantitative research is needed on the perceptions of business leaders regarding the role of community colleges in the workforce system.

Funding to expand high cost high demand programs in health sciences, engineering and information technology presents another area for recommended research. SAEs felt strongly that more funding was needed for these programs, but little information surfaced regarding specific levels of funding needed or required.

This study was the first time that SAEs were surveyed regarding the role of community colleges in WIA, hence no data was available by which to compare the results. Another recommendation for future research is to conduct this survey on a regular basis to provide longitudinal data. This would enable the perceptions of SAEs to be
tracked over time. It would allow researchers to control for certain variables to determine if those variables impact the perceptions of SAEs regarding community colleges and WIOA. For example, these variables include the way community colleges are governed in a particular state, the role of community colleges in the one-stop system, the perceptions of business leaders regarding community colleges, smaller states as compared to larger states or regions of the country, and states with greater urban centers compared to more rural states.

**Conclusions**

Based on the results of this research and Kingdon’s theoretical model on agenda setting this study concludes that a policy window is open for community colleges to better define their role on the workforce policy agenda, and that SAEs are a group of policy entrepreneurs who can play a vital role in this effort. As policy makers, business leaders, and millions of students turn to community colleges in unprecedented ways, SAEs can help define the community college role by recognizing this window and helping to facilitate the coupling of the various streams of problems, policies and politics to advance the community college agenda.

This research is significant because prior to this study, no empirical data existed on SAEs, a group of policy entrepreneurs who advocate for community colleges on both the state and federal level. This study is timely as the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 was amended with the passage of WIOA in the spring of 2014 – the first major public workforce legislation since 1998.

Regarding the research questions, 1) What are the perceptions of SAEs regarding the role of community colleges in the implementation of WIA; 2) What should the role of
community colleges be in the implementation of WIA according to SAEs; and 3) How do SAEs advocate on behalf of community colleges regarding the implementation of WIA, the data provides a cross-sectional estimate of SAE perceptions as an aggregate. The results of this research indicate that:

- SAEs perceive that formal responsibility to administer WIA programs is not assigned to community colleges but that community colleges should have a greater role in the implementation of WIA. The data from this study, however, does not indicate consensus on what that should be. This researcher recommends that SAEs work together to reach a consensus. The DOL comment period for the implementation of WIOA offers an excellent opportunity for SAEs to be at the table and weigh in on the role of community colleges in the public workforce system. This could have a major impact for community college funding and workforce training for years to come.

- SAEs perceive that increased funding is needed to expand high cost high demand programs in health sciences, engineering technology and informational technology. This is not surprising but further research is needed to quantify this finding. These are high growth industries that provide living wage jobs with room for advancement. Community Colleges could be key providers to train individuals for careers in these industries which will help drive the economy for the foreseeable future. This researcher recommends that SAEs advocate for increased funding in these high demand high growth program areas.

- SAEs perceive that business leaders see community colleges as primary providers of workforce training. Business leaders often lament that they have job openings
but they cannot find the talent to fill the available jobs. This study suggests that community colleges can be key partners with business to train individuals for available jobs. It is the recommendation of this researcher that SAEs work to develop strategic partnerships with business leaders in their respective states to promote the use of community colleges as preferred providers of workforce training.

- SAEs perceive that state workforce plans are communicated well and understood in some states but not in others. Every state workforce plan references community colleges as having a role in the workforce system but these roles are not clearly defined. This study concludes as does Katsinas (2012) that creating formal preferences for community colleges in the federal workforce system as a matter of policy “deserves serious consideration” by state and federal policy makers. This researcher recommends that SAEs work closely with the statewide workforce investment boards to better communicate state workforce plans and that the role of community colleges in these plans be better defined.

- SAEs have divergent opinions and levels of participation regarding advocacy related to WIA and community colleges making it difficult for community colleges to rise on the governmental agenda. This researcher recommends that a coordinated, unified advocacy strategy by the SAEs on the state and federal level would enhance the role of community colleges on the workforce policy agenda. Kingdon’s theoretical model on agenda setting suggests that change happens when people recognize problems, generate policy proposals, and then engage in political activities that support this change. This researcher suggests that SAEs are a group of
policy entrepreneurs who can help facilitate and influence the role of community colleges on the workforce policy agenda by coming together as a unified voice. SAEs are uniquely positioned with connections to state government and federal government. On the state level SAEs are active with community college leaders, community college presidents, boards of trustees, state agencies and governors’ offices. On the federal level SAEs are active with influential associations such as AACC and ACCT, and have access to congressional representatives in both the House and Senate, as well as agency staff. Since WIOA is federal legislation that is implemented on the state level, SAEs can play a key advocacy role for community colleges on the workforce policy agenda by connecting the key players on both the state and federal level.

Focusing events such as economic conditions, changes in policy, or shifts in the political climate of the nation can facilitate change. Sometimes these variables, or what Kingdon (2003) calls focusing events, converge simultaneously to create the conditions that bring about change.

Examples of focusing events that place community colleges at the forefront of the higher education and workforce agenda include: the surge in community college enrollments over the last five years, the increasing need to have education beyond high school to secure living wage employment, President Obama’s initiative to raise educational attainment and the passage of the WIOA. These events coupled with the ability of community colleges to respond quickly to local workforce needs in a recovering economy suggest that the climate is ripe for community colleges to rise on the governmental agenda.
This study concludes that a policy window is open for community colleges to rise on the governmental agenda to address the workforce needs of the nation. Policy windows are opened when separate streams of problems, policies and politics come together at critical times to address a compelling problem (Kingdon, p. 194).

The potential for community college to raise educational attainment and train the workforce for the emerging economy has yet to be fully realized. There is a sense of urgency however, as the agenda setting process is a fluid one. Policy windows come and go, priorities change and issues evolve. By recognizing and taking advantage of the policy window open for community colleges, SAEs represent one group of policy entrepreneurs that can help define the role of community colleges in the workforce system – helping community colleges reach their full potential in training and educating the American workforce of today and tomorrow.
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Appendix A

Introductory e-mail to State Association Chief Executives

From: Michael Hansen
To: National Council of State Association Chief Executives
Cc: Cox, Andrew
Subject: Survey Request
Date: Monday, February 03, 2014 12:50:31 PM

Dear Fellow Community College State Association Executives:

A doctoral student from the University of Toledo named Andrew Cox is conducting research on the role of community colleges in the implementation of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998. Mr. Cox is seeking to survey current members of the National Council of State Association Chief Executives (NCSACE) to aid in this research. It is a brief survey and should only take 10-15 minutes to complete. Participation is voluntary and results will be presented in aggregate format. No personal identifiers will be used.

Your participation would be greatly appreciated and may help policy makers, community college leaders and workforce practitioners better understand the role of community colleges in the implementation of WIA. To complete the survey, please click on this link: https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/wiasurvey1

The deadline to complete the survey is Friday, February 14 at 5:00 p.m. If you have any questions about this research, Andrew Cox may be reached at 216-987-5849 or andrew.cox@tri-c.edu. You also may be receiving a follow up phone call from Andrew regarding the survey.

MJ Dolan
Iowa Association of Community College Trustees
President, National Council of State Association Chief Executives

Mike Hansen
Michigan Community College Association
Past President, National Council of State Association Chief Executives
Appendix B

Electronic Survey of Community College State Association Chief Executives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Workforce Investment Act</th>
<th>Adult Research – Informed Consent Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Principal Investigator:** David Meabon, Ph.D., (faculty advisor), phone: (419) 530 - 2666; Andrew Cox, Doctoral Candidate, phone: (216) 987-5849

**Purpose:** You are invited to participate in the research project entitled, *A National Study on the Role of Community Colleges in the Implementation of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998: Perceptions of State Association Chief Executives* which is being conducted at the University of Toledo under the direction of Dr. David Meabon and Andrew Cox. The purpose of this study is to gain a better understanding of the role of community colleges in the implementation of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 and to improve workforce system infrastructure.

**Description of Procedures:** This research study consists of an electronic survey distributed to community college state association chief executives who are members of the National Council of State Association Chief Executives (NCSACE). The survey contains a Likert-type rating scale and open ended questions. It should take between 10 and 15 minutes to complete.

After you have completed your participation, the research team will debrief you about the data, theory and research area under study and answer any questions you may have about the research.

**Potential Risks:** There are minimal risks to participation in this study, including loss of confidentiality. The results of this study will be presented in aggregate format and no personal identifiers will be used.

**Potential Benefits:** The direct benefit to you if you participate in this research is that you may gain a better understanding of the topical area of the research. Others who may be interested and impacted by this research include policy makers, community college leaders and workforce practitioners.

**Confidentiality:** The researchers will make every effort to prevent anyone who is not on the research team from knowing that you provided this information, or what that information is. Although we will make every effort to protect your
confidentiality, there is a low risk that this might be breached.

**Voluntary Participation:** Your participation is in this study is voluntary and your refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled and will not affect your relationship with The University of Toledo. In addition, you may discontinue participation at any time without any penalty or loss of benefits.

**Contact Information:** Before you decide to accept this invitation to take part in this study, you may ask any questions about the research. If you have questions at any time before, during or after your participation you should contact a member of the research team. David Meabon can be reached at (419) 530 – 2666 or Andrew Cox can be reached at (216) 987-5849.

If you have questions beyond those answered by the research team or about your rights as a research participant the Chairperson of the SBE Institutional Review Board may be contacted through the Office of Research on the main campus at (419) 530-2844.

**Workforce Investment Act**

*1. By selecting Yes below, you are stating that you have read and accept the information above and are giving your consent to participate in this research. You are also confirming that you are 18 years old or over.*

☐ Yes  
☐ No

2. **Name of Participant**

____________________________________________________

3. **Date**

____________________________________________________
### Workforce Investment Act

4. Please select the response that most closely corresponds with your perception as to the importance of each item below in your role as a leader of a community college state association.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral/Don't Know</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. In my state, formal responsibility to administer programs funded by the WIA is assigned to community colleges.</td>
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<td>2. In my state, the role of community colleges in the implementation of the WIA is well understood.</td>
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<td>3. In my state, unemployed workers can attend community colleges tuition-free for re-training purposes.</td>
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<td>4. Increased numbers of unemployed/displaced workers have exhausted available workforce training dollars via WIA and other sources for colleges in my state.</td>
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<td>5. Concerns over high numbers of unemployed workers are pushing community colleges to offer or expand &quot;quick&quot; job training programs in non-credit areas in my state.</td>
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<td>6. Funding is needed to expand high cost programs in areas such as health sciences, engineering technology, and information technology in my state.</td>
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<td>7. Business leaders see community colleges as primary workforce training providers.</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Community colleges are a formal preferred provider of WIA programs in my state.</td>
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### Workforce Investment Act

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Options</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9. Increasing attainment of industry-recognized credentials is a priority in my state.</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. In the recession, my state’s community colleges have seen more enrollment growth in transfer programs than in higher cost career-focused for-credit programs.</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. In my state, funding is insufficient to hire full-time faculty to staff programs in high wage careers/fields including nursing, engineering technology, etc.</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. The statewide workforce investment plan is clearly communicated in my state.</td>
<td>☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐</td>
</tr>
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</table>

5. **Which organizational structure best describes community college coordination in your state?** (Please select all that apply)
   - ☐ separate state-level community college board
   - ☐ community colleges have same coordinating board as K-12, separate from universities.
   - ☐ community colleges are under the same coordinating board as the universities.
   - ☐ there is no state-level community college coordination in my state

6. **Which organizational structure best describes community college governance in your state?**
   - ☐ local boards of trustees govern community colleges in my state
   - ☐ a single state-level board governs community colleges in my state
   - ☐ the same board that governs community colleges governs some or all universities in my state
   - ☐ the same board that coordinates K-12 governs community colleges in my state

7. **What should the role of community colleges be in the implementation of the Workforce Investment Act?**

8. **Do you as an executive of a community college state association, advocate on behalf of community colleges regarding the implementation of the Workforce Investment Act? If yes, please describe your advocacy in this regard.**
10. Please provide any additional thoughts you have on the role of community colleges in the implementation of the Workforce Investment Act: