How Technical College Chief Fundraising Officers Build Professional Capacity:

A Narrative Inquiry

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ABSTRACT

Chief fundraising officers at technical colleges within the Technical College System of Georgia face complex challenges, including scarce resources, small staff sizes, and a lack of formal training. The purpose of the study was to understand how chief fundraising officers use self-directed learning experiences and learning projects to build professional capacity. I conducted three 90-minute semi-structured interviews with four participants, recounting how these professionals navigate their complex roles through continuous learning and adaptation. The study highlights the chief fundraising officers' strategic engagements with professional development and their innovative approaches to leveraging limited resources. I described four key themes: (a) learning and living in community and the importance of peer networks; (b) unrecognized efforts and the multifaceted nature of their roles; (c) resource optimization and how they leverage limited support; and (d) the necessity of continuous learning in their field of work. These findings suggest strategies for enhancing fundraising operations in 2-year colleges and may inform administrative and budgetary decisions. By exploring the specific learning projects and learning experiences that facilitate professional growth, the study contributes to a deeper understanding of the professional development needs of chief fundraising officers in the technical college sector, offering insights for policy-making and future research.

Keywords: chief fundraising officers, technical colleges, higher education fundraising

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"The less I seek my source for some definitive, the closer I am to fine." (Indigo Girls, 1989)

DEDICATION

For the students—

It was and will always be for you.

Chapter 1

Two-year institutions play an essential role in the higher education landscape. Public community and technical colleges have a long-standing history of serving the disenfranchised and disadvantaged of America, including those without a secondary education, differently-abled individuals, racial minorities, and those with limited basic adult education (Lowry & Thomas-Anderson, 2017). Budd and Hawkins (2002) suggested 2-year institutions are best positioned to serve the local community workforce needs and maintain America's competitive global economy. Despite the demonstrated importance of these institutions, community and technical colleges have received less and less funding, year after year.

Operating capital deficits in 2-year college settings are documented through decades of research (Chakrabarti et al., 2020; Lingo et al., 2021). Two-year colleges traditionally have smaller enrollments than their 4-year counterparts due partly to the fact that many 2-year college students are considered part-time and because 4-year colleges and universities can offer graduate programs that increase overall enrollment (Yuen, 2023). Ironically, an increase in student enrollment can create a greater financial crisis for technical colleges, as only one source of revenue—tuition and fees—increases while more resources, technology, and staff are needed to serve the increased number of students (Barnes, 2015). State and federal funding comprise, on average, only 41% of technical colleges' budgets nationwide, forcing them to find alternative sources of revenue (Lowry & Thomas-Anderson, 2017).

After the 2008 economic recession, community and technical colleges received the most substantial federal decrease in resource allocation per student compared to their 4-year research university counterparts (Dowd & Shieh, 2014). In 2008, the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) published the findings of a survey of the National State Directors of Community Colleges. Respondents to the study indicated that tuition increases would continue to be an essential strategy to offset state and federal budget cuts. Also, respondents stated that rural community colleges faced the most significant budgetary constraints nationwide during this time of economic upheaval and uncertainty. In 2020, the Center for American Progress documented an estimated $78 billion per-student-revenue gap between 4-year and 2-year institutions, so that for each student enrolled in a community or technical college, the college receives about $8,800 less than a 4-year university would receive for the very same student in their classroom.

In response to these budgetary strains, public colleges established between the late 1980s and the modern-day "other structures by which to lead their fundraising efforts, such as independent foundations" (Ciampa, 2009, p. 13). The Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) defines these types of organizations as "separate 501(c)(3) charitable organizations that exist solely to support students, research, and learning at a college, university, university system, or college unit" (2023, para. 1). As of 2023, CASE reported 900 foundations affiliated with community colleges nationwide. These foundations can serve as one source of diversified revenue (Bock & Sullins, 1987).

Since the 2000s, technical college leadership has placed greater emphasis on fundraising. From fiscal year 2009 to fiscal year 2013, for example, 2-year college fundraising increased by 37.5% on average (Flahaven & Glover, 2020). Technical colleges have relied more heavily on their foundations and chief fundraising officers to "salvage [their] institutions from financial crises or pull downtrodden institutions from the vice grips of a financial abyss" (McWherter, 2005, p. 1). The very nature of a college-affiliated foundation allows it more flexibility and less regulation than the public college. These foundations can assist with student scholarships, programmatic and academic support, equipment purchases, and operating costs (Cohen et al., 2014). Technical college foundations seem well-positioned to offset the inevitable budget shortfall.

However, a strange dichotomy exists between technical college foundations and their successes. According to the Education Advisory Board, now known as EAB, community and technical colleges serve 41% of all undergraduate students in the U.S. (Arnim, 2021). However, only 1.5% of the funding raised in higher education supports 2-year institutions (Arnim, 2021). Some scholars have argued that community and technical college fundraising practices are still in their infancy despite most of their foundations existing for nearly 40 years (Pinchback, 2011; Scutari, 2019). The fundraising departments of community and technical colleges have grown since the early 2000s but remain understaffed (Scutari, 2019). Many 2-year colleges have failed to track their alumni, and even fewer have engaged them in the institution's fundraising (Akin, 2005; Marcus, 2013). A noted "lack of bureaucracy within community colleges" can make giving easier (Armin, 2021, para. 20). Unfortunately, that trait can also be limiting in that it restricts community colleges in the way of professional services and infrastructure comparable to 4-year research institutions. Technical college foundations are unique and carry some nuances that are not yet well understood.

What accounts for the disconnect between theory and reality in community and technical college fundraising? There is a gap in public funding for 2-year colleges, and private funding via fundraising can help fill this gap. However, limitations are imposed on the people charged with this work, the chief fundraising officers (Carrier, 2002). Fundraising is a relatively new venture in 2-year colleges (Carrier, 2002; Jones, 2007). Further complicating this situation, there are few pathways to formal education and training for the role (Breeze, 2017; Farwell et al., 2019). The chief fundraising officers in this setting traditionally have a smaller staff (Shaker & Nathan, 2017), and with fewer staff, the officers must often play multiple roles simultaneously, limiting their capacity (Jones, 2007; Stevenson, 2001). This study questions that the disconnect is because this role has not been codified as a necessary function of the 2-year institutions, demonstrated by a lack of investment in and understanding of the chief fundraising officer's professional capacity (Jones, 2007; Shaker & Nathan, 2017; Stevenson, 2001). Without this role, the institution is limited in diversifying its revenue sources, complicating already thinly stretched budgets (Barnes, 2015; Kittel, 2014; Phelan, 2014). With limited resources, the institution can serve fewer students, directly influencing the institution's mission (Barnes, 2015; Kittel, 2014; Phelan, 2014).

Statement of the Problem

No matter the specific setting, financial constraints on a college or university's budget create a financial strain for the institution and its students individually, as fewer scholarships and grants are available to them (Long, 2007). Although private funding could help alleviate some of this stress, foundations and chief fundraising officers have been wildly underutilized (LaBeouf, 2003). Technical college chief fundraising officers often lack the resources to upskill their knowledge base, expand their teams, or have the time to participate in self-directed learning projects to grow their knowledge, skills, and abilities (Farwell et al., 2019). Without these officers working at total capacity, the institution and the students suffer financially (LaBeouf, 2003).

Fundraisers and their work are often overlooked and misunderstood. Breeze (2017) suggested this understanding gap had three leading causes: (a) fundraising primarily happened behind the scenes; (b) the work was extensive, but the details were unknown and not immediately apparent; and (c) fundraising can appear as a volunteer's task, which could undermine the professionalism of the career. Breeze (2017) argued that understanding fundraisers and their work was necessary not only to re-balance the current focus on donors and patterns of giving but also to give fundraising the "analytic attention" (p. 12) it deserved to become more successful and respected. Decision-makers (legislators) and academia (college leadership) have neglected to understand the complexity of technical college fundraising. (LaBeouf, 2003). Breeze (2017) stated, "There remains a disconnect between understanding the importance of the role and valuing the people filling that role" (p. 23). With ever-increasing pressure on community and technical colleges to fundraise private support, looking at the people who garner said support becomes imperative.

Most literature has focused on fundraising strategies and donor motivations, leaving a gap in understanding the individuals facilitating the process (Farwell et al., 2019). Research has focused on the external variables that contributed to fundraising success rather than the impact of investments in fundraising infrastructures such as personnel (Carrier, 2002; Hall, 2002; Jackson & Glass, 2000; Parker, 2019). This lack of information has restricted understanding of the fundraiser's strategic role in institutional success.

In developing a literature review, I discovered a scarcity of qualitative data reflecting nationwide community and technical college fundraisers, and I could find no formal data for those working in Georgia (Ciampa, 2009; Greenelsh, 2006; LaBeouf, 2003; McWherter, 2005; Pinchback, 2011). Most of the current literature is in the form of case studies in the context of a specific institution, with very little attention given to the chief fundraising officer individually (Pinchback, 2011). There is a gap in the literature regarding the professional experiences of chief fundraising officers in higher education, specifically in 2-year college settings (Parker, 2019; Shaker & Nathan, 2017). Factors such as lack of historical reference (Parker, 2019), the nuances of fundraising (Breeze, 2017), and fewer people in the profession due to "consistent underinvestment" (Parker, 2019, p. 38) influence the lack of literature and understanding for the profession itself.

The research findings demonstrated how college leadership can better support fundraising efforts through directed learning experiences and programs and through indirect means that facilitate learning and success, such as providing administrative support or time for self-directed learning. Strategic and thoughtful attention to understanding the learning experiences of these roles might produce better fundraising results, ultimately impacting budgetary outcomes and student recruitment, retention, and graduation rates.

Significance of the Study

The chief fundraising officer's work directly impacts and influences an institution's ability to serve students (Pinchback, 2011). Private funding often provides student scholarships, additional faculty and programmatic funding, and capital outlay support. Additionally, private funding can underwrite shortfalls to the overall institutional budget; without it, the institution may be in a poor financial position (Carter, 2009). Research has shown that investing in staffing at 2-year college foundations improves fundraising efforts and that more attention to chief fundraising officers' staff sizes and professional development is necessary (Stevenson, 2001). Investing in the infrastructure of technical college foundations, including the chief fundraising officers, would strengthen college budgets and recruitment, retention, and graduation rates. Fully utilizing the potential of the college foundation would allow 2-year colleges to remain affordable and accessible by providing diversified revenue sources. Stevenson (2001) found, for example, that 2-year college chief fundraising officers believed their foundation was contributing directly to the college's mission of "providing accessible and affordable education" (p. 77).

Recently, there has been a renewed policy focus on student persistence and completion, a strategic initiative that could be directly impacted through the work of private fundraising (Levin & Kater, 2018). Dey and Hurtado (1995) described a reciprocal and dynamic relationship between students and their college, one that the budget can influence. Community college foundations help "advance the undergraduate educational access and quality" (Greenelsh, 2006, p. 12) essential to student's ability to thrive. The drop-out rate of community college students is higher than their 4-year university co-eds, often because of an inability to finance their education (Rhodes et al., 2008). Giva (2024) found that students who receive some type of financial support, such as that provided by a college foundation, persist at a higher rate than students without. Student scholarships like those provided by donations to community college foundations help propel students toward program completion and graduation (Martin-Osorio, 2009). Fundraising professionals' work remains a critical strategy for college success (Roueche et al., 2002).

A lack of research and knowledge of fundraising in 2-year colleges only compounds the challenges chief fundraising officers face. A lack of understanding could breed a cycle of misappropriation of time, energy, and resources (Sunderman, 2007). Many community and technical colleges do not participate in national surveys like those provided by the Voluntary Support for Education (VSE) and the AACC. Without this data, it is challenging for researchers and practitioners to benchmark and set pace with other institutions (Akin, 2005). By examining the learning experiences of the person responsible for fundraising at these institutions, leadership could better support them in these roles, making the entire effort more successful. Additionally, incoming or life-long professionals could use these narratives as guides for learning to do their work or to improve job performance. This research could provide a formative evaluation of the existing resources and practices of the fundraisers so that improvement may occur in addition to understanding and appreciating the learning experiences of these professionals (Maxwell, 2013). As LaBeouf (2003) argued, “Without statistics that illuminate community college foundation activity regularly, researchers cannot comment on these education foundations with any reliability” (p. 4).

By better understanding these experiences and the meaning these individuals may make of them, leaders can make better-informed decisions to encourage the success of these fundraisers. Patterson et al. (2012) explained that community and technical colleges must invest in fundraising comparable to their 4-year counterparts if they aspire to real financial gains and successes. Community and technical colleges are well-positioned to fundraise but lack the infrastructure to make it happen on an economy of scale (Ciampa, 2009).

Purpose of the Study

By exploring the specific learning projects and learning experiences that facilitate professional growth, the study focused on gaining a deeper understanding of the professional development needs of chief fundraising officers in the technical college sector, offering insights for policy-making and future research. The purpose of the study was to understand how chief fundraising officers use self-directed learning experiences and learning projects to build professional capacity.

For this study, I define self-directed learning as both the process of how individuals engage and direct their own learning, as well as the characteristics of those individuals engaging in self-directed learning (Brockett & Hiemstra, 1991; Stockdale, 2003; Stockdale & Brockett, 2011). One way adult learners can embark on a self-directed learning experience is by undertaking a learning project. For this study, I subscribe to Tough's (1971) definition of a learning project as a deliberate exercise or undertaking to gain knowledge or expertise (Tough, 1971). I define professional capacity building as "the continuum of professional learning that results in increased knowledge, skills, and application of leadership" (Zugelder, 2021, p. 25). To best achieve the purpose of this study, I identified one central research question and three sub-questions.

Research Questions

This study's primary research question was: *How do chief fundraising officers use learning experiences and projects to build professional capacity?* The following sub-questions allowed for greater clarity around the chief fundraising officers' learning experiences that increase professional capacity:

(a) What are the learning experiences and projects of chief fundraising officers in the Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG)?

(b) What do these learning experiences and projects demonstrate about the professional capacity of chief fundraising officers in the TCSG?

(c) How can the learning experiences and projects of the chief fundraising officers in the TCSG help improve the professional capacity of 2-year college fundraisers?

Conceptual Framework

Maxwell (2013) described a conceptual framework as informing a research design and study based on four primary constructs: the researcher's experiential knowledge, existing theory and research, pilot and exploratory research, and thought experiments.

Experiential Knowledge

Maxwell (2013) explained the subjectivity of qualitative research by writing that "any view is a view from some perspective and is therefore shaped by the location (social and theoretical) and lens of the observer" (p. 46). I subscribed to Glesne and Peshkin's (1992) philosophy that my "subjectivity is the basis for the story that I am able to tell"

(Glesne & Peshkin, 1992, p. 104), and I considered it vital to disclose this relationship in the research.

During my graduate studies at the University of South Carolina, I had the opportunity to take a class with Dr. Jim Hudgins, the former President of the South Carolina Technical College System. This class was an Introduction to Community and Technical Colleges and my first time being mindful of my exposure to this setting. Dr. Hudgins made the content come to life. He had students visit technical colleges and interview the senior staff and presidents. Students in the class presented pertinent topics in higher education through the lens of technical and community college administration. He brought technical college students and instructors to class to share their experiences with us. One afternoon, I met with Dr. Hudgins and told him I was interested in a career at a technical college. He encouraged me to experience the work firsthand, so I did, with two consecutive semesters of internships in enrollment management at Midlands Technical College. I quickly developed a passion for 2-year institutions and set my sights on working within one as soon as I graduated.

However, I had already had plenty of interactions with my local community and technical colleges that I had taken for granted. I had previously interacted with my hometown community college in high school and as an undergraduate student when I took college courses. My mother was an adjunct tennis instructor and summer camp director there. My younger brother earned his general educational development (GED) diploma from Albany Technical College a few years later. Though he never finished his associate degree, my father attended a technical college in Florida before moving to Georgia for a successful 38-year career in a manufacturing plant. Despite not realizing it, my life experiences had already interwoven 2-year institutions into my understanding of higher education, allowing me to develop an appreciation for 2-year institutions long before my graduate program.

While in graduate school, I had the opportunity to work for the university's alumni association, providing administrative support to the chief fundraising officer. Similar to my experience with 2-year colleges, I had had plenty of brushes with fundraising and development, but this was my first formal introduction. I immediately fell in love with the work. It was the perfect combination of competition and excitement. The job gave me the feeling of being of service to others and working for the greater good. I realized I wanted to work in a 2-year college in a fundraising capacity. In 2016, I accepted a job at the Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG) as a coordinator at their foundation. I served as the executive director for the West Georgia Technical College Foundation and the Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG) until the fall of 2022.

I left the system because I became frustrated with the lack of resources and professional development provided to my colleagues and me within TCSG. My fundraising work at TCSG was unlike my experience at the University of South Carolina. My experience was unique compared to my University System of Georgia (USG) counterparts. My observations were that the TCSG was not yet ready to invest in the professional development of its chief fundraising officers because the return on that investment had not yet been fully demonstrated. My intention with this research was to describe the impact of the learning experiences of chief fundraising officers on their professional practices to help inform leadership's decisions on their investments in these roles. I am aware that my experiences are solely mine and might not be reflected in the experiences of those I interviewed in this study. From the onset of this research, I have been mindful not to over-insert myself as a participant in the work while still respecting that I cannot be wholly removed from it. I concur with Maxwell's (2013) bricolage of ontological realism—"the belief that there is a real world that exists independently of our perceptions and theories" (Maxwell, 2013, p. 43)—and epistemological constructivism—"our understanding of this world is inevitably our construction, rather than a purely objective perception of reality, and no such construction can claim absolute truth" (p. 43).

Existing Theory and Research

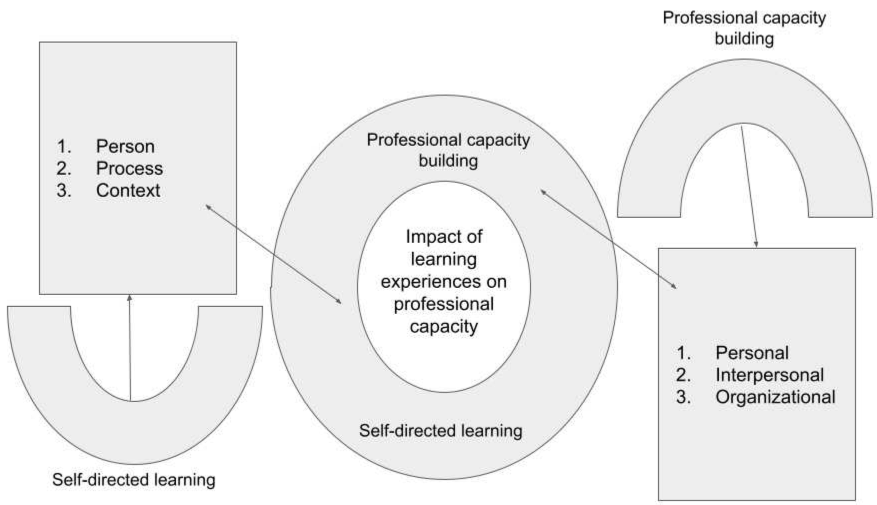
In preparing for this study, I read and created an annotated bibliography for 21 dissertations that studied topics adjacent to my research. I chose Breeze's *The New Fundraisers* as a mentor research study to borrow ideas and organization. I received Breeze's permission to reference her work, specifically her interview guide, in my research. This correspondence can be found in Appendix A. More of the existing literature that influenced this study is presented in Chapter 2, and significant consideration was given to the "theories and perspectives of those studied, rather than relying entirely on established theoretical views" (Maxwell, 2013, p. 53).

The purpose of the study was to understand how chief fundraising officers use self-directed learning experiences and learning projects to build professional capacity. I defined experience as "something always in the making, being shaped and reshaped over time, as new situations are encountered" (Clandinin et al., 2016, p. 28). In the context of learning, this means "the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience" (Kolb, 1984, p. 38). For this research, self-directed learning is defined as the act of people engaging in and managing their own learning, as well as the traits of those people (Brockett & Hiemstra, 1991; Stockdale, 2003; Stockdale & Brockett, 2011). Learning projects are defined following Tough's (1971) definition of a deliberate exercise or undertaking to gain knowledge or expertise utilized. Professional capacity is "the continuum of professional learning that results in increased knowledge, skills, and application of leadership" (Zugelder, 2021, p. 25).

In preparation for this study, I sought theories and research to understand better self-directed learning experiences, learning projects, and professional capacity. This study's most influential theoretical works were Hiemstra and Brockett's (2012) person-process-context model for self-directed learning and Mitchell and Sackney's (2011) professional capacity building. I applied these theories within the context of Herrero and Kramer's (2020) model of fundraising-as-knowing in practice. I created a conceptual map illustrating the intersectionality of these two theories in describing the impact of the learning experiences of chief fundraising officers on their professional capacity (see Figure 1).

Figure 1

Conceptual Map-Intersectionality



Adult Learners and Experiential Learning

Tough (2002) found that 73% of all adult learning was initiated by the learners themselves. He described 80% of all adult learning as informal, which is learning experiences not planned for by an institution or organization. Most informal learning occurs in relationships with others or in the community. Tough (2002) found that "there may actually be more social interaction in informal learning than there is in classroom learning" (Tough, 2002, p. 2). He also found that "people often learn in order to perform a task better" (p. 3), that is, not only to understand the technicalities and basics of a function but also to perform it with a degree of precision and improvement.

Experiential learning theory (ELT) provides a nonlinear and multi-level model where experience plays a significant role in the learning process of adults (Smith, n.d.). Kolb (1984) defined learning in this way as "the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience" (p. 38). Luckmann (1996) described experiential learning as "a process through which a learner constructs knowledge, skills, and value from direct experiences" (p. 7). All learning experiences are unique to the individual (Beard & Wilson, 2002).

Self-Directed Learning Through Learning Projects

The purpose of the study was to examine the learning experiences and projects of chief fundraising officers in the Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG). Therefore, adult learning theory and self-directed learning (SDL), in particular, were relevant. Knowles (1970) described adult learning as "andragogy," or how adults learn, under the assumption that it is different from how children learn (pp. 40-1). Knowles (1970) posited that adult learners are intrinsically motivated to learn, move from a reliance on a teacher or guide to a dependence on self, apply experience to learning, and are naturally inclined to problem-solve and apply new knowledge to solving problems.

Self-directed learning has been studied and re-examined within the context of adult education for decades (Brockett et al., 2001; Conner et al., 2009; Kirk et al., 2012). Self-directed learning can be understood as both the process of how individuals engage and direct their own learning, as well as understood as the characteristics of those individuals engaging in self-directed learning (Brockett & Hiemstra, 1991; Stockdale, 2003; Stockdale & Brockett, 2011). Knowles (1975) described self-directed learning as how an individual takes responsibility for and in their learning experiences rather than relying on others for this opportunity. In the early 1990s, Hiemstra and Brockett (2012) introduced the personality-responsibility-orientation (PRO) model to describe SDL in relation to the person in a given context undertaking the primary responsibility for their learning. Hiemstra and Brockett (2012) then updated their PRO model to the person-process-context (PPC) model. For this study, I am using the conceptualization of SDL as the process of engaging in SDL, whereby an individual initiates, implements, and evaluates their own learning.

The PPC model is influential in understanding the learning theories of this study. *Person* includes the individual and their characteristics, life experiences, previous education, and resilience, among other personal factors; *Process* refers to the transaction of teaching and learning, including life skills, learning skills and styles, planning and organization, and technological skills; and *Context* involves the whole setting where the person and process reside, such as the social milieu, power contexts, finance, gender, race, and sexual orientation (Hiemstra & Brockett, 2012). Person, Process, and Context are considered "comparable in their influence" (Greenelsh, 2006, p. 12), distinguishing it from the PRO model. These three elements were crucial to this study because each of the learning experiences and outcomes is interdependent on the individual, the process, and the larger socioeconomic context within which they operate.

It was essential for this study to explore the experiential learning of the chief fundraising officers in the TCSG, including the self-directed learning project, and how the fundraisers perceived these activities to impact their professional capacity. Tough (1971) defined learning projects as

> a major, highly deliberate effort to gain certain knowledge and skill (or to change in some other way). Some learning projects aim to gain new knowledge, insight, or understanding. Others are attempts to improve one's skill or performance or to change one's attitudes or emotional reactions. Others involve efforts to change one's over behavior or to break a habit. (p. 1)

Professional Capacity Building

Professional capacity building is “the continuum of professional learning that results in increased knowledge, skills, and application of leadership” (Zugelder, 2021, p. 25). Mitchell and Sackney (2011) defined three tenets of professional capacity building within the context of professional learning experiences for K-12 schoolteachers: (a) personal, (b) interpersonal, and (c) organizational. Personal capacity refers to the “deep and critical deconstruction and reconstruction of one’s own professional knowledge” (Mitchell & Sackney, 2011, p. 10). Next, interpersonal capacity refers to the relationships between coworkers and their collective emphasis on learning and professional growth (Mitchell & Sackney, 2011). Finally, organizational capacity explains how the community, structures, and systems facilitate and encourage personal and interpersonal professional growth (Mitchell & Sackney, 2011). Although these theoretical tenets were born out of observations in a K-12 setting, evidence suggests their applicability also extends to capacity building in higher education.

Mitchell and Sackney (2011) developed professional capacity building to reflect learning communities as educators “deconstruct and reconstruct their professional narratives” (p. i) as they learn and grow as professionals. They defined a learning community as professional learning within a group of people that “permeates the life” of the staff and students (Mitchell & Sackney, 2011, p. 8). The authors subscribed to a philosophical approach focused on the human elements of the educational setting integrated into the whole ecosystem, as well as a social constructivist orientation that “entails the deep involvement of each individual” (p. xviii) in creating said ecosystem. Although their focus is on the professional development of grade-school educators, there is continuity between the concept of a learning community in the academic setting and the professional development of the chief fundraising officers in technical colleges. Mitchell and Sackney's (2011) *Profound Improvement* depicts the cohesive relationships between the three tenets of capacity building in a learning community environment (see Figure 2).

Figure 2

Capacities for Building a Learning Community

Note: Adapted from Mitchell & Sackney (2011)

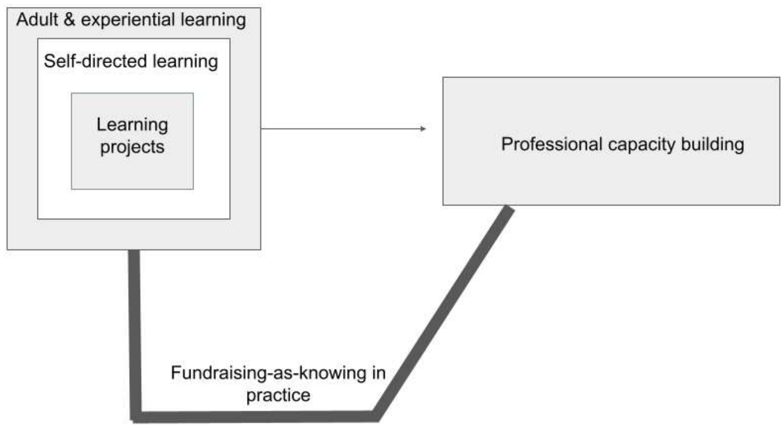
Fundraising-as-Knowing in Practice

The work of Herrero and Kramer (2020) provided great foundational work for this study as they wanted "to understand how fundraisers carry out their work" (p. 1) with reference to the earlier works of Aldrich (2016), Breeze (2017), Daly (2013), and Orlikowski (2002). Herrero and Kramer (2020) explained that their framework is built upon practice-based studies that seek to understand "how learning occurs within organisational [sic] environments" (Herrero & Kramer, 2020, p. 2). This perspective believes learning is fluid, constantly "situated, negotiated, and embedded" (Herrero & Kramer, 2020, p. 2) within an organization and its people. Through specialized training, people are “building social networks” as well as “sharing [in] the organisation’s [sic] identity” (Herrero & Kramer, 2020, p. 2). In layman’s terms, fundraising-as-knowing in practice could be on-the-job training (OJT)—learning that “takes place at [the] actual place and while doing [the] actual job” (Timsal et al., 2016, p. 3). Furthermore, OJT is more common in “larger firms due to their large internal structures” (Timsal et al., 2016, p. 3) and when the objective is to increase productivity.

This study used the frameworks of adult and experiential learning, specifically self-directed learning via learning projects, to better understand how chief fundraising officers build professional capacity in the context of fundraising-as-knowing in practice. The learning projects were interpreted to interact with professional capacity building within fundraising-as-knowing in practice (see Figure 3). Literature has demonstrated that most fundraisers have come to the work via other means and attribute their career “to chance” (Carbone, 1987, p. 9; see also Bloland & Bornstein, 1991; Cutlip, 1998). Gaining fundraising skills and knowledge occurs best through on-the-job experience (Gurin, 1985; Kelly, 1998; Lindhal, 2010). Duronio and Tempel (1997) found that 74% of U.S. fundraisers indicated that in the mid-1990s, they learned their skills while on the job. Through the participant interviews, I sought to understand better if they perceived their work to be fundraising-as-knowing in practice.

Figure 3

Theoretical Interactions



Pilot and Exploratory Research

In earlier assignments, I conducted a 1-hour interview with a fundraiser within the Technical College System of Georgia and a 30-minute interview with a fundraiser within the South Carolina Technical College System. The interviews served as pilot interview experiences to assess whether the questions performed as expected and to identify any required modifications (Maxwell, 2013). From these two experiences, I refined the purpose of my study. I also appreciated the necessity of adapting the conceptual framework when necessary in response to the new information I continued to acquire as I began the interview phase of the study (Maxwell, 2013). I revised and refined the conceptual framework based on the clarification of the purpose of the study through my pilot experiences. I was also able to practice the interview questions with a dissertation coach to prepare for the experience of actively listening and responding to my participants. I shared interview questions with a colleague within the Technical College

System of Georgia who was not participating in the study to receive their feedback on the questions and application of each question to our work.

Thought Experiments

I began journaling my experiences in researcher memos at the start of the study. These memos turned into thought experiments where I considered the possible outcomes of the models, assumptions, and expectations before starting my study's research and interviews. These memos became thought experiments where I considered the possible outcomes of the models, assumptions, and expectations before the research and interview development began (Maxwell, 2013) and continued throughout the study. I reflected on and debriefed each interview, which constantly challenged my assumptions and guided me to unpack these challenges emotionally and mentally outside the interview context.

Research Design

The design for this study was constructed around research questions that sought to understand the learning experiences and projects of chief fundraising officers in the Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG) and how those experiences influence their professional capacity. This study was situated in a social constructivist worldview (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Social constructivism leans on the meaning individuals make of the world they live and work within (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Social constructivism is differentiated by subjectivity, complex and nuanced views, broad and general discussions and interactions, social and historical contexts, and interactions between people and their settings and contexts (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The alignment of the approaches used in this study with Creswell and Creswell's (2018) social constructivist practices is shown below (see Table 1).

Table 1

Alignment of Social Constructivist Practices with this Study

Social Constructivist Practices	Approach To This Study
The researcher positions themself to the study.	I disclosed my background related to this study in Chapter 1 and discussed my role in depth in Chapter 3.
Collects participant meanings.	The study focused on narrative inquiry design, collecting meaning from the learning experiences of chief fundraising officers.
Focuses on a single concept or phenomenon.	This study focused on the learning experiences of chief fundraising officers in the Technical College System of Georgia and the impact of those experiences on their professional capacity.
Brings personal values into the study.	I was associated with this position for eight years and cannot remove my viewpoint and understanding of the topic. Hence, my values are present in the study.
Studies the context or setting of participants.	Each narrative was framed within the context and setting of the chief fundraising officer's respective college and college foundation.
Collaborates with the participants.	I actively participated in the research with my collaborating participants.
Employs text analysis procedures.	I employed the psychological analytic procedure The Listening Guide (2018), a text analysis categorized by narration and inner dialogue within the context of the setting and in relation to the researcher.

Note: As adapted from Table 1. 4 in Creswell's (2018) *Research Design*.

The process theory of qualitative research was most appropriate for this research's goals as process theory views the world through connections between people, situations, events, and factors (Maxwell, 2013). This study focused on the connections between the chief fundraising officers, their learning experiences, and their professional capacity. The study was crafted to understand how the fundraiser's education, professional experiences, and personal development impacted their professional capacity (Maxwell, 2013).

Narrative Inquiry

Durrance (1997) explained that "the story is our oldest, proven motivational tool... moreover, it is a means of experiencing our lives" (p. 26). This study was rooted in the appreciation of the power of storytelling. Much of my career in fundraising has been spent crafting and listening to stories and understanding the power of good storytelling. I referred to these stories as narratives, an understanding that captures the elements of both telling and knowing (McQuillan, 2000). Narrative inquiry, with its roots in social sciences, literary criticism, and nonfiction, acknowledges experience as a valid source of knowledge (Clandinin, 2013).

Dewey (1916, 1938) described the narrative inquiry as having three significant elements: experience, continuity, and temporality. "Experience understood narratively" (Clandinin et al., 2016, p. 15) occurs on a continuum of understanding the past, shaping and reshaping the understanding in the present, and then understanding into the future. Interaction refers to "the individual, the objective conditions and other people" in an experience (Clandinin et al., 2016, p. 35).

Crites (1971) described three elements that connect experience to a narrative quality: sacred stories, mundane stories, and temporality. All three elements "express coherence over time" (Clandinin et al., 2016, p. 36) in that narratives can convey experiences over time. Sacred stories are more pronounced and "carry a sense of authority" (Clandinin et al., 2016, p. 38), while mundane stories are more everyday-type stories. Temporality refers to the ever-important and present element of time in experiences and, therefore, stories. Carr (1986) built upon Crites's work by adding an element of "the self who experiences and acts" (p. 73). Carr linked narrative inquiry to experiences and actions in narrative coherence (Clandinin et al., 2016.). Reissman placed narrative study within three different levels:

> Stories told by the research participants (which are themselves interpretive), interpretive accounts developed by an investigator based on interviews and fieldwork observation (a story about stories), and even the narrative a reader constructs after engaging with the participant's and investigator's narrative. (Riessman, 2008, p. 6)

Understanding these three framework layers would be helpful in my data analysis later in the study. Narrative inquiry is unique in its elements of temporality, the emphasis on the presentation of self-identity in language, and the relationship between researcher and participant as a pivotal hallmark of the research (Chase, 2010; Clandnin & Connelly, 2000; Elliot, 2012; Josselson, 2011; Riessman, 2008).

Data Collection

The data required to answer the research questions were story-oriented, focusing on the past and present. The data needed to include personal, information-rich stories to gain information about various parts of the fundraisers' experience (Maxwell, 2013). Patton's (2015) personal experience, engagement, empathetic neutrality, and mindfulness techniques were employed during data collection to get close to participants while balancing "sensitivity, respect, awareness, and responsiveness" (Patton, 2015, p. 46). I generated data from the recounting of participants' learning experiences and their meanings in the very words of those being interviewed. Riessman (1993) recommended that interviewers give "greater control to respondents" (p. 55) by keeping the interview less structured, with a loose interview guide to help as needed. I developed the interview guide through the lens of one research question with three sub-questions centered on how chief fundraising officers build professional capacity (Riessman, 1993).

The setting for this study was within the Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG), the state's system of 2-year public institutions. Purposeful sampling ensured that the intended voices were elevated in the study. The participants were the chief fundraising officers for their respective college foundations. The target sample size was between seven and eight participants to acquire deep, rich stories from a variety of perspectives while also safeguarding against withdrawals from the study. Four participants ultimately completed all three interview rounds.

All participants had worked for at least five years in higher education. Tenure was an important factor in the selection of participants because continuity of relationships is essential in fundraising and allows for long-term perspectives and maturation of experiences. This tenure also allowed for longitudinal reflection on experiences entering the field and current and prospective experiences. Duronio and Tempel (1997) referred to this tenure time frame as stable in higher education.

Delimitations, Assumptions, Limitations, and Definition of Terms

In this section, I address the delimitations identified during the study's design, provide definitions for key terms and concepts, explicate my assumptions informing this study, and finally present the study's limitations.

Delimitations

This study focused on chief fundraising officers in TCSG, which could limit applicability to other settings (Barnes, 2015). The study's geographic delimitation means that all participants work within the same state budget system, providing excellent continuity to the study setting. The informants of this study had to be the primary contact and responsible party for the fundraising function at their respective college or college foundation within the TCSG during 2022 and 2023 (the length of this study). Those interviewed had to be tenured, with five or more years of experience working within higher education. This delimitation provided longitudinal context so that initial experiences from which some time has passed can be studied. This study rested on the assumption that chief fundraising officers were participating in experiential learning and learning projects related to their professional role. This assumption was consistent with a review of the literature (Allerton, 1974; Benson, 1974; Fair, 1973; Harrison, 2010; McCatty, 1975; Tough, 1971).

Assumptions

When conceptualizing the study, I made several assumptions about the key findings, sample and sampling, and data collection. I made an assumption about key findings related to participants' perceptions of institutionally provided professional development, and I addressed my biases by measures of reflexivity, subjectivity, and trustworthiness. I made an assumption about the recruitment of the sample as well. I thought there would be a greater interest in participating in the study. Additionally, as it relates to sampling, I assumed that more people would meet my initial sampling criteria of five years of experience within TCSG. Lastly, as it relates to data collection, I accurately assumed that the participants would have engaged in learning projects prior to the time of the study.

Limitations

By the study's design, a limitation was that all participants must have been chief fundraising officers during the study period (2023-2024) within the TCSG and had accumulated five years of experience within higher education. A second limitation of the study was the singular focus on professional development, and excluding other work-related factors was not framed within the theoretical framework.

Definition of Terms

Chief fundraising officer: The individual primarily manages the technical college foundation and its fundraising efforts.

Donor: "An individual or organization that gives money, goods, or services to an organization" (McNay et al., 2021, p. 3).

Experience: "Something always in the making, being shaped and reshaped over time, as new situations are encountered" (Clandinin et al., 2016, p. 28).

Fundraising: The art and science of cultivating a relationship to make a financial request on behalf of the institution; will sometimes be used interchangeably with the term *development*.

Learning project: A deliberate exercise or undertaking to gain knowledge or expertise (Tough, 1971).

Professional capacity: "The continuum of professional learning that results in increased knowledge, skills, and application of leadership" (Zugelder, 2021, p. 25); will often be used with the term *capacity building*, which is an effort to grow knowledge in an exploratory and open manner (Sackney et al., 2005).

Technical college: A 2-year public institution focusing on workforce and economic development as well as adult education; sometimes used interchangeably with the terms *community college* and *2-year college*; defined as “any not-for-profit institution regionally accredited to award the associate in arts or the associate in science as its highest degree” (Cohen et al., 2014, p. 5).

Organization of the Study

This study is organized into five chapters. Chapter 2 reviews the literature explaining the history of technical colleges, the current budget mechanisms for Georgia technical colleges, and the history and recent developments of fundraising in technical colleges. Chapter 3 describes the study’s methodology, including the recruitment of participants, interview procedures, and data collection and analysis. Chapter 4 consists of the analysis of the data collected. Chapter 5 covers the major themes that arose from the findings, a discussion of the findings, conclusions, implications for the field, and recommendations for future research.

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of the study was to understand how chief fundraising officers use self-directed learning experiences and learning projects to build professional capacity. The research sought to answer the central question: *How do chief fundraising officers use learning experiences and projects to build professional capacity?*

This chapter explains the setting of technical colleges, providing a historical overview of their role in higher education, the fundraising and financial infrastructure of these institutions, and the present-day strengths and challenges they face. This foundational information provides the context and setting for this study. A literature review of chief fundraising officers is then presented concerning their role, career experiences, and industry standards. This literature review explains what is and is not defined, provided, and expected of the chief fundraising officers who will be interviewed. Following that, a deeper exploration of the literature concerning adult learning experience, learning project theories, and professional capacity-building theories are presented. The chapter concludes with my assessment of the deficiencies and contradictions in the current literature that influenced the study.

History of Community and Technical Colleges

In the early 20th century, the public need for 2-year colleges was apparent as America experienced an industrial boom, increasing the demand for a skilled workforce (Cohen et al., 2014). Technical colleges were poised to fulfill the workforce's needs by offering affordable and accessible technical and trade skills instruction. Technical colleges could also relieve the influx of students enrolling in postsecondary institutions by providing general education outside of 4-year universities and colleges. As early as 1851, university officials began to stress the importance of the "junior colleges" to "provide general and vocational education to students through age 19 or 20" (Cohen et al., 2014, pp. 6-7). With time, 2-year colleges became the "buffer institution" (Cohen et al., 2014, p. 8) for students deemed unprepared for the 4-year experience. Technical colleges provide accessibility to populations previously excluded in the hierarchical and political landscape of postsecondary education (Cohen et al., 2014).

The Vocational Act of 1963 began an expansion in higher education that "recognized the need for semiprofessionals" (Cohen et al., 2014, p. 304) and technical or vocational training. With its passage, technical education took off for the first time in history at a greater rate than its baccalaureate counterparts (Cohen et al., 2014). The Vocational Act of 1963 (the Act) called for each state to plan flexible vocational education programs in the form of permanent postsecondary institutions or to integrate such programs into existing postsecondary institutions (U.S. Department of Education [USDOE], 1969). The Act also deputized states and communities to allocate financial resources for the cause. Despite the legislation and public awareness surrounding technical colleges in the early to mid-1900s, stand-alone technical colleges were not born until a 1964 American Association of Junior Colleges (AAJC) committee meeting to discuss the Act (Cohen et al., 2014). Although many junior colleges were already federally funded by the 1917 Smith-Hughes Act and the 1937 George-Deen Act, the 1963 expansion required sweeping nationwide augmentation. The Vocational Act of 1963 was amended in 1968 and 1972, and additional federal legislation related to technical education mandates followed, including the Comprehensive Education and Training Act (CETA) in 1973, the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) of 1982, and the Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act (VEA) of 1984.

The Comprehensive Education and Training Act (1973) called upon each of the states to take responsibility for training the underemployed and unemployed with the first block grant of its kind, providing direct financial resources to local communities for that purpose (Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations [ACIR], 1977). The Job Training Partnership Act (1982) further clarified the infrastructure implemented by CETA, requiring that curriculum and instruction of workforce development be implemented at the most local level, with state oversight reserved for supervision and assessment (Guttman, 1983). The Carl D. Perkins VEA (1984), more commonly called Perkins, was reauthorized in 1990 (II), 1998 (III), 2006 (IV), and 2019 (V). Perkins has been credited with expanding federal technical education support to secondary and postsecondary institutions, with $1.1 billion invested in 2015-2016 (Lee, 2016).

The mission of technical colleges has remained constant throughout their brief history in higher education. The work of most technical colleges includes "academic transfer preparation, occupational education, continuing education, developmental education, and community service" (Cohen et al., 2014, pp. 25-26). Pedersen's (1987; 2000) research provided further context to understand the role of 2-year colleges. He found that the early technical colleges were birthed from "local community conditions and interest" (Cohen et al., 2014, p. 11). In the post-2000s, adult education, or the effort to provide education that is "interdisciplinary, intertwined with other formal academic disciplines," (Collins, 2020, p. 31) was also attributed to technical colleges. Technical education integrated adult education into its mission through expanded funding in the School-to-Work Opportunities Act (1994) (H.R. 2884) and the Workforce Investment Act (1998) (H.R. 1385). Adult education can include high school equivalency and General Education Development (GED) classes and assessments, adult literacy classes, English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction, and additional workplace and life skills training (TCSG, 2022).

The public technical education boom of previous decades dropped off in the 1980s as the American population began to decline (Cohen et al., 2014). This fall in population caused technical colleges to expand their offerings to attract more students, including older, non-traditional students. More students enrolled part-time to continue working and take care of family obligations. According to Ma & Baum (2016), enrollment increased between 2000 and 2010, but dropped again after 2010 as more students enrolled in for-profit institutions. Around 2010, enrollment at public and private 4-year institutions increased, but continued to decline for public 2-year institutions (Ma & Baum, 2016). In 2020, higher education enrollment drastically dropped with the global coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) pandemic. Spring 2022 data showed an 11% decline nationwide in full-time students attending community colleges compared to Spring 2021. Simultaneously, part-time student enrollment declined, with more than 827,000 students leaving 2-year institutions since Spring 2020 (Leckrone, 2022).

Technical education enrollment is countercyclical to economic vitality (Dickler, 2020). With the "increased wages and benefits brought on by the ongoing economic recovery" (Leckrone, 2022, para. 7), prospective students may find it more lucrative, at least in the short term, to remain employed. An ongoing conversation in the media continues about the importance of technical education, as it remains the best option poised to create a skilled workforce which has more than a high school credential but less than a baccalaureate degree.

History of Fundraising in Technical Colleges

After World War II, higher education institutions expanded fundraising by creating dedicated offices to fundraising beyond that of the college president's office (Ciampa, 2009). In 1958, the American Alumni Council (AAC) and the American College Public Relations Association (ACPRA) issued an opinion recommending that colleges and universities be intentional about creating an office of institutional advancement spearheaded by a chief fundraising officer "with status equal to [other] chief administrators" (Ciampa, 2009, p. 16).

The first record of fundraising activities in higher education was in 1641 at Harvard College (Ciampa, 2009). However, the history of fundraising in technical colleges is newer than its baccalaureate counterparts. Midway Junior College, a private 2-year institution in Kentucky, was the first to establish a foundation in 1906 (Ciampa, 2009). Around the boom of technical education in the 1960s and 1970s, colleges started to recognize the need to establish private fundraising mechanisms through institutionally related foundations and offices of institutional advancement (Ciampa, 2009). MacArthur (2000) reported on the growth of foundations since the 1960s to bolster the college's reputation and fiscal reserves through public and private sources. Since the 1980s, public funding has continually decreased for technical colleges, resulting in over 90% of the colleges having established foundations (MacArthur, 2000). Fundraising in technical colleges began to professionalize between the 1980s and 2000s (Ciampa, 2009). Bock and Sullivan (1987) found that private fundraising became an answer to reduced state and federal support for technical colleges (Ciampa, 2009).

Despite the growing popularity of technical college foundations, a key component was still missing—a clear understanding of what fundraising in technical colleges entailed. Duree (2007) surveyed college presidents to ask how prepared they felt for meeting the critical leadership competencies defined by the AACC. Participants stated they felt least ready to engage in "an entrepreneurial stance in seeking ethical alternative funding sources" (Duree, 2007, p. 82) or, more simply, fundraising. Leadership in fundraising is critical for technical colleges (Hall, 2002). Although many leaders realize the importance of fundraising in diversifying technical college revenue, many lack the resources needed to accomplish this, a "catch-22 [that] perpetuates a cycle of insufficient funding" (Bucci & Waters, 2014, p. 877).

Budget Model in Technical Colleges

Solomon (1976, as cited in Cohen et al., 2014) argued that the costs of technical education must be maintained by all because of its ability to contribute to the greater social good. The literature suggests technical education is "an essential expenditure for economic growth, a common good" (Cohen et al., 2014, p. 319). Bass (2003) asserted that technical colleges are "places of public purpose" (p. 18), contributing to the greater good economically and socially. Yet technical colleges only receive about 27% of federal, state, and local education funding (AACC, 2017) and the debate about where technical colleges should expect funding remained.

The budget models of technical colleges were built upon "a complicated funding mix fueled by natural evolution, historical circumstance, political necessity, and well-intentioned governmental intervention" (Sunderman, 2007, p. 1). When 2-year colleges were still small with limited programs, local communities could fund most budgetary needs (Sunderman, 2007). Affordability and accessibility were at the heart of the missions of technical colleges, making it imperative to keep costs low while still delivering high-quality education. However, when enrollment and program offerings were expanded, local tax bases could not keep up, and therefore, technical colleges had to find alternative budget strategies (Sunderman, 2007). State funding became another funding source that was never considered stable or guaranteed. State funding for technical colleges had been reduced by over 30% each year since 1977 (Rizzo, 2003).

Student success has been one benchmark for state and federal budgetary allocation (Bers & Head, 2014; Phelan, 2014). Baker et al. (2002) argued that a performance-based budget model was the "Achilles heel of American higher education" (Ciampa, 2009, p. 26) as it failed to cover basic operations and student needs. Mullin (2010) concurred that technical colleges could not maintain vital control over their short- and long-term success by relying on government support for their budgets. Student needs are often considered after administrative overhead when budget funding is considered. Nearly 80% of technical college budgets fund personnel, only leaving about 20% for mission-related work (Mullin, 2010).

Compounding the budgetary strain is the nation's reliance on technical colleges to provide a stable workforce during economic downturns, thereby increasing enrollment, while all government disbursements to technical colleges simultaneously shrink (Oliff, 2021). The Lumina Foundation's *Achieving the Dream* research (2007) asserted that recovery was slow in each economic recession since the 1980s because there were too few workers with some level of postsecondary education. In the recession of 2003, for instance, philanthropy in higher education declined for the first time in 14 years, while state funding cuts tightened technical college budgets even further (Bass, 2003). These budgetary constraints make utilizing chief fundraising officers and college-affiliated foundations more imperative.

Current Trends and Literature

My initial review of the literature started with a search via ProQuest, EBSCO, and other institutionally provided database resources. For my current research. I utilized the following search terms: “fundraising,” “two-year college,” and “technical college.” My initial EBSCO yielded limited to no information related to funding within two-year or technical colleges. Additionally, my ProQuest Dissertation and These searches yield less than five viable resources within the last years. Overall, my assessment was there is limited scholarly research; thus, the literature here will contain supplemental reports on the current trends in fundraising literature.

Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) Principles of Practice

The Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) first adopted Principles of Practice for Fundraising Professionals in 2005, and they were updated again in 2020. CASE (2020), one of the foremost sources of professional development in educational fundraising, describes the expectations of educational fundraising professionals as:

> work[ing] on behalf of those served by [their] organizations during this exchange of values and represent[ing] their schools, colleges, and universities to donors, volunteers, and the larger public. In doing so, [educational fundraising professionals] also represent the integrity of the organization and of the fundraising profession. [Educational fundraising professionals] must, in discharging responsibilities, observe and promote the highest standards of personal and professional conduct and continually strive to increase our knowledge of the profession. (CASE, 2020, para. 2)

CASE (2020) defined these standards via five principles of practice: personal integrity, confidentiality, public trust, disclosure, and compensation. CASE (2020) defined personal integrity as fairness and honesty in the work, including avoiding potential conflicts of interest and respecting the professional boundaries of relationships built on behalf of the institution. Confidentiality, as defined by CASE (2020), refers to protecting donor privacy. Public trust refers to honoring a donor's intent for their gift as well as safeguarding the reputation of the institution and placing the institution's mission and values above all else. Disclosure means that fundraising professionals must be truthful about the institution's mission and priorities as well as provide information about policies and procedures. Compensation is defined by CASE (2020) as an industry-accepted standard to not pay based on commission or percentage of funds raised. All these principles are recommended standards for chief fundraising officers.

Affordability, State Appropriations, and Tuition

Chakrabarti et al. (2020) found that accessibility and affordability were directly linked to students' post-graduation success. As research has shown (Hoxby, 2009; Bound, Lovenheim & Turner 2010):

> Less state support for public higher education institutions is a particular concern for less selective institutions, as they tend to rely more on state funding. These institutions also serve a disproportionate percentage of students from low-income and disadvantaged backgrounds. Thus, over time, reductions in state appropriations have contributed to the increased stratification of resources in the postsecondary sector, wherein resources are increasingly concentrated in a small set of elite universities that serve the most academically-advanced students. (as cited in Chakrabarti et al., 2020, p. 1)

Chakrabarti et al. (2020) found that within the context of two-year colleges, colleges that received a $1,000 per student increase in state appropriations had students who were more likely to transfer to a four-year university (15.43%), more likely to obtain at least a bachelor's degree (20.12%), and more likely to earn a graduate degree (40.53%). It appears that increases in state appropriations would benefit student success outcomes, but history has proven that appropriations continue to decrease.

Ash (2017) examined two reports in which the researchers negated the strong correlation between the decline in state appropriates to public higher education institutions and the increase per student tuition. Researchers Delisle (2017) and Cooper (2017) argued that the methodology for which the relationships (findings) were established was "selectively" misinterpreted (p. 1). Additionally, both Delisle (2017) and

Cooper (2017) stated the findings showed a weak relationship, due to the methodology difficulties. However, Ash (2017) stated that their reports were misinterpretations with selective terminology for key concepts: tuition and state support. Further, Ash (2017) asserted that the report sampling was selective in that it overemphasized states with high revenue from fossil fuels. The data was reanalyzed with the following findings: $1000 in the state appropriate per student tends to increase tuition by roughly $350" (Ash, 2017, p. 1). Chakrabarti et al. (2020) found a similar relationship between state appropriations and student tuition rates.

Ash (2017) established his critique of each report by outlining the exclusion of pertinent data regarding their analysis (e.g. National Center for Education Statistics, scatterplots) as well as the select inclusion of where the statistical analysis may show bias. Ash (2017) found that cuts in state funding impact the quality of the educational experience (e.g. "student success and career trajectories") and how institutions may have to divert funding for other necessary areas to try to avoid tuition increases (e.g. failing infrastructure, offsets to faculty and staff). Ash (2017) highlighted additional ways in which institutions seek to stay on mission, one method is through fundraising.

Impact of Fundraising Campaigns

In understanding the importance of affordability against the backdrop of state appropriations and tuition, I wanted to better understand the modern outlook on the impact of fundraising campaigns. Michal (2023) conducted a qualitative case study for which the purpose was to explore long-term tuition freezes "as a tuition strategy adopted by higher education institutions" framed by the iron triangle theory (p. 3). The iron triangle is three factors that are interlinked with the assessment of college cost: "cost, quality, and access" (Immerwahr et al., 2008, p. 4). The study's literature included an examination of public institutions that voluntarily or involuntarily (mandated through legislation) imposed a long-term tuition freeze. Michal (2023) stated that although the institutions froze tuition, they did not receive an increase in state funding. Michal (2023) utilized the iron triangle to understand better the impact of quality and access at such institutions.

Cost theories were tied to the inflation of higher education tuition costs and a skilled, specialized workforce. Michal (2023) examined Hoxby's (1997) vertical integration concept wherein institutions can differentiate the quality based upon "students they can attract and the donated funds they can secure" (Michal, 2023, p. 11). Overall, Michal (2023) implied that the quality of the ranking of an institution is subjective and individualized. Access is an important issue in higher education, as traditionally, several marginalized groups were denied access; however, Michal (2023) highlighted that a diverse student population is necessary for institutions' survival. Thus, tuition freezes can serve as a method of tuition discounting wherein institutions can try to increase enrollment, expand access, and attract quality students. Many institutions looked for tuition resets as some institutions have utilized philanthropic support to cover tuition revenue declines.

Michal (2023) examined ways in which institutions can improve their philanthropic support and research. He reported that the institutionally related foundation's increase in contributions had a "dramatic" impact on the endowment of faculty/professorships (p. 90). Additionally, Michal (2023) reported that a foundation member categorized the gifts as transformative as they strengthened the institution and gave it the ability to “attract top-notch teachers and researchers, who in turn make us more competitive for federal research dollars” (Michal, 2023, p. 90). A tuition program was included in the foundation’s campaign, which provided tuition and fees for four years to incoming freshmen and transfer students with family incomes of less than “62,000 in adjusted income per year” (Michal, 2023, p. 91). Overall, the institution was addressing the three factors of the iron triangle: costs, quality, and access through contributions from fundraising campaigns. Although Michal’s (2023) study is not transferable to every institution’s fundraising structure, however it does provide contextualization for the need for fundraising within higher education.

Governance and Budgeting in the Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG)

The purpose of this study is to understand how chief fundraising officers use learning experiences and projects to build professional capacity. This section of the literature review provides context around the setting and structure of the TCSG. The Technical College System of Georgia is a function of the executive branch of the state government. It is governed by a State Board of Directors (State Board), appointed by the Governor of Georgia on a rotating basis. The State Board hires a Commissioner of the TCSG by the Governor’s appointment. In academic year 2023-2024, 22 technical colleges existed in Georgia. These technical colleges all fall under the purview of TCSG. The State Board produces an official TCSG policy manual which references the TCSG foundations. Policy 3.1.12 (II.A.2.f.iv) refers to *Cooperative Nonprofit Organizations* and describes these as “non-profit foundations or cooperative organizations that are established for the exclusive purpose of supporting the Technical College” (TCSG, 2022, p. 1). The policy refers to the “operational arrangements” (TCSG, 2022, p. 1) being "consistent with state requirements for the use of public resources" (p. 1). The policy manual also includes a memorandum of understanding (MOU) template to structure these arrangements between the college and the foundation. See Appendix B for a copy of the MOU template from 2023. The main elements of the MOU include clarifications about the foundation's name, mission, seal, logo, governance, and the relationship and responsibilities between the two entities, as well as asset and risk management, funding and administration, and terms of the agreement and dissolution.

The budget of the TCSG, including its technical colleges' budgets, is approved in the following manner: (a) a task force makes a recommendation to the Commissioner; (b) the Commissioner either approves or revises the recommendation to present to the State Board; and after (c) State Board approval, (d) the Commissioner presents the budget to the Governor's Office of Planning and Budget (OPB) for approval (TCSG, 2022). Lingo et al. (2021) reports that nationally, funding models have changed over time to change budgeting formula systems between public 4-year and 2-year institutions. They reported that these formulas are typically described as "base and base plus performance/hybrid" (p. 7), which include a base with additional funding based on defined success measures. Furthermore, a research team for InformEd States analyzed national public documents regarding state budgets from 2004 to 2021, representing 51 different 2-year systems (Lingo et al., 2021). Eight of the 2-year systems experienced no changes in their funding formula in those 18 years, including the TCSG (Lingo et al., 2021).

Role of the Chief Fundraising Officer in the Technical College

Until around 1958, college presidents primarily led fundraising in higher education, briefly defining the role of a chief fundraising officer (Ciampa, 2009). Past studies focused on the importance and function of the college foundation and the college president in fundraising successes. Yet, very little research has refined the role of the chief fundraising officer (Duree, 2007; Jackson & Glass, 2000; Pinchback, 2011). Researchers have struggled to define the role of the chief fundraising officer in higher education, and little to no attempt has been made to determine the position within the technical college setting. Worth and Asp (1994) found the chief fundraising officer role challenging because it had yet to be defined (Ciampa, 2009). Since 1994, researchers have called for more research explicitly dedicated to the chief fundraising officers themselves (Ciampa, 2009).

Although the work can be multi-faceted, the central theme of fundraising is "to offer donors an opportunity to accomplish something that feels important, that resonates with their values, and that they will feel great about doing" (Nugent, 2018, p. 197). Haire and Dodson-Pennington (2002) described the chief fundraising officer as one who originates ideas and facilitates the development of projects, identifies and stewards donors, matches donors' interests to institutional needs, tells the story of the college to garner interest, and balances multiple initiatives in harmony and not competition. Herbkersman and Hibbert-Jones (2003) described the technical competencies of planning and facilitating as crucial to defining the role of the chief fundraising officer. They also indicated the importance of behavioral competencies like customer service and integrity (Herbkersman & Hibbert-Jones, 2003). Burnette (2003), in collaboration with Rosso (2003), found that most fundraisers possessed certain qualities, including self-confidence, a natural inclination to match relationships to needs, leadership, and gracefulness.

The literature also indicated a high level of emotional responsivity and investment was required for a fundraiser's success. Breeze (2017) described fundraising as "emotional work within an emotional business" (p. 162). She found it was hard to determine when a fundraiser was "doing emotional labour [sic] because they have to, or because they want to" (Breeze, 2017, p. 154) because so much of the work of a fundraiser was intertwined with them. When Breeze (2017) sought to uncover what emotion was most strongly associated with professionals in the field, she found it to be gratitude, saying, "It is about expressing gratitude in attitudes and actions as well as in words" (p. 155). Often, fundraisers work on behalf of beneficiaries who will never be able to thank their benefactors. Additionally, many see the financial gift as the end instead of the "beginning of a (hopefully) long-term relationship" (Breeze, 2017, p. 159).

Organizational Structure

Fundraising is a social and relational process that hinges on building and maintaining relationships between donors and college staff (Ciampa, 2009). Among these college staff, the argument could be made that the chief fundraising officer is at the pinnacle of that process, as all other relationships flow from that individual's work. Researchers have advocated for a strong relationship between the chief fundraising officer and the college president. Fisher (1984), for example, advocated for an organizational structure in which the chief fundraising officer was a part of the president's senior leadership team (Ciampa, 2009). One of the significant cited works surrounding institutional advancement in higher education is the Greenbrier Report (1958), issued by the American Alumni Council and American Public Relations Association. This document stressed the importance of a chief fundraising officer, whom they described as the vice president of institutional advancement, reporting directly to the college president. However, a survey of 385 college and university presidents found only 19.8% were using such an organizational structure (Ciampa, 2009). Jackson and Glass (2000; as cited in Ciampa, 2009, p. 36) found factors such as "size, location, competition, and market of the institution" influenced how advancement was infused into the organizational structure.

Career Experiences of the Chief Fundraising Officers in the Technical College

One of the most closely related college degree programs for an aspiring chief fundraising officer could be a public administration degree. In a Fall 2021 and Spring 2022 survey, U.S. News ranked the best public affairs programs in the United States, finding only 270 master's programs in public affairs and administration (Morse & Hines, 2023). Not all offered fundraising-specific specialties (Morse & Hines, 2023). While these programs can provide exposure to fundraising specifically, there was a slight decrease (4%) between 1996 and 2006 in coursework focused on fundraising compared to other areas of nonprofit management (Mirabella, 2007). Formal education in fundraising exists at institutions like Indiana University's (IU) Lily Family School of Philanthropy and the University of Michigan's Development Summer Institute Program (Farwell et al., 2019). The Association of Fundraising Professionals has endorsed credentials such as the Certified Fund Raising Executive (CFRE) designation, demonstrating a fundraiser has committed to their field through experience and education (Farwell et al., 2019). And yet there are two noted shortcomings for preparing those entering the profession: most education focuses on "frontline fundraisers" (Farwell et al., 2019, p. 490) and does not necessarily account for the additional managerial and leadership skills needed for the chief officer, and there remains debate over what is considered best practice in training programs with so many focused on "fundraising folklore and the illusion of best practice" (Sargeant & Shang, 2011, para. 5).

In 2017, Farwell and colleagues interviewed 44 higher education fundraising professionals about their career trajectories. The researchers found that many considered their entrance into the field accidental, saying that they "fell into [the profession]" (p. 496). In contrast, others explained they were "looking for whatever [they] could get" (p. 496). There is a similar sentiment on the hiring side. In a 2013 survey, researchers found that the average length of a job posting for a chief fundraising officer was six months, and half of the respondents cited a lack of qualified candidates as their reasoning for the vacancy (Farwell et al., 2019).

Factors Influencing Career Experiences and Success

Cook and Lasher (2006) designed a model to evaluate presidential fundraising. In the model, they examined the effect of personal forces, environmental forces, role forces, and institutional forces on the president's fundraising success. These same factors can influence a chief fundraising officer's success. The literature indicates fundraising in technical colleges has faced unique challenges and opportunities. Smith (1993) explained three substantial obstacles to fundraising in 2-year institutions. Technical colleges face challenges in branding, connections, and professional fundraising. Sumners (2006) identified several factors described as "cultural obstacles" (p. 22) to fundraising successes for technical colleges. These included the lack of entrepreneurial experience or spirit in employees, the lack of brand identity, the emphasis on equity shortening the ability to pay competitively, and the lack of ability to communicate vision and purpose. Sumners (2006) also indicated a lack of leadership from presidents, trustees, and staff was a huge factor influencing the success of technical college fundraising. Anderson (2001) found factors contributing to fundraising success, including college reputation, ties to community investment, and direct benefit to the industry investing in workforce development. Fife (2004) asserted intrinsic factors, such as infrastructure for fundraising, extrinsic factors, such as the community environment, and leadership factors of the foundation, were the defining influences for fundraising success.

As Carter (2009) asserted, "It cannot be assumed that literature about four-year institutions will apply to community colleges" (p. 48). For example, although alumni are typically influential donors in higher education, they are not as engaged in the technical college fundraising setting. Alumni fail to be a reliable source of donor revenue because students do not experience the same allegiance to 2-year institutions as to 4-year institutions (Sumners, 2006). Chief fundraising officers must also communicate to donors why public institutions need private support, as many donors assume that state and federal funding covers all necessary expenses (Pinchback, 2011). One asset that technical colleges can capitalize on is the local nature of their work. Anderson (2001) found donors appreciated that resources were spent in their communities in that they could see a direct "benefit from community college expenditures" (p. 35).

Staffing in technical college fundraising departments is quite unlike their counterparts in 4-year institutions. In a case study of Walters State Community College's advancement operations, McWherter (2005) explained the vice president of advancement could only do about 10% of "what is on their plate" (p. 41) because the office is never staffed "adequately enough to ever come close to meeting the job demands" (p. 41). Each college is different in the amount of funding it decides to allocate for staff and the operations of its college foundation. Yet, there is a direct link between the foundation's success and the resources allocated (Jones, 2007). Most technical colleges have just one or two full-time professionals responsible for the fundraising function (Jones, 2007). Summers (2006) argued 4-year institutions have experienced the success they have because they have and continue to invest in hiring professional fundraising officers. Fife (2004) found the number of foundation staff significantly influenced the total annual dollars raised. Fife (2004) asserted a well-built team and budget for the foundation translated to "better research and records, more personal contact, more promotion, and more fund-raising activities" (p. 28).

Industry Standards of Chief Fundraising Officers in the Technical College

Fundraisers have collectively sought to standardize the profession, through the creation of membership associations, specialized training and education, the CFRE credential or equivalent in countries outside the United States, the establishment of ethical standards, and the development of particular rhetoric around giving which emphasizes a values-based perspective of fundraising (Shaker & Nathan, 2017).

The Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) developed a statement of ethics in 1991, and they have since revised and reaffirmed its meaning every few years. These ethical pillars for development officers in higher education include personal integrity, confidentiality, public trust, disclosure, and non-commission-based compensation (CASE, 2023b). In 1993, CASE, along with the American Association of Fund-Raising Counsel (AAFRC), the Association for Healthcare Philanthropy (AHP), and the Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP), adopted a Donor Bill of Rights that includes best practices for donor cultivation and stewardship (CASE, 2023b). These rights include confidence in the expenditure and acknowledgment of gifts, confidentiality maintenance, and trust and transparency (CASE, 2023b).

Burnette (2003) categorized the industry-standard tasks of a fundraiser as: "organizational preparation" (p. 463), including the development of a strategic plan and feasibility study, cultivating a team, budget, marketing plan, and commitment of leadership; donor prospecting and identification to include board members, previous and existing donors, and new donors from industry, individuals, and foundations; planning for securing a donation including major gift, annual gift, telephone and email communication, estate planning, grants, and investment strategies; managing expectations around reports, stewardship, and budget and staff; streamlining processes to provide the best return on investment; and then doing it all over again. Breeze's research (2017) found "the most frequent metaphor used by interviewees when explaining the everyday reality of their work was as choreographers trying to stage-manage events to achieve desired outcomes" (p. 121). Duronio and Tempel (1997) concluded only 13% of a fundraiser's work week was spent fundraising or directly asking for support, with the remainder of the time spent building relationships.

Debate remains as to whether fundraising is "a business enterprise about money or a values-based expression of moral commitment" (Shaker & Nathan, 2017, p. 5), further complicating the ability to define industry standards clearly. Breeze (2017) found a substantial disconnect "between understanding the importance of the role and valuing the people filling that role" (p. 23). An attitude of tolerance towards fundraisers is prevalent “because of the pressing need for the funds they can bring in, rather than a genuine appreciation of their skills and wider contribution" (Bloland & Bornstein, 1991,

p. 104). Furthermore, fundraisers are extremely reliant on their colleagues and their organization because "even the best fundraiser cannot have much success in an organisation [sic] that is not fulfilling its mission, is poorly run, or is not meeting the needs of clients" (Dorsey, 1991, pp. xvi-xvii).

Although some industry-accepted language and practices exist, no personality type or trait can embody every technical college fundraiser. However, literature does examine commonalities for those in the profession. Breeze (2017) summarized her findings by saying the data shows that fundraisers often have formative experiences of helping behaviour [sic], high levels of generalised [sic] trust, a greater propensity for gift-giving to loved ones and donating blood to strangers, a willingness to facilitate social situations, a preference for community-oriented and intellectual hobbies, positive personality traits and higher levels of emotional intelligence.

Need for Professional Development in Fundraising Success

Professional development is a key element to a chief fundraising officer's success. As noted by CASE (2023), "The importance of continuous learning and career development cannot be overstated" (CASE, 2023a, para. 1). CASE (2023a) identified two important reasons for continuous learning. First, it allows chief fundraising officers to remain informed about evolving trends and issues in philanthropy, allowing for better practice in fundraising, marketing, and strategic planning. Second, it provides a foundational understanding of advancement regardless of the experiential and educational background of the chief fundraising officer. Additionally, CASE (2023a) and other professional development may provide accurate training on the standards and practices of fundraising. So little attention has been given to understanding the role of fundraisers in higher education, especially those within technical colleges, further complicating the position and its success.

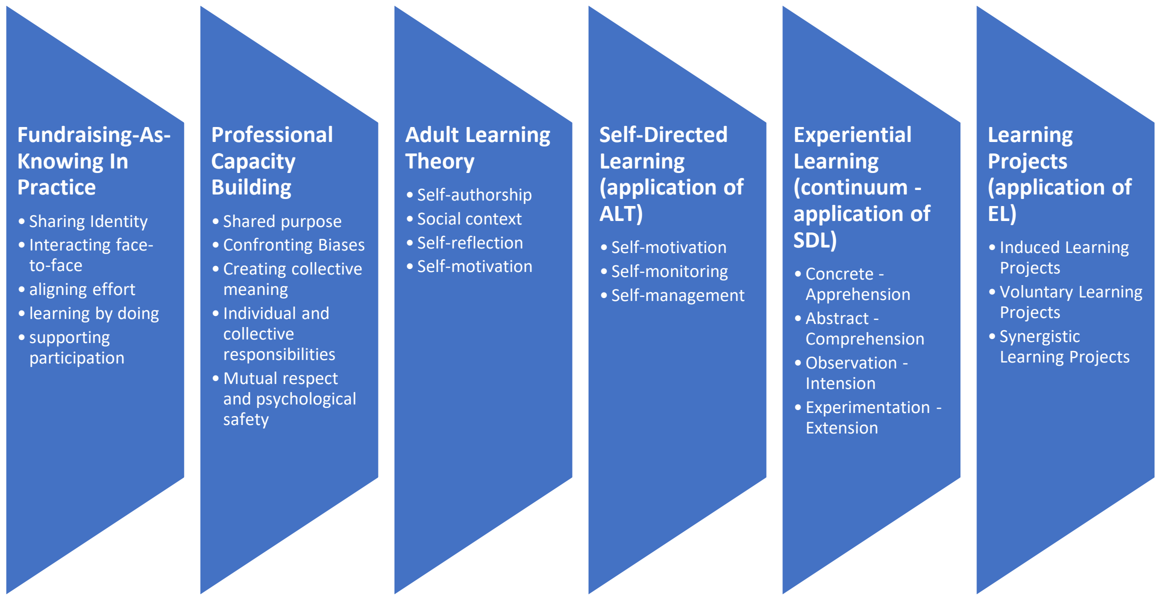
The need for a chief fundraising officer's success is two-fold. For the sake of the professional's self-confidence, it can be vital that their environment, resources, and experiences be positive ones. Similarly, for the sake of the college's success, the chief fundraising officer must be successful. Phelan (2014) described higher education's instability as a crisis requiring creative thinking, especially concerning funding. Fewer resources can cripple the abilities of technical colleges to remain accessible and affordable, which are core tenants of their missions. I took this context and then applied it to constructing a theoretical framework on which my research would hinge.

Theoretical Framework

The study is framed by three major theories: learning projects, fundraising-as-knowing in practice, and professional capacity building. To best understand learning projects, I first had to understand adult learning theory, self-directed learning, and experiential learning, so all three of these theories are also interrelated to my study. Illustrated below are the components of all six of the aforementioned theories, which are foundational to my study (see Figure 4).

Figure 4

Theoretical Framework Components



Please note that Adult Learning Theory, Self-Directed Learning, Experiential Learning, and Learning Projects have some similar components (e.g. self-motivation with Adult Learning Theory and Self-Directed Learning). Additionally, as highlighted above, the application of each theory builds upon the last. Thus, together, the theories provided a comprehensive lens through which better to understand Fundraising-As-Knowing In Practice and Professional Capacity Building. *Theory Component Matrix* illustrates the possible relationships between theory components (see Table 2: Theory Component Matrix). When utilizing the *Theory Component Matrix* (see Table 2), it is best to read it from left to right as the establishment of relevance and interconnectedness is central to the components of theories (see Figure 4).

Table 2

Theory Components Matrix

Fundraising- As-Knowing in Practice	Adult Learning Theory	Self-Directed Learning-	Experiential Learning	Learning Projects	Professional Capacity Building
Sharing identity	Social context	• Self-motivation • Self-monitoring • self-management	Abstract – comprehension	Synergistic learning projects	Shared purpose
Interacting face-to-face	• Social context • Self-authorship • Self-reflection	• Self-monitoring • Self-management	• Concrete – apprehension • Observation – intension • Experimentation -extension	Synergistic learning projects	• Confronting biases • Creating collective meaning • Individual and collective responsibilities • Mutual respect and psychological safety
Aligning effort	• Self-motivation • Self-reflection • Social context	• Self-motivation • Self-monitoring • self-management	• Concrete – apprehension • Experimentation - extension	Synergistic learning projects	• Creating collective meaning • Individual and collective responsibilities • Shared purpose
Supporting participation	• Self-motivation • Self-reflection • Social context	• Self-motivation • Self-monitoring • self-management	• Concrete – apprehension • Abstract – comprehension • Observation – intension • Experimentation - extension	Synergistic learning projects	• Creating collective meaning • Individual and collective responsibilities • Shared purpose

Adult Learning Theory

The purpose of this study is to understand how chief fundraising officers use learning experiences and projects to build professional capacity. All these professionals are adults and, therefore, function as adult learners in their motivation, readiness, and orientation to learning (Knowles, 2015). Thus, it is essential to define adult learning so that the interviewee's holistic learning processes are better understood.

Early adult learning theories focused on self-authorship, finding one's voice and perspective, and "the urgency to design meaningful learning experiences" (Montero-Hernandez & Cerven, 2018, p. 111). More recently, adult learning theory has focused on social contexts that can be directed toward action and change (Montero-Hernadez & Cerven, 2018). Adult learning is characterized by socio-cognitive development heightened by an attitude of self-reflection and an often-motivated desire to learn and grow (Montero-Hernandez & Cerven, 2018). In 1968, Knowles proposed the label of andragogy to describe adult learning and the characteristics of an adult learner.

Components of Adulting Learning Theory

Andragogy was introduced to describe the ways adults learn in contrast with the way children learn (pedagogy) (Merriam, 2001). There are five major assumptions associated with andragogy used to describe the adult learner (Merriam, 2001, p. 5):

1. Has an independent self-concept and can direct his or her own learning (self-authorship);
2. Has accumulated life experience as a resource for learning (self-reflection);
3. Has learning needs directly tied to shifting social responsibilities (social context);

4. Has a desire for immediate application and problem-solving in his or her learning (problem-solving);
5. Has a strong internal motivation to learn (self-motivation).

As Knowles presented his framework for andragogy (1968), Tough (1971) expanded on Houle's (1961) research to offer a thorough explanation of self-directed learning (SDL). Knowles (1975) would soon join the conversation with Tough (1971) to lay the groundwork for SDL theory.

Self-Directed Learning

One common practice among adults engaged in learning is self-directed learning (SDL). Knowles (1975) originally defined SDL as a “process in which individuals take the initiative, with or without the help of others, in diagnosing their learning needs, formulating learning goals, identifying human and material resources for learning, choosing and implementing appropriate learning strategies, and evaluating learning outcomes” (p.18). Self-directed learning refers to a process by which an adult, with certain learner characteristics, takes responsibility for and ownership of constructing, experiencing, and assessing their learning project or experience (Garrison, 1997). Garrison (1997) addressed three dimensions of SDL: motivation to enter SDL as a process, self-monitoring, and self-management.

Components of Self-Directed Learning

Motivation refers to both the impetus to start a task and the inspiration to continue. Motivation “can initiate and maintain the effort toward learning and realizing cognitive goals” (Zhu et al., 2020, p. 2076). Self-monitoring is this model's second dimension. It incorporates both cognitive and metacognitive processes, such as the capacity to reflect on one's own thinking and to be aware of one's own learning strategies. As per Garrison (1997), self-monitoring entails the learner taking ownership of creating their own personalized learning. Self-management is how adult learners approach and apply resources to their learning, such as study techniques and leveraging a support network. Zhu and colleagues (2020) referred to self-management as “task control” (p. 2076). Self-managing encompasses all external activities and influences on learning (Zhu et al., 2020, p. 2076). One way in which adults manage their learning is through experiential learning, which is a “side effect of working, problem-solving or living” (Simons, 2000, p. 6). Given that research has indicated many fundraisers have no formal educational pathway into fundraising (Breeze, 2017), it is important to understand what, if any, SDL practices are utilized by these chief fundraising officers.

Experiential Learning

Kolb and Kolb (2017) developed a guide for experiential educators in higher education, wherein they provided a historical context for Experiential Learning Theory. The research included an in-depth examination of aspects of ELT: the learning cycle, learning style, and learning space contextualized within higher education. Included within their historical account is an introduction of the foundational scholars of ELT (e.g., John Dewey, William James, Jean Piaget, Kurt Lewin, Lev Vygotsky, Carl Rogers, Paulo Freire, Carl Jung, and Mary Parker Follett). Each scholar has contributed to the development of a multi-dimensional model for which to understand adult development and ELT.

Beard and Wilson (2018) referenced Keeton and Tate’s (1978) definition of experiential learning as “learning in which the learning is directly in touch with the realities being studied" (Keeton & Tate, 1978, in Cell, 1984: viii as cited by Beard & Wilson, 2018, p. 2). Additionally, Keeton and Tate (1978) differentiated experiential learning from learning acquired through reading, listening, discussing, or writing. Beard and Wilson (2018) highlighted that the aforementioned activities can most certainly be incorporated into experiential learning; however, it is the "experience" that is central to the learning process (p. 2). Beard and Wilson (2018) provided the parameters for experiential learning (pp.6-7):

1. Experience is central to the learning process;
2. The experience of learning potentially has transformational properties for the learner;
3. The experiential dynamics include four elements of, for, interpersonal, and external interactions;
4. Experience serves as a bridge to unify: "actions and thoughts, doing and knowing, body and mind, nature and person, practice and theory"(p. 7).

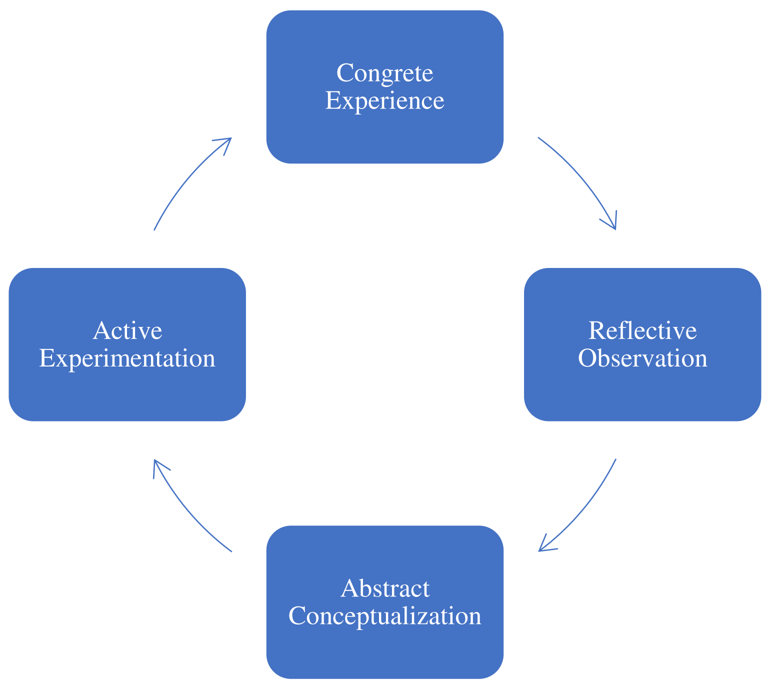
Experiential learning theory (ELT) was the guiding framework for understanding the learning process in this study; that is, learning that stems from experience. This theory describes experience on a continuum ranging from a concrete experience (apprehension) to an abstract conceptualization (comprehension). The experiences are then transformed into learning through reflective observation (intension) and active experimentation (extension) (Kolb & Kolb, 2017). Adults learning through experience may have some "indirect control over the working, problem-solving or living that codetermines the learning in a distant way" (Simons, 2000, p. 6).

Components of Experiential Learning

Experiential learning theory is well-known and applied in higher education settings in both academic and student affairs (Zhou & Brown, 2018), making it a well-fitted framework for this study, where I will be listening for indications of the interviewee's experiences with apprehension, comprehension, intension, and extension (see Figure 5).

Figure 5

Kolb's (1984) Four Stages of Learning



Note: An adaptation of Kolb's (1984) Four Stages of Learning

However, there are many criticisms of ELT. Despite having built upon the work of Dewey, Kolb failed to explore the non-reflective experience in learning, even though Dewey considered this the "dominant form of experience" (Zhou & Brown, 2018, 6.2.4). Dewey also believed natural observation to be the first step in learning, whereas Kolb relied on experience to kickstart learning (Zhou & Brown, 2018). Researchers have also questioned Kolb's lack of definition for and conceptualization of a concrete experience (Miettinen, 2000; Yorks & Kasl, 2002). Kolb did not integrate social or group experience into his model either (Zhou & Brown, 2018). Despite these criticisms, ELT remains an essential concept in this study to understand the adult learning process. One way to see experiential learning theory in practice is through understanding the learning projects that an adult undertakes.

Beard and Wilson (2018) built upon Dewey's (1916) bridging concept, wherein experience is contextualized within environments (e.g., nature, art, education). The bridging concept connects "opposites or dualities," and this concept provides the foundation for experiential learning parameters (Beard & Wilson, 2018, p. 6). Beard and Wilson (2018) expanded the learning parameters as a method to explore Beard's (2010) idea of "sense-making" (p. 3). Beard (2010) categorized sense-making as an act of learning that occurs through immersion within an experience. He explored the concept that the whole self is engaged in this process of sense-making: "physically bodily, intellectually, emotionally, psychologically, and spiritual" (Beard, 2010, p. 17 as cited by Beard & Wilson, 2018, p. 3). Through this immersion learning experience, the learner's whole being is engaging with aspects of their environment, specifically the outer world. The outer world can further be contextualized into subcategories: social, cultural, and political. The interaction between the learner and the outer world can be defined as an experience of interaction (e.g. belonging or acting). Thus, through sense-making, learners can bridge concepts within the aforementioned four parameters of experiential learning examined below (Beard & Wilson, 2018, p. 4):

- The experience designed *for* learning is an experience in the inner world of the learner
- The experience *of* learning is affected by the inner world of the learner
- The experience designed *for* learning experiences in the outer world
- The experience *of* learning is affected by the outer world interactions and conditions

Overall, these elements are considered to be four core interactional dynamics that serve to bridge the process and the person. The four are directly tied to immersion and reflection, which are essential components of experiential learning. For this study, it is important to know how chief fundraiser officers are connected to the process of Fundraising-As-Knowing In Practice and Professional Capacity Building. Beard and Wilson (2018) highlighted how experiential learning has been woven into employability-based learning through the following three forms (p. 50):

- Learning about work, which is informational
- Learning at work, which is locational
- Learning through work; which is experiential

As Chief Fundraising Officers may have some level of all three types of "learning," I will examine how they learn through work (e.g. learning projects).

Learning Projects

Through his research in SDL, Tough (1971) conceptualized the idea of an adult learning project defined as a deliberate exercise or undertaking to gain knowledge or expertise to be utilized. Tough introduced the concept of adult learning projects (1971) by building on Houle's earlier research (1961) to understand what learning projects adults from all professional sectors undertook each year (Roberson, 2005). Tough (1978) found that most adults engaged in an average of five learning projects each year, spending about 500 hours engaged in these projects. Tough shared later that he was surprised to have found that about 80% of the learning projects occurred in an informal setting, which is not a typical classroom or college environment (2002). From this realization, Tough imagined an iceberg metaphor indicating that adult learning is often underneath the surface, or invisible, from worldview (2002). Learning projects entail the learner directing the process and details of the learning (Roberson, 2005).

Tough's (1971) concept has been criticized in that it assumes that everyone desires to learn and that all projects with a learning outcome are learning projects, whereas the learner might consider them recreational (Roberson, 2005). Brookfield (1985) criticized both SDL and learning projects as overlooking the importance and expertise of a teacher, and the over-simplification of learning happening within a vacuum without social interaction. Additionally, in the U.S. context, there may be suggestive undertones of the White majority problematically reflected in SDL (Roberson, 2005). Despite these criticisms, SDL is considered the primary way adults learn (Caffarella & O'Donnell, 1987; Merriam & Caffarella, 1999) and often positively influences a person's self-concept (Brockett & Hiemstra, 1991). For this study, it was crucial to recognize the instances of SDL and the learning projects of the chief fundraising officers in the TCSG. To better understand this context, I will next explore the components of learning projects.

Components of Learning Projects

Learning projects can include self-planned, classroom, and group learning and are traditionally characterized by their informality (Tough, 1978). All learning projects share a common purpose: to help learners acquire and retain specific knowledge (Tough, 1978). Tough (1978) found that most often, learners were motivated to undertake a learning project by their perception of an anticipated opportunity to apply their learning in real-time. Clardy (2000) referred to learning projects as a "unit of analysis" for self-directed learning (p. 5), and this unit of SDL often occurs in group settings (Tough, 1978). Tough (1978) explained that 90 percent of adults probably undertake a learning project each year, meaning that learning projects are a standard SDL analysis unit. About 20 percent of the time, learning projects are designed by an expert, consultant, or professional; of that time, about 10 percent of the learning occurs in a group setting (Tough, 1978). The remaining 80 percent of the learning projects are designed and facilitated by a layperson, and 73 percent of that time, the layperson is the learner himself or herself (Tough, 1978). Tough (1978) referred to these instances as self-planned learning projects. Most learning projects culminated in about 100 hours of work (Clardy, 2000; Tough, 1978).

Clardy (1999, 2000) identified three types of learning projects: induced, voluntary, and synergistic. Induced learning projects are "the prototype for nonstructured, on-the-job learning" (Clardy, 2000, p. 114). These are learning projects that a learner undertakes without "mandate, guidance, or formal training resources" (Clardy, 2000, p. 114), so the learner is very much the owner of their project experience. Induced learning projects are often spurred by an imbalance in performance, capability, or skill set (Clardy, 2000). Voluntary learning projects are similar to induced ones in that they are learner-motivated and driven. However, voluntary learning projects are "more open-ended, ongoing, and long-term" than induced learning projects. Voluntary learning projects may also be of greater benefit to the learner than to their professional organization. In contrast, induced learning projects typically fill a gap for the organization more than the learner (Clardy, 2000). Synergistic learning projects “result from the combination of a motivation to act and learn with the spark of workplace circumstance” (Clardy, 2000, p. 116). These learning projects are motivated by a new opportunity or advancement within a working environment but are not necessarily required to perform the task at hand. Synergistic learning projects require the learner's self-motivation to initiate and commit to the project (Clardy, 2000).

Professional Capacity Building

According to Geiger (2019), “Being a fundraising professional today means more than just having the necessary fundraising knowledge and experience” (para. 11). The study, sponsored by the Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP), collected data via an online survey that included over 1,000 fundraising professionals in the United States and Canada. In explaining the results, AFP Chair Martha Schumacher commented that “certain basic needs aren’t being met in terms of professional development, mentoring, and opportunities for promotion” (as cited in Geiger, 2019, p. 15).

Mitchell and Sackney (2011) described personal professional capacity as “wrapped up in both the cognition *and* the actions of the practitioner” (p. 35). They explained that this capacity-building process involves cognition and action as “the deep transformation of the professional narrative that leads to profound improvement” (p. 35). Mitchell and Sackney (2011) defined personal capacity building as the “active and reflective construction of knowledge” (p. 16). Capacity building, therefore, must involve a confrontation of personally held biases, assumptions, and practices. Interpersonal professional capacity relates to “creating collective meaning” (Mitchell & Sackney, 2011,

p. 17) within a workplace setting and the relationships within. The authors continued describing building capacity interpersonally as “people work[ing] together on shared purposes, tak[ing] individual and collective responsibility of the well-being and learning of others, and operat[ing] in a spirit of mutual respect and psychological safety” (Mitchell & Sackney, 2011, p. 17).

Organizational capacity building refers to structures and systems that invest heavily in the professional development of individuals and groups (Mitchell & Sackney, 2011). They suggested a truly flexible system that embraces the individual and the community can build organizational capacity. Furthermore, building personal, interpersonal, and organizational professional capacity, they argue, is most relevant to better understanding the learning experiences of chief fundraising officers that help them create professional capacity. As Melacarne and Nicolaides (2019) found, “personal and professional continual growth are a must. In the learning society, it is necessary to promote new training paths and trajectories of participation that allow people to discern and critically reflect on what information matters” (Melacarne & Nicolaides, 2019, p. 38).

Fundraising-as-Knowing in Practice

Orlikowski’s (2002) study of competencies of software employees in the Netherlands uncovered five core competencies for knowing in practice theory: (a) sharing identity, (b) interacting face-to-face, (c) aligning effort, (d) learning by doing, and (e) supporting participation. Orlikowski (2002) argued that these five competencies expand personal and organizational practice into knowledge. Explicitly applied to fundraising, Breeze (2017) suggested that much of fundraisers’ work is learned on the job. Daly

(2013) argued that chief fundraisers make a connection between “how to act” (p. 21) in their profession and how that understanding shapes their actions in the practice of fundraising. Herrero and Kramer (2020) synthesized these works into a belief that “fundraisers do learn [about their job] by doing their job” (p. 2). Their findings from 15 face-to-face interviews with fundraisers in higher education and arts nonprofits in the United Kingdom provided insight into fundraising-as-knowing in practice. Herrero and Kramer’s (2020) study corroborated Orlikowski’s competencies of sharing identity and interactions, negotiation and effort alignment, and learning by doing. They concluded that the work conducted by the fundraisers was overcoming internal and external misconceptions of their positions while negotiating and re-negotiating their role within their organization. This study was designed assuming that fundraising can be and often is learned on the job so that SDL and learning projects can offer opportunities for increased capacity building.

Conclusion

The literature on the role of chief fundraising officers in higher education, particularly in technical colleges, is noticeably sparse (Ciampa, 2009). Recent dissertations and studies have asserted that this role is underexplored, with a significant lack of published research to support it (Ciampa, 2009). Understanding the current practices in this field is crucial to enhancing the professional capabilities of chief fundraising officers. The existing gap in the literature presents an opportunity for this research to offer a detailed account of their learning experiences. The next chapter outlines the methods employed in conducting, analyzing, and presenting this research.

Chapter 3

METHOD

The purpose of this study was to understand how chief fundraising officers use learning experiences and projects to build professional capacity. The study's research questions focused on answering the central question: *How do chief fundraising officers use learning experiences and projects to build professional capacity?* The following sub-questions allowed for greater clarity around the chief fundraising officers' learning experiences that increased professional capacity:

(a) What are the learning experiences and projects of chief fundraising officers in the Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG)?

(b) What do these learning experiences and projects demonstrate about the professional capacity of chief fundraising officers in the TCSG?

(c) How can the learning experiences and projects of the chief fundraising officers in the TCSG help improve the professional capacity of 2-year college fundraisers?

A qualitative design is most appropriate for this study because it enables a thorough exploration of participants' unique and rich experiences (Patton, 2015). Patton (2015) described the characteristics of qualitative inquiry, including: "strategic and purposeful sampling techniques" (p. 91), "organic and reflexive nature of the design and the research" (p. 91), and "philosophical roots in constructivism" (p. 91). All these elements are cornerstones of this study. As Patton (2015) explained, constructivism allows the data captured to be appreciated in its own right; "being heard [is] an end in itself" (p. 123)—which resonates well with this study, given that there is little to no other qualitative and narrative data for this population in Georgia.

Bochner (2001) described a "narrative turn" (p. 133) in qualitative design that underscores the validity of people's stories as representations of their experience, worthy of being analyzed but not exclusively analytical. He argued that stories are part of humankind's collective "lived existence" (Bochner, 2001, p. 135) and are not meant to be just evaluated on the story's analytical or academic significance, a deviation from past social science standards. Narrative inquiry was the best design for the proposed study because it uses "stories as data" (Merriam, 2002, p. 9) in context. Storytelling is a powerful tool that is "pervasive in human experience" (Merriam, 2002, p. 286). McQuillan (2000) described narrative as an understanding of both the telling and the knowing of an experience, and this means that "it provides explanatory knowledge of human experiences, which allows the portrayal of rich nuances of meaning in emplotted stories" (Kim, 2015, p.11).

Narrative inquiry is especially relevant to the field of education. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) described education as experience itself, making it more applicable to narrative applications and analysis. Narrative research has become a dominant methodology for sharing the lived experiences of educators and students to reshape policy, influence procedure and pedagogy, and subscribe professional development (Kim, 2015, p. 19).

Setting

The study occurred within the Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG). The TCSG is responsible for 2-year public technical education, adult education, and workforce development for the state. The participants of this study were chief fundraising officers at technical college foundations. As of June 2022, 22 technical colleges with 88 campuses comprise the TCSG (TCSG, 2022). The TCSG represents all geographical demographics of the state, serving rural, urban, and suburban areas (TCSG, 2022). Students at these institutions are considered nontraditional because they are often older, single parents, enrolled part-time and working full-time, and are likely economically disadvantaged (TCSG, 2022). More than 300,000 Georgians are impacted by the TCSG's work each year through its technical education, adult education, and workforce development programs (TCSG, 2022).

By studying chief fundraising officers within one public, state-supported technical education system, I could present stories from within one similar setting. All these institutions operate under the same governance and budgetary systems, allowing for some congruence in context. Furthermore, focusing on this one system can allow for more in-depth information. As Patton (2015) explained, “In-depth information from a small number of people can be very valuable, especially if the cases are information-rich" (p. 311). I hoped that by studying a particular setting and a purposefully chosen sample of chief fundraising officers, I would elicit information-rich storytelling from the participants. This hope was realized as the participants provided detailed and insightful stories from their experiences as chief fundraising officers.

Population and Sample

The participants for this study were chief fundraising officers within the Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG). Within TCSG are 23 chief fundraising officers, one for each college-affiliated foundation and one for the state system-affiliated foundation. I anticipated engaging with four to seven participants with the understanding that I would have reached an adequate sample size when I encountered saturation. Saturation is when “depth as well as breadth of information has been achieved” (Kim, 2015, p. 161). O’Reilly and Parker (2013) acknowledge that the qualitative nature of narrative inquiry means individual uniqueness, meaning that data can never be truly saturated as there will always be another person’s story to hear and tell. In recognizing this, I have tried to be transparent about disclosing my constructivist epistemological position and adopting a narrative inquiry methodology to demonstrate my complete understanding of the saturation limitations in my sampling technique.

As of Spring 2023, there were 23 chief fundraising officers in the TCSG, so this range would account for 17-30% of the study’s population. Qualitative narrative research is characterized by rich stories of individual experiences. It is a time-and-energy-consuming process involving both the researcher and participant that can be better conducted with a smaller audience (Subedi, 2021). Furthermore, a smaller sample size can engender a closer relationship between the researcher and the participants (Subedi, 2021).

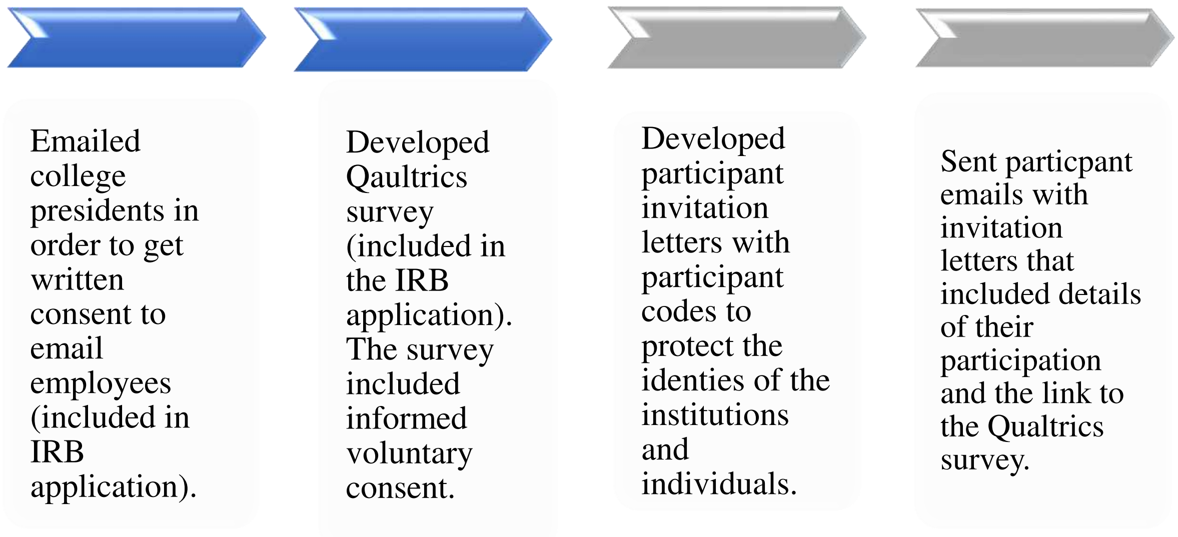
All participants had to be their technical college foundation’s chief fundraising officer and were considered key informants. The purposeful sampling strategy for the key informants “identif[ies] people with great knowledge and/or influence (by reputation) who can shed light on the inquiry issues” (Patton, 2015, p. 268). Key informants were defined by their tenure within the TCSG as seasoned professionals with five or more years of experience in higher education. The study's purpose was not to compare the experiences of the chief fundraising officers but to allow each story to stand entirely on its own. Each story was analyzed and presented independently.

The workflow for participant recruitment was as follows: In keeping with TCSG's IRB protocol, college presidents were emailed first to seek permission to engage their employees. The email I sent to request conducting the study to TCSG is available as Appendix C. Nineteen of 23 college presidents responded affirmatively that their employees could be contacted regarding this research; I did not hear from the remaining four presidents. I e-mailed those chief fundraising officers whose president had complied to ask if they would consider participating in the study. I visited the respective college websites to develop a list of chief fundraising officers at each institution. I used my VSU student e-mail to contact each officer through their institutional e-mail addresses. From July 26 to August 1, 2023, initial e-mails introducing the study and follow-up e-mails containing a link to the Qualtrics survey were sent. Six of the 18 potential participants expressed interest, though one was disqualified due to their insufficient tenure within TCSG. Given this limitation, and with the approval of the dissertation chair and committee, the eligibility criterion was adjusted from requiring five years of experience within TCSG to 5 years within the broader field of higher education. This modification was made to broaden eligibility in case of early withdrawal of participants. All six eligible participants completed the Qualtrics survey. Follow-up e-mails were sent to arrange the initial interviews, yet two of the six did not respond to several requests to schedule the interviews. The four remaining participants arranged for interviews, which took place between August 10 and October 30, 2023. Due to TCSG's restrictions on using state resources for research, scheduling interviews outside participants' working hours was crucial. Most interviews were conducted on weekdays after 6:00 pm or during weekends.

I sent a round of first emails to potential participants on July 26, 2023. Of those that I emailed, six responded that they were interested in participating. That email is available as Appendix D. In the e-mail, I disclosed the research as belonging to Valdosta State University (VSU), acknowledged that it had been approved by the Institutional Review Boards (IRB) of both VSU (available as Appendix E, and the protocol exemption report is available as Appendix F) and TCSG (the final approval to conduct the study at TCSG is available as Appendix G); my former professional relationship with the TCSG; a description of the study and its purpose; an overview of what a participant could expect during the study; and my contact information. Once I had established an interest in this population sample, I moved to the data collection phase. I created an illustration to document the participant recruitment phase leading up to the initial data collection phase using a Qualtrics survey (see Figure 6).

Figure 6

Participant Recruitment Phase



I simultaneously worked on the interview protocol and script, addressing ethical concerns, obtaining IRB approval from TCSG, TCSG institutions requiring individual IRB approval, and VSU, and developing a data collection timeline.

A simple demographic survey was initiated before the contact visit to collect basic demographic and biographical data. To protect participants, I employed an online random name generator to produce pseudonyms for the participants and their institutions.

Data Collection

Storytelling via interview was the primary means of data collection for this study. Interviewing provided a glimpse into each participant's "stream of consciousness" (Seidman, 2006, p. 7) as they revealed experiences and the meanings and feelings associated with those experiences. Patton (2015) described interviews as assuming that "the perspective of others is meaningful and knowable and can be made explicit" (p. 426) and that the purpose of interviews is "to allow us to enter into the other person's perspective” (p. 426). The study’s collection design was grounded in Riessman’s (1993) narrative inquiry work. Riessman (1993) asserted that the story is the “object of investigation” (p. 1) in narrative inquiry. Furthermore, Riessman (1993) argued that storytelling as a means of investigation was the best design for “studies of subjectivity and identity” (pp. 4-5), elements perfectly aligned with the study’s investigation. Riessman (1993) subscribed to a five-part series for narrative analysis following a “primary experience” (p. 10), including attending, telling, transcribing, analyzing, and reading.

This study’s interviews were one-on-one experiences for the participant and me under the framework of “in-depth interviewing” (Seidman, 2006, p. 10). Seidman (2006) described this interview style as one that conveys a genuine interest in the participant’s stories and the meanings associated with those stories. Minichiello et al. (1995) explained in-depth interviewing as those interviews that reveal “the private interpretations” (p. 87) an individual holds about “self, life, and experience” (p. 87). The study’s interviews were in-depth because they emphasized the personal meaning the participants assigned to their experiences.

As explained earlier, “co-constructing accounts of experience” is one of three elements unique to narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Foste, 2018, p. 22; Riessman, 2008). Understanding this, I had to be mindful of the nature of interviews, which rely on a question-and-answer response style. I recognized that my participants’ responses were heavily influenced by the questions I asked of them. I allowed for flexibility and fluidity in my interview guide. I allotted pauses and follow-up questions to allow participants to gather thoughts and elaborate if desired. Mishler (1986) made an important theoretical distinction between a stimulus-response approach to data collection and the narrative methodology of meaning-making. I remained mindful of this distinction by incorporating a natural, conversational flow into my interview style. Creating a safe environment via participant protections like informed consent became essential to facilitating this natural, conversational flow.

Participant Protection and Informed Consent

Prior to the contact visit, each participant who agreed to participate was given a simple demographic survey to complete via Qualtrics. This allowed me to understand demographic data before the contact visit and verify that participants met the basic criteria for participation, such as employment and tenure. I then scheduled a contact visit with each participant. The contact visit established rapport between the participants and initiated the first step in informed consent for the participants (Seidman, 2006). Each participant was presented with a consent document and asked to verbally confirm their understanding of its content on the recorded video. The study participants needed to consent to participate in the research, not only for ethical reasons but also to lay the groundwork for the highly personal nature of the storytelling required of this study.

Interview Guide and Schedule

As Kim (2015) explained, “An interview needs to be designed in a way that it invites our interviewees to speak in their own voices, to express themselves freely, deciding where to start their story as well as the flow of topics” (p. 165). I designed and implemented my interviews with this in mind. I utilized my research journal to memo before and between interviews. Given my close association with the topic, I resisted the urge to share my own stories and instead provided signs of engagement through eye contact and nods of understanding. I wrote my interview guide with enough flexibility so that participants could direct and redirect the conversation. This was particularly evident as I spoke in detail with each participant about their learning projects in the last twelve months. No participant presented their projects in the same linear fashion, which was perfectly reasonable and organic. I allowed participants the room and space to talk without interruption so that they could completely express themselves before we approached another subject.

Bochner (2001) asserted that qualitative researchers must remember that their participants' experiences are not merely "data to be analyzed and categorized but [are] a story to be respected and engaged" (p. 132). Breeze's (2017) work to understand better the role and experiences of fundraisers in the United Kingdom served as a research model for this study, particularly regarding the interview portion of the research. I communicated with Breeze via e-mail to gain permission to adapt her interview questions for the study. The interview guide and script can be found in Appendix H.

The research was designed using Seidman's (2006) interview approach, employing three 90-minute interviews conducted with each participant. Seidman (2006) described the first in his three-part interview series as the one with a historical basis, which speaks to the first research question of this study. He described the second interview as presenting the "experience within the context of the social setting," which speaks directly to research question two of this study (Seidman, 2006, p. 18). Seidman's third interview in the series was about meaning-making, which is the purpose of this study's third question. Interviews were conducted over several weeks via TEAMS to allow for recording and transcription and for convenience in mitigating travel concerns.

Allowing space and time for the participants to contemplate their responses provided for richer, more authentic storytelling with each forthcoming interview.

Interviews were recorded and transcribed via Microsoft TEAMS. In keeping with Creswell's (2018) and Riessman's (1993) recommendations, the interview protocol or guide was prepared prior to the interviews and included 5-10 open-ended questions to guide the conversation. I consulted Tough's (1975) *Interview Schedule for Studying Some Basic Characteristics of Learning Projects* and Smeltzer's (2016) *Revised Interview Schedule for Studying Some Basic Characteristics of the Workplace Learning Projects of Multiple Elected Officials* to help inform the interview guide created for this study. A PowerPoint presentation with the voluntary informed consent statement was shown at the start of each interview. I asked each participant to re-read it and verbally affirm that they understood before we began. Appendix I is the slide used for the first and third interviews, while Appendix J is the slide used for the second interview.

To allow for more candor, rapport, and reflection, I had planned for the interviews to be spaced over several weeks in at least three months (see Table 3). This cadence was based on Seidman's (2006) recommendation that each interview be spaced from "3 days to a week apart" (Seidman, 2006, p. 21), allowing for the "participant to mull over the proceeding interview but not enough time to lose the connection between the two" (Seidman, 2006, p. 21). If followed precisely, this schedule would have accounted for approximately three months.

Table 3

Proposed Interview Schedule

Interviewee	Interview #1	Interview #2	Interview #3
#1	Week 1	Week 5	Week 9
#2	Week 1	Week 5	Week 9
#3	Week 2	Week 6	Week 10
#4	Week 2	Week 6	Week 10
#5	Week 3	Week 7	Week 11
#6	Week 3	Week 7	Week 11
#7	Week 4	Week 8	Week 12
#8	Week 4	Week 8	Week 12

I conducted interviews in the following manner, with a few instances having to be rescheduled from earlier dates due to personal and professional calendar commitments (see Table 4). Interviews lasted between 34 and 56 minutes. The interview guide and script are in Appendix H.

Table 4

Interview Schedule

Interviewee	Interview #1	Interview #2	Interview #3
Thomas	September 5	September 19	October 18
Annette	August 29	October 10	October 30
Patrice	August 12	August 21	October 9
Sherrie	August 10	August 28	September 11

Procedure

While obtaining Valdosta State University's Institutional Review Board (IRB) letter of exemption, I also had to obtain a letter of cooperation from the Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG). A copy of these letters can be found in Appendix C. To obtain said letter, TCSG needed written consent from each technical college president expressing their cooperation. I e-mailed 22 technical college presidents and received acknowledgment of support from 18 technical college presidents. I provided this information to TCSG, which then approved my working with the 18 institutions whose presidents were agreeable to the study. Additionally, one college of the 18 had an IRB review process that I completed to follow its protocol.

Next, I sent an initial e-mail and letter to each of the 18 technical college chief fundraising officers whose participation was approved, inviting them to participate in my study. Accompanying each invitation was a copy of the letter of support from the TCSG and a copy of Valdosta State University's IRB letter of exemption. Participation was voluntary, and participants could withdraw from the research anytime. The invitation e-mail and letter of support are found in Appendix D and G. At the bottom of each invitation was a Qualtrics survey link. The survey was used to gather voluntary informed consent and basic demographic information. Within each e-mail and letter, each of the 18 potential participants was assigned a five-digit code as a unique identifier. This served as a means of participant protection.

Interviews were conducted via the Microsoft TEAMS platform to facilitate a more straightforward rendering of transcription and recording services and for ease of scheduling. The Microsoft TEAMS platform was associated with my VSU account and required a login for both the participant and me. All recordings and transcriptions were stored under password protection in my Microsoft TEAMS and OneDrive accounts.

Data Analysis and Presentation

When it came time to analyze my data, I needed to remember the elements unique to narrative inquiry—temporality, construction of self-identity, and the relationship between myself and the participants—so that I could analyze through this unique lens.

Temporality refers to the assumption that individuals and experiences change over time. As Foste (2018) noted, “central to this point, then, is that verbal accounts of experience are always given meaning in light of previous experiences” (p. 12). It became apparent to me that I would need to do the work to construct each participant’s story in a more linear presentation than was natural to storytelling.

Given my constructivist worldview, I wanted to rely heavily on the participant’s own words by leveraging direct quotations. “Language is never a neutral pursuit and… the choice of words is always to some extent a political act,” Foste (2018) commented when explaining how participants construct their sense of self. I found this to be accurate as I carefully contemplated participants’ word choices and how my participants constructed their stories. Riessman (2008) explained that social context must be considered when understanding a person’s sense of self. Riessman’s (2008) approach is thematic analysis, which appreciates participants' words and direct quotations. I honored the elements of thematic analysis by preserving as much of the raw data via direct quotations as possible while creating a linear presentation for each participant’s story. Foste (2018) described this as “socially and historically situated performances” that describe the participant’s identity within the context of their conversation with the interviewer (p. 12).

Finally, I had to consider my relationship with this work before I analyzed our conversations. Before engaging in research analyzing a narrative inquiry, it is important for a researcher to “consider their own autobiography, or their narrative,” and contemplate how it may influence their perception of interactions with participants (Foste, 2018, p. 13). Clandinin and Connelly (2000) deemed this exercise as compiling narrative beginnings. Foste (2018) recognized this, saying, “Participants tell the stories they do because the researcher has identified them as important and prompted such a telling” (p. 13). I will explore my narrative beginning in greater detail later in this chapter when I discuss my role as the researcher.

Creswell (2013) described six steps in the qualitative analysis process that I adhered to with my data: organizing, reading, coding, describing, and representing. I downloaded the original transcripts and video recordings from Microsoft Teams to organize my data. I then used my spreadsheet of pseudonyms to redact identifying information from copies of the originals. I saved these files with the unique code identifier assigned to each participant at their original invitation to participate. I read all transcripts, first as a unique set for each participant and then as a set of the group's first, second, and third interviews. Simultaneously, I imported these copies of the transcripts into Quirkos. I created multiple “layers” in my software dashboard so that I could conduct several iterations of coding. Finally, I used my coding to describe and then present my themes and key findings. In the following paragraphs, I will explain my coding, description, and presentation decisions in greater detail.

Organization of Raw Data and Data Analysis

Kim (2015) described four essential elements of qualitative data analysis: codes, categories, patterns, and themes. Drawing on the work of Creswell (2007) and Saldaña (2009), Kim (2015) outlined the general process as engaging in multiple coding processes to identify a word or short phrase that serves as an attribute for a portion of the data. This is followed by discovering relationships between similar codes to form a category. From there, emerging patterns are identified within each category, which then can be developed into themes.

In analyzing the data, I first organized it by downloading, reading, and cleaning interview transcripts, storing each in a password-protected folder labeled with each participant's numerical code. I chose the computer-assisted qualitative data assistant software (CAQDAS) Quirkos for data analysis. I revisited Saldaña's (2016) *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers* to inform my coding iterations and strategies. I imported the four participants' interviews into three separate tabs in Quirkos, enabling analysis of each interview in relation to the others. My coding scheme began with a first layer aligned with the research questions and a second layer based on emerging categories. I tested the coding scheme on a single series of interviews before applying the scheme to all 12 transcripts. I coded all first-round interviews at one time, all second-round interviews at one time, and all third-round interviews at one time.

I applied initial and process coding methods to the text from each transcript. In the next section, I will explain why I chose these methods. Following the initial coding cycle, I conducted code charting as a transitional process, as described by Harding (2013). This approach involves summarizing a piece of an interview transcript in one column of a table and aligning it with the major codes in the adjacent column. I quickly constructed this chart using Microsoft Excel spreadsheets.

I engaged in *shop talking* with colleagues about the study and my preliminary findings to provoke new insights and questions. A second coding cycle employed pattern coding to synthesize the first rounds of coding into more refined categories, themes, and patterns. This revealed to me aspects I had previously overlooked in constructing my themes. I began drawing conclusions from this coded data, shaping the content for Chapters 4 and 5 of my report.

In preparation for presenting my data, I returned to Kim (2015) for guidance on narrative data interpretation. Kim (2015) explains a concept called narrative smoothing as a necessary but problematic function in reporting data that provides a "coherent, engaging and interesting" narrative to the reader but that, unfortunately, can omit important data nuances (p. 192). Spence (1986) provided suggestions for ethical interpretation, saying that a researcher can:

- Be more nuanced and sensitive
- Recognize that the stories are not fixed but dynamic, and connotations can be up for interpretation
- Secure participant confidentiality even at the expense of the narrative's richness
- Keeping the participant and reader in mind when presenting

Coding

I researched four CAQDAS options: MAXQDA, Nvivo, Quirkos, and Delve. I chose to utilize Quirkos because of its user-friendly interface and the comprehensive view of codes, categories, patterns, and themes on the platform's dashboard. I secured transcriptions and video recordings for each participant in a password-protected folder on my VSU OneDrive before uploading them to Quirkos to begin the coding stages.

Saldaña's (2016) *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers* served as a textbook for coding decision-making and practice. During the initial coding cycle, elemental methodology was the most appropriate approach for this study based on my emergent research design and research question alignment (Saldaña, 2016). Saldaña (2016) recommends making coding choices in alignment with an understanding of the nature of the research questions. Epistemological questions, those that "suggest the exploration of participant actions/processes and perceptions found within the data" (Saldaña, 2016, p. 70), are best answered by specific coding methods, including two types I chose for this study: initial and process coding. As Saldaña (2016) described, the coding decision was based on an "emergent conceptual framework for the study" (p. 71) that revolves around the central question: *How do chief fundraising officers use learning experiences and projects to build professional capacity?*

Saldaña (2016) described initial coding as "open coding" (p. 115) at times because it "implies an initiating procedural step in harmony with first cycle coding processes" (p. 115). Initial coding provides direction in forming first impressions and tentative codes leading to categories, patterns, and themes. Initial coding must not be formulaic and can often exude into process coding, as was the case for my study.

Process coding uses gerunds—the "-ing" form of verbs—exclusively to indicate the action in the data (Saldaña, 2016). This action-oriented coding method represented my action-oriented study in understanding learning and capacity building. Saldaña (2016) offered that process coding can be beneficial to understanding "routines and rituals of human life . . . for the purpose of reaching a goal or solving a problem" (Saldaña, 2016, p. 111), which Corbin and Strauss (2015) also echoed.

After applying initial and process coding strategies through manual coding in Word documents and Quirkos, a computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS), I gained a deeper understanding of my participants' stories. I proceeded with a second round of coding, known as pattern coding. This method helped me synthesize the initial coding rounds into more focused categories, themes, and patterns. Additionally, this second coding cycle revealed emerging categories, themes, and patterns that were not apparent in the initial stages.

Analysis and Presentation

The study analysis utilized a psychological framework called the Listening Guide (LG), introduced in 2001. The LG methodology asserts that "human experience is always interpretative" (Tolman & Head, 2021, p. 152) and relies heavily on experiences intertwined with inner dialogue, emotion, and psychology. The LG methodology emphasizes listening with a "muscle of curiosity" (Tolman & Head, 2021, p. 154) and an ever-present spirit of empathy. The muscle of curiosity refers to the genuine emergence of new understandings and interpretations characteristic of qualitative research. In interpreting data, LG implies that the participant's self, or autobiography, is created "in and through relationship, with multi-faceted narrators, shaping and reshaping themselves" (Tolman & Head, 2021, p. 194). The LG methodology has five essential stages of analysis: (a) Observing the setting coupled with the researcher's response to the narration; (b) Listening for the "I," understood as paying closest attention to how the participant depicts themself; (c) Holding, in tension, multiple *voices* for each participant; (d) Analyzing the various voices in connection with the "I" to *understand a psychological logic*; and finally, (e) Composing an analysis that provides a window into the "narrator's inner life" (Tolman & Head, 2021, p. 158).

The LG methodology aligns closely with the study's conceptual framework and offers a cohesive psychological approach. By prioritizing LG, the analysis emphasizes listening to and presenting participants' multifaceted intrapersonal dialogues. This method elevates each participant's voice to stand independently within the research. Presenting these narratives as distinct and stand-alone vignettes, as Seidman (2006) suggested, allows for a focused approach that directly addresses the research questions.

When presenting my work, I wanted to be mindful of the essence of narrative inquiry in appreciating the participants' experiences and word choices. As Chase (2010) noted, narrative inquiry "takes an interest in the other as a narrator of his or her particular biographical experiences as he or she understands them" rather than assigning an objective truth to the human experience (p. 219).

Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness has been defined as the quality of making research findings "worth paying attention to" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 290). Trustworthiness is often the counter-response to qualitative research's "controversial" concept of validity (Maxwell, 2013, p. 122). Lincoln and Guba (1985) introduced four characteristics to define trustworthiness: "truth value," "applicability," "consistency," and "neutrality" (p. 290). Truth value is defined by the researcher's ability to adequately demonstrate "multiple constructions" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 296). Operating under these constructions often means giving weight to the notion of multiple interpretations and experiences for a similar population, such as chief fundraising officers in the TCSG. Due to *prolonged engagement* with my participants, I was able to leverage the rich, descriptive texts from each interview to establish greater sincerity in my research. I intentionally tried to provide enough textual context for readers to be able to orient themselves with each participant and draw their conclusions by employing the use of *thick descriptions* in describing all elements of my methodology, my narratives with direct quotations, and my conclusions with major themes and key findings (Foste, 2018).

Consistency is often associated with the ability to duplicate research. However, Lincoln and Guba (1985) argued through their definition of consistency that a broader interpretation is available to a narrative inquiry that accounts for change and growth. "Centrality of meaning" (Foste, 2018, p. 25) is critical to narrative inquiry and presents as transferability to research. Jones et al. (2014) refer to transferability as an "invit[ation] considering the researcher's work within the reader's own local context" (p. 56). Narrative inquiry is elevated by its ability to enable the reader to investigate a variety of subtleties in ways they might not have otherwise considered (Josselson, 2011).

Finally, neutrality refers to the researcher's relationship to the research as being in-depth but with appropriate distance and investment, free of judgment (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Riessman (1993) similarly spoke to these elements in her understanding of validation, saying that "there is no reason to assume that an individual's narrative will, or should be, entirely consistent from one setting to the next" (1993, p. 65). She has made an important distinction: "trustworthiness, not truth, is a key semantic difference" in narrative inquiry (Riessman, 1993, p. 65).

Lincoln and Guba (2013) provided guidance on the necessity of trust in every stage of qualitative, constructivist inquiry because the very nature of the research itself "precludes confidentiality" (p. 75). Complete confidentiality is impossible to guarantee, and the only semblance of such is provided through "personal contact and attention" (Lincoln & Guba, 2013, p. 76). In this study, confidentiality was achieved through informed consent, using pseudonyms for participant and institutional names, and intentionality in protecting interviews and data. Raw data was stored on a password-protected computer, and transcribed data was kept in a locked office. I employed a random name generator online to produce pseudonyms for the participants and their institutions.

The study's trustworthiness has been affirmed as each participant exercised the opportunity to review their interview records and correct misunderstandings through *member checking* (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Riessman, 1993). Additionally, I have documented an *audit trail* to "be transparent, making every point of research design and data collection visible and accompanied by a corresponding rationale" (Foste, 2018, p. 26). I used password-protected Quirkos and OneDrive tools to keep data organized and memo-writing throughout the entire process as a *reflexive journal*. I have maintained a password-protected hyperlinked dissertation plan in which all materials related to my study are stored. Prior to data collection, I participated in a year of Dissertation Dive-In (DDI) courses at VSU, as well as in collaborative sessions and writing boot camps with Creating Connections Consulting, which provided the opportunity to have other doctoral candidates read, edit, and offer feedback on my work through *peer debriefing*. Finally, I have allowed for *referential adequacy* by maintaining archives of my raw data in Quirkos for subsequent analysis, interpretation, and verification.

Ethical Considerations

The American Educational Research Association (AERA, 2009) offers guidance on ethical research standards. I present these standards as Kim (2015) described, along with the accompanying approach within this study (see Table 5). Additionally, I completed an IRB Basics refresher course offered by the Collaborative Institutional

Training Initiative (CITI) in the Spring of 2023 prior to beginning this study's data collection to comply with the IRB standards of VSU and TCSG as well as to refamiliarize myself with the best practices in ethical human research. My CITI certificate is found in Appendix E, and the protocol exemption report is available in Appendix F. All research and data were stored on a password-protected computer and within password-protected software, including Quirkos, Qualtrics, and Microsoft OneDrive. Codes were given to each participant at the onset of the interview phase, and I used a random name generator website to assign pseudonyms.

Table 5

American Educational Research Association (AERA) 2009 Standards for Ethics

AERA Standards for Ethics	Approach Within This Study
Human Consent/Access to Information: Honor human consent agreements; explicitly state IRB approval.	Each participant received voluntary informed consent disclosures on the first invitation when receiving the Qualtrics demographics survey and at the start of each interview session. The university's IRB approval was also disclosed in the invitation to participate.
Perspectives and Voices: Respect and honor participants' perspectives.	Each participant reviewed their narrative presentation and corrected for inaccuracies or errors before it was included in Chapter 4.
Bias: The researcher's perspective should be acknowledged in the study.	*Shop talking* occurred often with my colleagues to provoke different perspectives in the analysis. Additionally, I employed a researcher memo journal to disclose thoughts and feelings throughout the process.
Evidence/Reasoning: Explain how conclusions were reached.	Decisions on coding and analysis were aligned with the research questions' epistemological basis, requiring initial and process coding for initial analysis.

Funding/Sponsorship: Indicate any funding relationships.	This study was neither externally funded nor sponsored.

Role of the Researcher

To borrow from the words of Seidman (2006), I considered it “a privilege to gather the stories of people” (p. 5), and with this privilege came great responsibility. I disclosed my personal and professional relationship with the topic in Chapter 1, in that I worked within the TCSG between 2016 and 2022. Over time, I became frustrated with the lack of resources and professional development provided for myself and my fellow chief fundraising officers. I observed that TCSG was not yet ready to invest in the professional development of its chief fundraising officers because the return on that investment had not yet been fully demonstrated. I brought well-informed and practical experiences in the setting and position to this study. However, with familiarity with the topic and subjects, I also brought the biases of my understanding and experiences. To overcome these personal biases, I committed to writing memos with reflective notes, questions, and disclosures even before the study began (Seidman, 2006). Before each interview, I used my research journal to memo feelings, thoughts, assumptions, and biases to “empty” my mind as much as possible. I began the research journal after finishing coursework and continued the practice throughout my study. This allowed me a safe space to process my part in the interview and research process.

One key difference between qualitative and quantitative research is that qualitative research appreciates the role of the researcher as an “instrument” (Seidman, 2006, p. 23) in the study. I understand and appreciate my role as a vehicle for capturing and sharing the participants’ stories. I did not intend to insert my beliefs, assumptions, or evaluations into the shared accounts. I worked hard to make myself a vulnerable participant by sharing a rapport and trust with each participant (Seidman, 2006). One element of providing more trustworthiness in my role was examining my reflexivity in this research.

Reflexivity

Parahoo (2006) defines reflexivity as a cycle of continuous reflection on the part of the qualitative researcher to better understand their perceptions, beliefs, and behaviors, with a conscious understanding that those all have implications on their experience in their research. Hertz (1997) described reflexivity as the point of recognition between what a researcher knows and how they know it. As stated above, I know and have feelings about the role of a chief fundraising officer in the TCSG because, prior to this study, I had been one for several years. Before beginning this study, I had to accept that my perception was solely mine, and I could not presuppose it would be the same experience for my participants. Jootun et al. (2009) described reflexivity in action through their use of "research diaries to bring to awareness the influences on their interpretation of the data" (p. 4). They also explained the "possibility of becoming enmeshed with the subjects," complicating the distance between a researcher and their participants (p. 4). One helpful strategy as a reflexivity exercise is bracketing or bringing to the forefront of consciousness a researcher's beliefs and dispositions on the subject matter (Jootun & McGhee, 2009). Jootun and McGhee (2009) recommended several strategies for reflexive work, including corresponding explanations for how each strategy was executed in this study (see Table 6). I used several approaches within this study to invoke a reflexivity in myself and my work.

Table 6

Jootun and McGhee (2009) Reflexivity Strategies

Jootun & McGhee's (2009) Reflexivity Strategy	Approach Within This Study
Focusing solely on the participants' experiences, do not defend or add additional information.	Prior to each interview, I attempted to "empty" my own experiences. I also practiced reflective and active listening during each interview.
Clearly define the conditions that produced the data to disclose how the researcher may have impacted the setting and data.	I have oriented readers to the settings and conditions of interviews by describing each in the narrative presentations.
Employ a research diary.	I began a research diary in January 2022 during the research phase of this study and have continued this process throughout the research project.
Utilize a decision trail that clarifies the participants' selection process and the question sets' formulation.	An audit trail was provided in this report. Also, the interview guide is available as Appendix H.

Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to describe a clear plan for data collection and analysis in this study. The research design, collection, analysis, and presentation were all considered in the context of current literature to fill gaps in understanding the chief fundraising officers' experiences in 2-year college settings. The participants' individual experiences, told from their first-person point of view, remained the heart of this research to answer the study's research questions. In the next chapter, the participants' stories are presented.

Chapter 4

NARRATIVE PROFILES

The purpose of this study was to understand how chief fundraising officers use learning experiences and projects to build professional capacity. The interview guide was crafted to this understanding as well as to answer the following sub-questions:

(a) What are the learning experiences and projects of chief fundraising officers in the Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG)?

(b) What do these learning experiences and projects demonstrate about the professional capacity of chief fundraising officers in the TCSG?

(c) In what ways can the learning experiences and projects of the chief fundraising officers in the TCSG help to improve the professional capacity of 2-year college fundraisers?

The interview guide demonstrates the guiding questions that helped to stimulate conversation; however, the participants heavily steered the conversations and the thematic elements they wished to highlight.

Participant Profiles

Four participants completed the entire survey and interview series. I compiled a table to present their self-reported demographics (see Table 7). In the table, FTE refers to the average annual full-time enrollment at the participant's institution. All four participants had a master's degree, and one of the four also had a doctorate. All four participants identified as White. One of the four participants identified as a man. All participants had five or more years of experience in higher education.

Table 7

Participant's Demographics

Pseudonym	**Gender**	**Race**	**Education**	**Tenure in Higher Education**	**Institution**	**FTE at Institution**
Thomas	Man	White	Graduate	5	Somerset	1001-3000
Annette	Woman	White	Graduate	15	Grapevine	7,000+
Patricia	Woman	White	Graduate	13	Eagle Mountain	5,001-7,000
Sherrie	Woman	White	Graduate	18	Horizon	1,001-3,000

All participants shared candid and heartfelt experiences and observations of their tenure before TCSG and at present. This sample does not represent the entire population of TCSG chief fundraising officers. Instead, it is meant to vocalize how some chief fundraising officers use learning experiences and projects to build professional capacity.

Within each participant's vignette, I refer to a list of CASE's 2020 competencies for *Principles of Practices for Fundraising Professionals at Educational Institutions,* available as Appendix K. These competencies are personal integrity, confidentiality, public trust, disclosure, and compensation. Each participant received a copy of these competencies before each interview.

Thomas

Thomas (pseudonym) is the chief fundraising officer for Somerset Technical College (Somerset) (pseudonym), where he serves as the executive director for the foundation and the marketing department. As an undergraduate, Thomas studied agricultural communication and completed an additional leadership and service certificate. As a junior and senior undergraduate student, Thomas was an ambassador for his institution's alumni association. Through his work as an ambassador, Thomas first understood the importance of philanthropy in higher education. Thomas also attended a Council for the Support and Advancement of Education (CASE) conference as an undergraduate student, allowing him to see the profession from behind the scenes. Although Thomas had previously encountered fundraising for organizations and clubs as a child, he credited his CASE experience as the first indication that fundraising was an actual professional career. After a few years in the workforce, he began working on his master's degree, achieving his Master of Public Administration in journalism and mass communications with an emphasis in public relations from a state-flagship 4-year university. While pursuing his master degree, Thomas undertook a capstone project focused on fundraising, as his interest had been piqued by his undergraduate experience with the alumni association.

After graduating, Thomas started working at his alma mater in a unit's decentralized marketing and communications office. Thomas recalled there being a "little bit of development, communications, and marketing" in the role as he supported the signature events for the unit, which also happened to be Thomas's undergraduate school within the university. He also spent time cultivating corporate sponsorships, fostering alumni relationships, and engaging in student philanthropy through his work with the ambassador program he had once been with as a student. Thomas was in this role for about eight years before transitioning to TCSG.

Thomas first came to know about the position at TCSG through a Somerset Technical College Foundation board member whom Thomas had known professionally for about seven years. She was an alum of Somerset and advocated that Thomas consider applying for the position that would ultimately be responsible for marketing and fundraising at Somerset. Thomas did some additional homework on the institution, asked around his network about its reputation and position, and decided to apply.

Thomas described Somerset as a " medium-sized college town with another university in it." Somerset has an average annual enrollment of 5,500-6,000 students, with about 1,000 of those full-time students. The institution is predominantly White, and many students receive financial aid. The most popular programs of study are business, cosmetology, and health-related studies.

Thomas had been at Somerset for about two and a half years when we met. On his initial introduction to Somerset and TCSG, he recalled being given a general onboarding module and some accompanying state-mandated training. Thomas said, "I don't think there was anything related to job-specific training at all," and he relied on one other development office employee to "basically give [him] the lay of the land." Thomas is responsible for both fundraising and marketing for the entire college. He remembered having a mentor-type figure at the TCSG system office for marketing, but he did not feel he had one for fundraising. Thomas noted that many people equated fundraising as a profession similar to sales, but he considered them different. Thomas explained that fundraising had "a little bit more heart" than sales, and while sales could be rewarding by adding value to a company and being compensated for such, fundraising was unlike any other reward. "I can't think of any more rewarding work," Thomas said, "than to see the outcome of your hard work in a student or institution's success."

One of Thomas's first challenges was establishing "consistency with people in the position," leaving him to fill in gaps for himself. "It seemed like there were a lot more questions than there were answers to how do we do things—can we even pull a list of our donors?" recalled Thomas. He remembered a lot of backlogs of data to input into the donor relationship software and felt as though he had to figure out a strategic direction for the office quickly. Thomas assembled the small group of teachers he had—his one employee and his Board chair. The three had many roundtable discussions to speak candidly about what operation needs were and what fundraising and development goals were feasible to increase revenue. Over time, Thomas began to feel as though fundraisers at TCSG were often "looked over" due to a lack of understanding of the role and the work.

Thomas started his role in May 2021 and attended his first professional conference, the Georgia Education Advancement Council (GEAC) annual conference, that November. He felt that experience was helpful to him early on in his tenure at TCSG. However, ultimately, he credits the peer-to-peer networking and relationship-building from that conference as his most significant takeaway.

When I asked if fundraisers are born or made, Thomas took a pause and then confidently said,

> I really feel like they are made. Because I feel like most of the people I know in the industry didn't . . . it's not like they went to school thinking, "I want to be a fundraiser." It's like they kind of, you kind of, fall into it one way or another. You use transferable skills, usually from other sectors,

to build your skills as a fundraiser. I don't think that there are many people that graduate high school and think I'm gonna be a fundraiser, you know?

Thomas described the best fundraisers as having a natural relatability. He also noted the importance of being organized and able to document well. "They've got to have a vision and be able to implement and persuade other people to join that vision from the organization," Thomas elaborated.

Thomas found other essential characteristics in a good fundraiser: strong communication skills, honesty, authenticity, and drive. Thomas noted that good fundraisers had a lot of patience. He also felt it important that fundraisers celebrated their wins, even the small ones, and he admitted he and his peers did not take the opportunity to do that enough. Conversely, Thomas felt that a bad fundraiser did not ask for money or one who did ask for money without having done their homework first. He stressed the importance of preparing and researching before meetings and being prepared with good questions. Diligence in communications and follow-up were also essential qualities that Thomas deemed necessary for the role. Thomas had difficulty naming the best fundraiser he knew, citing the industry standard of frequent turnover as preventing him from observing many fundraisers for very long periods.

When presented with the CASE competencies for educational fundraisers, Thomas resonated immediately with the concepts of integrity and trust, describing these as "a big part of development." Thomas relayed that he had experience within other institutions that were more metric-driven than values-driven, and he felt that performance should be measured on demonstratable competency in areas like integrity, trust, and relationship-building rather than on dollars raised alone. Thomas has chosen to stay in the field of fundraising because, as he described it, “It’s a unique opportunity that is kind of a more niche sector, where you can go and develop these great relationships and do something good for an organization and most fundraising really shouldn’t have any bad to it.” He went on to say that the only bad part of fundraising was when your project did not get funded or got delayed, but that it was more of a disappointment of what could have been than a bad feeling. One of Thomas's most insightful comments was describing fundraising as “more optimistic than pessimistic” work. I had never considered framing it like that before, but this idea of the work tending to be positive even when things do not go the fundraiser’s intended way was inspiring. Thomas also described liking the feeling of contributing to people in his community who would, in turn, continue to contribute to the community themselves.

Thomas described some of his most memorable fundraising moments, saying that he had recently been asked if he would like to accept an expensive, life-sized stuffed lion and that he often had to make judgment calls as to which gifts were viable for the foundation and college to accept. Thomas also described a recent conversation with a donor who established a scholarship in memory of their daughter who had died several years ago as a “full-circle moment,” when the most recent recipient happened to be an old classmate of their daughter’s from 15 or 20 years ago, returning to school at Somerset.

Professional development and learning the role for Thomas meant “trying to figure out what other people are doing and what is successful and also doing trial and error to see what is successful for your context.” Thomas believed he had learned best in situations where the experience was provided to him because he felt like “there are some things, like at peer group meetings, that I just would not seek out on my own.” Thomas shared four unique learning projects he had undertaken this year. He cited his participation in GEAC and the TCSG peer group as learning opportunities for him, as well as his ability to work with a professional coach and research regarding a customer relationship management (CRM) donor database. Thomas explained that sometimes the most significant challenge to learning in this role was “sometimes not knowing what we need or where to go to find it.”

GEAC.

Thomas described the GEAC annual conference as providing a good mixture of content from both marketing and fundraising arenas, making it particularly pertinent to him as he manages both for Somerset. “There’s a big dichotomy between large shops and small shops, so a lot of the large shop stuff doesn’t always apply to me. So, it’s, you know, sometimes, it’s not always exactly helpful, but sometimes it is,” he shared. Moreover, Thomas enjoyed the chance to bounce ideas off his colleagues within and outside TCSG at the GEAC annual conference. The GEAC annual conference is a 3-day event usually held at an off-site location. Thomas felt he did not need to prepare for the learning experience at the conference before attending but did need to dedicate as much of his attention during the three days as possible to the agenda. One of Thomas’s employees initiated their participation in the GEAC conference by signing up Thomas and herself. Once there, Thomas could customize his schedule based on his preferences for topics and sessions. Participation in the GEAC conference did require an investment of Thomas’s time and Somerset’s financial resources to register and send him off-campus. As a manager, Thomas had to weigh the costs and benefits of taking his employee with him to events like the GEAC annual conference. “With just two of us, if we’re both out at a conference, that means there is nobody back in the office answering the phone and taking students’ questions when they walk up.”

TCSG Peer Group

Thomas recounted receiving information regarding board relations and management, developing proposals, best practices in governance, trends in fundraising, and strategic planning from the TCSG peer group meetings over the last year. Thomas remembered the peer group meetings being in person each spring, summer, and fall. Thomas described the peer group meetings as more mandatory learning, which is “a function of [his] job essentially.” Peer group meetings function similarly to the GEAC annual conference regarding the resources required, so Thomas had to allocate travel time and budget to participate fully in these meetings. Thomas cited being unable to “unplug” from the office as one of the challenges to learning at the peer group meetings, saying,

> You’re working, trying to answer emails, while you’re also trying to learn because there is so much going on. If you don’t stay on top of things, you’re only going to get further behind and more frustrated. You can’t always shut your email off for two days for the sake of professional development.

Additionally, Thomas felt that the meetings' content could get repetitive without “new content” coming in each time. He added, “Professional development is definitely encouraged in our system, but you also have to get your job done.”

Professional Coach

Thomas’s professional coach was initially hired as a special event consultant but quickly became a trusted long-term resource for Thomas. He described their work as optimizing the foundation's operations and helping him answer targeted, specific questions. He described “having very honest conversations and getting recommendations on how to navigate different situations, whether it be fundraising or office or board relations” with his professional coach. Additionally, Thomas’s coach can provide insights to Thomas on the donor fundraising cycle and encourage him to focus more on major gift work. “One of my coach’s big things is you need to ask all your questions and do not leave meetings with questions unanswered,” Thomas shared. He could couple his coaching work with personal research that allowed him to be prepared with specific questions and ideas for the coaching sessions. He had spent time looking at other organizations’ giving societies, fundraising appeals, and special events to inform his conversations with his coach.

Since the few days they spent together working on the event, they had reached a weekly consultation schedule for the last three months. Initially, Thomas reached out to and hired the coach for the special event, but after the success, his supervisor had asked the coach to stay on retainer as a professional coach for Thomas individually. While the coaching required additional financial resources of Somerset and Thomas’s time, he also had to work outside each coaching meeting to prepare and progress towards the next meeting. “There are always follow-ups or more research to be done to be prepared for our next meeting,” Thomas said.

Donor Database Research

One of the biggest projects Thomas had undertaken within the last year was evaluating the current donor database, often referred to within the field as CRM software. “Right now, I’m evaluating the CRM systems that will work best for our foundation, and that is not necessarily new, but the platforms themselves are new, and how they'd impact our infrastructure in our office would be new," Thomas said.

Thomas had leaned into the peer group to get references and recommendations from others on what platforms they were using. Thomas's goal was to consolidate all his software into one CRM rather than using multiple platforms for different purposes like the office had currently. "This'll allow us to be better organized and to automate a few things that can go a long way with a limited staff," Thomas explained. Thomas said other institutions sometimes hired consultants to help them pick the best CRM. "It can be a full-time job," Thomas said, but he was willing to put in the work to find the right fit for his needs and operations at Somerset. Thomas estimated that he had spent about a whole week and a half in hours researching and consulting others on potential CRMs and all his learning was self-motivated. Thomas had dedicated time and electronic resources to understanding and evaluating CRMs. He had not paid for additional resources like CASE or an external consultant to provide recommendations on the CRM.

> I went to one prospect research webinar just because I was interested and it could inform this CRM decision, but the folks presenting were from a major university with a whole division just dedicated to prospect research. So, the context of that content is not always 100% transferable, and I have to be cautious about where I spend my time.

Reflecting on his career so far, Thomas felt like he had learned "you have to articulate impact and lead with impact rather than skipping ahead to end results." Even though he had come to Somerset feeling like "he was starting a new foundation from scratch," he felt as though it had been a good learning experience. To overcome that obstacle, Thomas had to balance his time, saying, “It can be frustrating when it’s like I’m still trying to learn what I need to do while also trying to do what I need to do.” Additionally, Thomas has had to overcome misconceptions in his role such as the foundation has an endless supply of money to give away. He also explained one of the ironies of the work beautifully, saying, “We’re trying to sell people on an institution that often did not benefit from our services. Most of our major donors are not alumni that went to our institution. There are so many different causes out there, how do we stand out?” He cited his work in the past year with the professional coach as one of his career's most impactful learning experiences thus far. “There are no magic answers, but she can provide guidance and expertise from years of experience,” he said. At the end of our series of interviews, Thomas nicely summarized his beliefs about how chief fundraising officers build capacity,

> I think they build professional capacity by leveraging their networks. I mean, just being kind of like a sponge and soaking up everything within their institution. Because not only do you have to know development, but you also have to know a little bit about everything at your institution, too. You need to be able to articulate that back to a donor and then be able to ask them good questions. Whether you are trying to build capacity or just do any part of your job, that is important. And then I think you have to have some enthusiasm for your work, and people externally and internally, they’ll see that. Success breeds success. So maybe then more funding and resources flow your way for more professional development or a professional coach.

Annette

Annette (pseudonym) is the chief fundraising officer for Grapevine Technical College (Grapevine) (pseudonym), where she serves as the associate vice president for institutional advancement. Before coming to Grapevine, Annette had fundraising experience with a community nonprofit museum and a large health-related nonprofit chapter in her community. Her first job out of college was at a local ad agency. Wanting more stability in her professional life, Annette went on to a large insurance agency where she was responsible for marketing. After a few years in that role, she felt the position had "kind of run its course," so she applied for a position with the large health-related nonprofit chapter in her community. She described the setting as very corporate and very different from what she was accustomed to. The nonprofit was very goal driven but had very little support in the infrastructure, and Annette was responsible for fundraising from six counties with no fundraising experience. When there was a leadership transition in that organization, Annette made her transition to the community nonprofit museum. At the museum, Annette was still primarily involved in marketing. Following that role, she transitioned to Grapevine, her first in higher education fundraising. She recalled her journey into fundraising as "really by accident." She came to Grapevine with her bachelor's in journalism communications with an emphasis on public relations. About eight years into her tenure at Grapevine, Annette returned to school and earned her master's in public administration.

Annette was already aware of Grapevine as a native to and living in the community Grapevine serves. After spending some time out of the workforce raising her second child, she was specifically interested in a state-government-related position. She described the benefits of these types of positions as stable, which is an important value to her. On Annette's first day, she learned more about the structure and governance of the system within which Grapevine operated. She admitted she was unfamiliar with TCSG already and had assumed it was within the University System of Georgia (USG), a common misconception in public awareness.

Annette described herself as walking into some "turmoil" when she first took on the position because there had been a recent shift in presidents, and her predecessor had retired after a very long career. She remembered that on her first day on the job, the president had called her to his office to talk. "First thing he said was well, I'm so glad you're here. I just wanna make sure you understand I don't fundraise. That's why you're here," Annette recalled.

Annette and I engaged a knowing glance at this comment, as we both know the importance of a president to a chief fundraising officer's success. Annette described the president's leadership style as one that meant she had to find her own way. Annette went on to say she had no formal training for her position and inherited a "wreck" of an office that was "wild" for one person to manage alone. At the time, she had no employees, but she already knew a few people on the Board of Trustees. Initially, her job was primarily oriented towards fundraising, with some special events planning included. Over time, the job included elements of marketing as well as grant writing.

Another early challenge for Annette was the existing culture of Grapevine, in that many of her colleagues saw the foundation as a source of endless income for whatever was needed. She recalled her first afternoon working at Grapevine when a vice president came into her office and said, “Well, I’m gonna need $25,000, and you’re gonna give it to me.” Annette described the experience as “eye-opening,” saying that,

> That was the expectation, but with the help of my board to help me say “No!” We were going to have a process in place, and it was not going to work like that. This is donor’s money, not your money.

Initially, encounters like these made Annette question her decision to come to Grapevine. “I told my husband just a few days in, ‘I think I’ve made a mistake.’” Annette added that with the confidence and wisdom of time and experience, she knew how to better advocate and assert herself to her superiors and colleagues.

As Annette explained, Grapevine serves 11 counties that are mostly rural, with three being considered more urban. Annette’s service delivery area is “bigger than the state of Delaware” comparatively, so she literally has a lot of ground to cover. Grapevine has six other private, public, and for-profit higher education institutions within its same footprint. Grapevine’s institutionally related foundation, which Annette oversees, has been in existence since 1991. Within her first few years at Grapevine, Annette encountered several different presidents, as the college was undergoing major transformations as well as an impending merger with a sister institution. Grapevine merged with another college around 2013, which meant Annette had to merge two institutionally related foundations, a process that took over a year. Annette described Grapevine’s current culture as very much team oriented and positive, and she credited her current president as “very dynamic” in their leadership style. Grapevine employs about 1,000 faculty and staff, 400 of whom are full-time.

I told Annette that the question I am trying to answer with this research is how chief fundraising officers in the TCSG learn how to do their jobs. Without missing a beat, Annette responded, “OJT . . . on-the-job training.” When coming to Grapevine, Annette had received no formal training for her role. However, she did find a strong peer group network within TCSG that was “immeasurably helpful” and where she “learned the most about how to do things, the way things were being done at other places, and maybe what worked and what did not work.” She also found mentorship among her board members, saying that several were strong community advocates who were very patient and kind. “But as far as someone on staff at the college that was a mentor . . . absolutely not,” Annette said. Also, TCSG did not offer formal training or teaching plans at the time. Annette recalled that early on in her tenure, the system office engaged with a consulting group charged with training the chief fundraising officers, but she did not find that to be very effective. Annette had sought professional development and training from external organizations like the Georgia Center for Nonprofits (GCN) and the Council for Resource Development (CRD), which is no longer in existence. Annette also found professional development through her TCSG peer group, an effort of organized meetings between all 22 technical college foundations and the state office foundation.

About three weeks into her role, Annette recalled her first peer group meeting, where she met colleagues in her same position around the state. She described that impact as “immeasurable” in that she could ask questions and learn in a collegial and collaborative environment, one in which she felt immediately “embraced.” She still calls that group her “sounding board,” but she admitted she was now one of the “veterans” helping the younger cohort of chief fundraising officers to learn their job. When reflecting on the most impactful professional development of her career thus far, Annette cited the occasions she had been able to learn from and with her peers. Annette admires the fundraising efforts of her colleagues these days, and she mentioned Sherrie from Horizon Technical College by name. “She believes in it, and you just know it’s pure,” Annette said, and that is “a measure of true success.” She also noted a colleague in the University System of Georgia in her community who made “you feel at ease and then before you know it, you’ve given her a blank check.” As a fundraiser, Annette considered her to be one of the best. She described the current president of Grapevine as someone who also puts donors at ease, and she tried to emulate that same spirit in her own work. She hoped that as she disseminated learning to others, “They’d say I don’t ever ask them to do something I wouldn’t do and that I’ve at least shared something worthy, that the knowledge I’ve given them will make them better and able to leave that mark.”

The most pervasive challenge to Annette’s learning and professional development had been the material and coursework progressing with her. “The offerings, I am more than just at a beginning level now, and strategic, thoughtful advanced professional training is really lacking in the field.” Additionally, Annette realized there were still some misconceptions about her work. Some colleagues on campus perceived the foundation as the one “to throw parties and buy the liquor.” While some stewardship and “party-throwing” was necessary, Annette stressed that the foundation only existed to help students. Additionally, she had to overcome other misconceptions associated with her role, like her work was “just fundraising,” when really “it is so much more, and we’re the victims of our own success, because when we do things well, they just keep piling on and piling on because they know it’ll get done.”

In the past, she had also had to manage, convince, and educate her past presidents that they, too, should be involved in fundraising. Annette also spoke to the public's misunderstanding that the technical colleges were entirely funded by the state when, in reality, the percentage of funding allocated to the system had been cut year after year. The jargon of fundraising can confuse the public, Annette shared, and the nuances of technical education itself were confusing as well.

In thinking about what makes a fundraiser successful, Annette tried to exemplify characteristics she considered essential to the role so that her colleagues could better understand and appreciate her work. When describing a successful fundraiser, Annette believed they "exude passion for their project," they were genuine in their interactions, and they were very personable. And while she considered these qualities necessary, she also thought fundraising could be learned, saying, "I think if you have the right mindset and the heart for it, you can do [fundraising]." Annette shared that a bad fundraiser was more challenging to connect with and made conversations and interactions uncomfortable.

Annette was familiar with CASE and had attended some conferences and webinars they had offered. She described "little nuggets" she picked up along the way from these conferences or webinars that were helpful to her, but overall, she had not found the association to be applicable to her work. "Most of the schools they're dealing with are larger scale schools," Annette observed, finding it difficult to find relevance to Grapevine. "We're so limited, too, with the training that we do have available that we just have to take what we can get, and there's nothing that is really at that level other than CASE," Annette remarked. She offered in a post-event survey to help with the conference in the future and never heard back. She said she utilized CASE for industry standards and case studies today but did not consider it a major form of her professional development.

One of Annette's most memorable requests came as she sat down with a strong supporter to ask them for a million-dollar gift. She had spent weeks studying and preparing for the big meeting. When the day came, she "had this whole speech planned," but the donor cut her off and said, "Why did it take you so long to ask?" She described that as an important lesson that taught her not to be afraid to ask, to leave nothing on the table, not to take the "No's" personally, and to be ready for success when you had put in the time and effort to cultivate a strong relationship with a donor. Annette finished our first conversation with a striking observation:

> Just to see what education can do for a person, and if I can be a small piece of help along the way, it is so rewarding to me to see and hear those success stories. And, to even get to meet with students who come back and say, "You know, I was $100 away from being on the street, and you didn't know that, but you did this for me, and now I've elevated myself and I'm moving on." That makes the bad days worth it, to be able to say I had a small role in helping that student get to the finish line . . . I've watched people grow up and it is also so rewarding to see where we've come, even in the last ten years as a college. I mean, we were in turmoil, really and truly. Now, ten years later, we're taking students to study abroad in the Grenadines and in Ireland who have never even been outside of the country. It's crazy.

Annette described her learning style as being naturally curious and hungry for more information.

> "I don't ever want to be caught unaware. I don't ever want to be that person in the room [caught unaware]. It has really driven me continually to learn to say, 'Well I don't know the answer, but I'm going to go find out before they even realize I didn't know the answer.'"

She also felt as though self-directed learning was the most fruitful type of education for her as "nobody's going to advocate for me like I advocate for me. I'm definitely going to work harder at it if it's something that I want to do." Annette shared with me three different learning projects she had undertaken in the last year: (a) being short-staffed and training new employees, (b) participating in the GEAC annual conference, and (c) learning about a stock gift transaction.

Short-Staffed and Training New Employees

Annette had several employees a little over 12 months ago who were not in the role for their skill set, and so she described the learning process she had as a manager trying to compensate for that and, ultimately, letting those employees go without losing the budget for the position in the future. "I had to get a lot of help and I had to learn a lot from HR from a management standpoint on how to navigate that appropriately," Annette remembered. From that point of view, Annette had to learn to shift her perspective until she could be once again fully staffed.

> As far as the finer details of planning events and trying to do mid-level fundraising, because I was short staffed, because I didn't have two full-time staff members, I had to learn how to prioritize and focus really well.

> Really, I had to remind myself. I already knew how to prioritize and focus, but this was a strong reminder in that lesson.

Annette said she did not feel like the operations of the foundation suffered with this new bigger picture perspective, so she tried to implement more of that into her work since she became fully staffed. When it came time for interviewing, hiring, and onboarding the new employees, that also provided a learning opportunity. “It’s very rare that you get at least on our end, that you get somebody in advancement who’s got lots of experience coming into our positions. So, I am used to starting basically from scratch,” Annette said. She explained that this required her to slow down and think through how she would want to onboard her new employees. From a practice she had picked up many years ago, she implemented a 3-6-9-12 month evaluation plan for each new employee. She said this tool allowed her to understand what they had learned and accomplished in their first 3, 6, 9, and 1 year of employment. It was not a practice required by the state, but one Annette had implemented in her department since she hired her first employee years ago. She described it as “helping them stay on track, helping them know what they are responsible for, and helping me, as their manager, know what they are enjoying and where they may need more coaching or more learning opportunities.” Annette said the entire process had consumed hours weekly from her schedule in the last year as she had to interview, hire, and onboard new employees. Annette was self-motivated to take on this learning and its accompanying work because it would mean more manpower for her team; without these efforts, her vacant positions might have sat unfilled or worse, might be returned to budget in the next year. In addition to her own time and the college’s financial resources required for the work, Annette enlisted the help of some of her peer group members' help interviewing candidates for the position, acting in a semi-consultant position.

GEAC

Annette had a unique experience within the last 12 months with GEAC as she served as the lead planner for the conference that year. This leadership position allowed Annette more control over the session and workshop content. She approached that experience by thinking about what she wanted to learn and what she anticipated her peers would want to learn. She also incorporated the knowledge she had gained from onboarding new employees to include topics more pertinent to newcomers. “It is a good perspective to take it all the way back to the starting point like that,” she commented. Reflecting on this learning experience, Annette said she had learned the knowledge gaps for the GEAC annual conference regarding session and workshop content. She found that the knowledge gap was perpetuated because all the sessions and workshops were led by volunteers who submitted applications to present at the conference. “But the problem with that is we’re pulling on our own resources, right?” Annette explained. A lack of financial resources prevented the group from hiring too many professional speakers or experts to come to the conference. “If we don’t have the authority on the topic we’re presenting on, where will we get it from?” Annette shared that this is a common point of contention in this industry.

When Annette was in the thick of planning the conference, she said she had spent several hours each week on the work, but now that she was no longer in that role, she only spent about 5 hours a month contributing to the board. She recalled her entire experience with GEAC being self-motivated, though she did credit colleagues from her peer group who encouraged her to get involved and attend the conference years ago. Since GEAC is a statewide entity, Annette said she learned a lot about higher education fundraising from a broader perspective. “Anytime you’re leading a statewide organization, you’re going to learn a lot about the product, the people, the personalities, the timing, the scheduling, all of that kind of stuff,” she said.

Stock Gift Transaction

Annette had a completely new learning experience this year regarding stock gift transactions. Annette had not personally managed a stock gift transaction from start to finish in her 15-year career. She was approached by a donor in August who wanted to transfer some stock to Grapevine before the end of the calendar year. Annette first started by researching her existing policies on gift acceptance. She had to initiate “several other processes that had to be set in place, and [she] had to figure out which processes were best for [Grapevine].” She tried to think long-term so that whatever procedure she instituted would be helpful for future circumstances. “The policy was there, but the procedure wasn’t really fine-tuned yet. So, I worked through that, and I learned about that,” Annette recalls. Annette remembers she had to research how to accept the stock gift between financial institutions manually, account for the gift in her own bookkeeping, and judge whether to keep the stock or immediately sell it. “It was more complicated than I thought it was, but it was a good learning opportunity for me,” Annette said.

Ultimately, the donor was happy and the entire learning process from start to finish took Annette between 2 and 3 months. From the experience, Annette learned more about the financial jargon associated with this type of gift and the difference in stock ratings, information that she could now share with others in her office and peer group.

Additionally, she recognized she did not have a financial investor or advisor on her foundation board, so she prioritized finding someone with that skill set as a resource in the future. Annette had to step outside her comfort zone to work so closely with finances, and she also leveraged her years of experience in relationship management by "diplomatically finding out from the donor what kind of stock we were discussing" and whether it was one the foundation would want to accept.

The peer group provided Annette examples of policies and procedures that she could craft into a version for Grapevine's board approval. Additionally, she was able to speak to trusted community members with investment banking experience and other nonprofit leaders to gain insights. Annette said there "is no question" that her desire to learn about this process was entirely self-directed.

When we took the time to reflect on Annette's career and learnings thus far, she remarked,

> I'm standing on the shoulders of those who came before me. So, I just want to leave it better than I found it. And even if that is just impacting one person, that's good enough for me. I want to look back and say, "I was entrusted with something good, and I made it stronger than before.

Her parting wisdom for an incoming chief fundraising officer was to lean on their network and find a mentor early on. "I would also say, don't ever stop learning, you've got to keep learning." Annette believed that chief fundraising officers built professional capacity by "mentoring, growing their knowledge every day, and striving to be the best at their job," while also paying it forward, and "sharing the knowledge with the next level of folks who come through so we can leave it better than we found it."

Patricia

Patricia (pseudonym) is the vice president for institutional advancement and marketing at Eagle Mountain Technical College (Eagle Mountain) (pseudonym). She earned her associate degree in business management, her bachelor's degree in business management and marketing, and her master's in business administration all before beginning her career at Eagle Mountain. Patricia started working at Eagle Mountain in late 2010. In 2018, she earned her doctorate in educational leadership. Like many fundraisers, Patricia started her career in marketing with a digital marketing agency and then worked for a national sports radio syndicate in south Florida. When she first moved to the community where Eagle Mountain is located, she spent time building connections and eventually served as director of marketing for the local hospital system. In that role, she was exposed to marketing and communications for the hospital system's affiliated foundation. When she was looking for her next career move, the role at Eagle Mountain seemed to be the perfect fit, combining her work in marketing and communications in a foundation setting.

Eagle Mountain was in its last year of a capital fundraising campaign when Patricia came on board, and she described it as "a huge weight on her shoulders" as she tried to manage not only the public relations and marketing for the college and foundation but also to complete a capital campaign. "They literally did their capital campaign in an Excel spreadsheet," Patricia remembered, without judgment, as they had a "very elementary way of doing things as a young foundation." At that time, Eagle Mountain had not yet merged, and so it operated under a different name and served only three counties. Patricia's role was to lead a combined office that housed marketing and the foundation, and she had one part-time assistant to help her. “It took a lot of time and effort, a lot of blood, sweat, and tears, to get all of those things going in a forward direction,” she recalled. Back in 2010, Patricia remembered the foundation’s annual revenue being about $200,000. Today, she is proud that Eagle Mountain Foundation gives away $75,000 each semester in scholarships alone.

Patricia had moved to the Eagle Mountain community from out-of-state, so she was not familiar with the college or the TCSG. She met the college president at that time, whom she had known from other community networking events and stayed in touch for future opportunities, although nothing had been open at that time. He retired, and a new president was named, resulting in an opening in the marketing and foundation department. One of her mentors and friends, the Foundation Board chairman, wrote a letter of recommendation on her behalf, and “luckily I got the job,” Patricia remembered. “It takes a little while to learn everything about TCSG and wrap your arms around it,” she said, but she considered the challenge to be “really exciting at the time.”

Patricia spoke with a lot of admiration for that former Board Chairman, saying that he had been her mentor early on in her career at Eagle Mountain. “He was one of those people who just had the natural ability to have a conversation with anyone. He would go into a room, not knowing a soul, and walk out with 100 new friends,” she said. Patricia acknowledged he was not her only mentor at the time, but that he certainly played a pivotal role in sharing historical knowledge and offering unwavering support to her. One of her other mentors was the former president of the hospital system foundation, whom Patricia described as having a “wealth of foundation knowledge. She was just one of those people who always had a level head and a logical opinion and could guide you in a way that was always in best practices," Patricia remembered.

Patricia recalls that TCSG was doing a "phenomenal job for professional development internally" when she came on board. She was impressed that the TCSG already had a well-established peer group program that allowed her to learn from peers around the state with varying degrees of experience, some with 30 or more years of experience, she recalled. Patricia credited her college and TCSG with "working to professionally develop those individuals [in her position] and give them the resources that they all need at the ground level to make the asks happen." She considered her peer group her village, with whom she has collaborated for years, one that, collectively, garnered more recognition for the entire system. Patricia also cited the Georgia Education Advancement Council (GEAC) as her early source of professional development. The earliest days on the job were not easy for Patricia, so having these resources to fall back on proved to be crucial, as she remembered:

> For probably the first year and a half of my job with the college, I worked no less than 70 or 80 hours a week. I was working Friday nights, weekends, nights until 8:00 pm, late. But I also had to have work-life balance. I had small children. So, I would cook dinner and do stuff with my kids and then hop back on to work when they were asleep, like 9:00 o'clock at night, and I had to be done by 2:00 am to get some rest and then get back up with them.

The hard work paid off because she was able to demonstrate the value of her work and her department. Now, she has a full marketing staff of three full-time employees, two full-time employees in the foundation office, and an additional eight grant-funded employees who manage grants. The students are the main motivation that have kept Patricia motivated all these years,

> Seeing those students at graduation, I mean we spend about $25,000 to $30,000 a year on GED scholarships, and this year, we had 165 graduates [from the adult education GED program]. Those individuals have truly changed their lives. Being able to be a small part of that story, even unbeknownst to them, is meaningful. It reminds me why I do what I do, why I work so hard to find the dollars to support these students. I get to do something most people never have the opportunity to do, and that is to help other people change their lives.

Patricia leaned towards believing fundraisers are made, saying that, “There are certain characteristics of a fundraiser that are in our DNA, but no one goes to college or goes to start a career and says, ‘You know what? I’m gonna raise money for the rest of my life.’” Patricia went on to say the best fundraisers were the ones who did not feel the need to “blow their own horn,” or “turf guard” their successes. Rather, they were willing to teach and help others. Patricia felt as though a lot of the CASE competencies were spot on, saying that she could see them all at play in her own work. She shared an example of trust-building when her college was merging with another, meaning that she’d have to approach two separate foundations about the possibility of merging into one and co-mingling their hard-earned, fundraised dollars. Patricia saw this as an opportunity to share her own best practices with the other foundation staff, and with time, they learned to trust her and made more funds available to her foundation. Patricia also spoke about the “fiduciary responsibility” that her role carries, not only to document but also to follow through on donor intent for a gift. “Being willing to continually learn and humble yourself, to know you can’t do it all yourself, lends itself to the most career growth,” Patricia said.

Patricia shared with me two large learning projects she had undertaken in the last year: (a) planning and implementing a capital campaign for Eagle Mountain and (b) working towards obtaining the Certified Fund Raising Executive (CFRE) credential.

Capital Campaign

Patricia had been told Eagle Mountain needed to prepare for a capital fundraising campaign. Once she was given this information, Patricia took the learning into her own hands, saying, “I really kicked into, ok, I need to figure out exactly the steps I need to take to do this.” She described how she was trying to “hone in on the vision of the campaign, the problem the campaign is trying to solve, and how that impacts the community, and then saying that in a way that resonates with the individuals and corporations and others that we’re trying to make an ask of.” Patricia explained that this was different from the campaign she had first experienced when she started at Eagle Mountain. In fact, it was the first of its kind for Eagle Mountain, and it required her to do research and informational interviews to understand what the community had supported in the past. She had turned to CASE for additional resources, like white papers on best practices for capital campaign planning. Eagle Mountain had hired a consultant who could help Patricia with “more labor-intensive things like wealth screening,” as well as providing day-to-day feedback or coaching as Patricia needed. Specific topics that were not common to technical college foundation giving, like life insurance annuities and wills and trusts, for example, were topics Patricia could research on her own while also enlisting the help of her consultant for advice. Letting go and being able to delegate to the consultant had been a "learning curve, too" for Patricia, as she had spent so much of her career doing it all herself. "I have confidence in the people I've chosen to help me along this walk in this journey and they're teaching me, too," Patricia said.

Patricia estimated she had spent about 15 hours a week on this work for the last six months, but she acknowledged that was probably an underestimation. Patricia believed she had already learned a lot in just half a year, including the capital campaign plan, the case for support statement, capital outlay budgeting, project request organization and dissemination, consultant management, wealth screening, and donor database management and restructuring. Patricia leaned on some of her old documents and learnings from the first capital campaign she had participated in, but she also turned to some new technology. "I turned to ChatGPT to help me compile a capital campaign task list. It doesn't give you the answers or anything, but it did give me a timeline of how things should be managed, and I just used that as a starting point," she shared. "I'm just trying to use whatever methods and tools are available to us. Especially as a small shop, we have to be resourceful." Patricia cited a lack of time as a strong barrier to her capital campaign learning success, saying it "truly is a challenge to find the time to wrap your mind around everything and every piece of it," while trying to manage the day-to-day operations of her job.

CFRE

The Certified Fund Raising Executive (CFRE) credential is "a voluntary credential recognized worldwide, [it] signifies a confident, ethical fundraising professional" (CFRE, 2023). More than 7,000 fundraising professionals are CFREs worldwide, and the credential requires both an application and an examination (CFRE, 2023). Patricia was preparing to sit for the examination portion of the CFRE, so a lot of her learning this year was focused on the exam. "There are a lot of things we don't necessarily see in the 2-year setting that I've had to refamiliarize myself with, like giving in perpetuity, life insurance policies and annuities, and how to accept those kinds of gifts. We just don't encounter those in our practice," Patricia shared, so that had required her to study those topics more thoroughly.

Patricia was motivated to undertake this learning project because she felt it would make her a better professional. "I don't have to be an expert on all of these topics, but to be able to speak intelligently about them to a donor is important. Those individuals who can give at that capacity, they can tell if you know what you're talking about or not," Patricia commented. Patricia purchased a study guide and utilized materials and resources from the CFRE website to prepare for the examination. She had taken practice tests to simulate the test-day experience, which would be a full 4-hour test one weekend. Patricia also had to submit an application documenting her years of experience and success in the field prior to acceptance to take the exam. "It took me close to ten years because it does require a significant amount of documentation, not just within the profession, but also your contributions to leadership positions, civic organizations, volunteering, and furthering your education." Patricia was devoting 2 to 3 hours a week to studying for the exam, but admitted she wanted to get closer to 5 to 10 hours a week before she felt confident in taking the exam. "Carving out the time that I need to do that has proven to be a challenge for me," Patricia shared. Patricia was entirely self-motivated to obtain this certification, saying,

> It's something that I've always wanted to work towards since sort of the beginning of my career. It's one of those things that when people who are in the world [of fundraising] see it, they know you've become, you sort of have, a mastery of the craft. It just solidifies that, and really, it's just a personal goal that I would like to obtain.

Patricia summarized the impact of pursuing her CFRE as follows: "Having an opportunity to learn or relearn things from a different perspective, which is what studying for this does, helps you."

In thinking about the lifelong learnings in her career, Patricia felt that "the only thing that's consistent in what we do is change, whether it be from the college side, where initiatives are changing, changing visions, changing leadership, changing trends." This inevitable change had reinforced the need for continuous learning for Patricia. "We're really lucky that we have that opportunity for continuous learning through TCSG's peer group to share so much with colleagues around the state who understand what you are doing each day." Patricia noted that early on in her career, her mentors played a huge role in her learning individually, and with time, that had evolved into learning and even sharing her own learning within the peer group community. Patricia was able to disseminate some of her own knowledge through the continuing education department of economic development at Eagle Mountain. She had provided classes to external partners on customer service, conflict resolution, and new supervisor training. Patricia also credited her work outside of her professional career, volunteering and being involved with other nonprofits, with influencing her career learning outcomes. The sense of community in her work was what Patricia thought made them strongest, saying “No one has to reinvent the wheel, and everyone’s willing to support each other.”

One of the most pervasive challenges to Patricia’s long-term learning had been and remains “the lack of development for small offices.” She shared that professional development and continuing education available to chief fundraising officers often targeted larger institutions, making it harder for her to relate to and digest the information being provided to her. She also had to overcome the inevitable challenges of misconceptions: “We don’t just pick and choose who we want to give money away to. There’s a process. We’re not a checkbook. You don’t just come to us when you need to buy cookies,” she explained. Her foundation, like all the others within the TCSG, was a unique 501c3 separate from the college: “So, my office is technically running a whole separate nonprofit business in addition to my role here, and I think that is a misconception because people think we can just do whatever we want to do.” Patricia had to adhere to certain federal and state regulations to keep her foundation’s nonprofit status. Additionally, there were misconceptions about being a state-supported, public institution, as donors often questioned why her foundation existed or why students needed additional support beyond what taxpayers were already providing. Technical education itself could be hard for the public to understand: “It’s gotten better over the years, but there’s still a lot of misconceptions about what technical education is today,” Patricia said, “Once [the public] get on campus, their whole attitude changes about what technical education is, even if they are seeing the automotive or welding shop, they’re like ‘I didn’t realize just how interesting this is.’”

When I asked Patricia how chief fundraising officers build professional capacity, she responded with "continuous education," adding,

> You need good people around you, so you need to build the case to have more than just you in an office. Continue your education. Keep exceptional records, whether that be financial or donor or everything in between. Personally and professionally, fill your cup. I say personally because we're being asked and pulled in a million different directions, and if you're not filling your cup, no one else is going to.

Sherrie

Sherrie (pseudonym) is the vice president for marketing and institutional advancement at Horizon Technical College (Horizon) (pseudonym). She has bachelor's and master's degrees in journalism and public relations, and began her career at a daily newspaper—the first female sports editor of a daily in Georgia. She spent some time managing a public relations program for the city school system and then started her own marketing and communications firm which she led for 15 years. While teaching as an adjunct marketing professor at Horizon in the evenings, she was approached to apply for a full-time position at the college as the head of marketing and fundraising for the college. Although she was unsure if it was the right path forward, she applied and interviewed for the job and was selected for the position. "The rest is history, and I've been there ever since," Sherrie said with a smile.

Horizon, as Sherrie described, "is a family atmosphere. We are friends at work and friends in the community, and I think student success is the number one goal of most everyone that works at the college." Horizon is in a very rural area of Georgia that

Sherrie remarked “is the one place in our community where everyone feels comfortable to come.” Sherrie has been with Horizon for 18 years—the longest TCSG-tenured individual I interviewed. Sherrie had volunteer experience with fundraising at her church and her children’s school prior to working at Horizon, but this was her first time fundraising professionally. Sherrie’s marketing background gave her confidence to showcase the foundation and raise funds “because that’s what [she] knew how to do.” Her philosophy remains, “Friend-raising first, fundraising second.” However, the transition was not always the easiest. Initially, Sherrie was provided “absolutely no” professional development or onboarding. She said she “can remember attending senior staff meetings thinking ‘I’m an imposter.’”

To overcome this learning curve, Sherrie spent the first year listening more than talking, learning where the pitfalls were, and building internal relationships. “You’re thrown into a mixing bowl,” Sherrie remembered, “and you have to decide where do you spend most of your time.” Sherrie prioritized maintaining the reputation of the college’s image and brand, believing the fundraising could then follow. She believed fundraisers could be made, but the best ones have innate qualities like an outgoing personality and being detail-oriented. She stressed the importance of listening by telling a story,

> She told me about a young mother with two girls she had met who was dealing with housing insecurity. Her husband had left her, and she didn’t have a job, though this person is very well off today. Sherrie said that when they had started a project to raise money for housing on campus, this young mother was one of the first people she thought of because of that story she had been told many years before. This person ended up making a great donation for the project.

Sherri said the best fundraisers are not only those that can successfully ask for money once, but can keep the relationship going for years. She acknowledged that factors could influence a fundraiser's success, like internal strife and dissatisfaction impacting a faculty and staff giving campaign. She has confronted misconceptions in her role, like, "We don't do anything. We just plan parties. We just show up and take photos." Sherri explained just how much detail goes into that photo taking example that people often overlook, including getting all the right people in the room for photos, taking the actual photos, editing and uploading the photos, and then deciding how to best use the photos for the greatest overall impact, whether it be through personalized gifts or thank you notes. Sherri had also experienced push-back in the past as to why fundraisers are "never in their offices," because there can be a perception that they are not working when they are out in the community, meeting with donors and partners.

One of Sherri's memorable fundraising requests came from a *cold call*—an unexpected interaction with a potential donor. She remembered a gentleman wanting to donate to the aviation technology program at Horizon. Sherri was selling the program to him when all of a sudden, the donor said, "I agree with all that you said. I graduated from there." Sherri said she had to laugh at herself at that moment. "I'd never heard of him, and now he was in the process of giving us a Learjet," Sherri recalled.

Another cold call came in the form of an anonymous email that claimed a donor wanted to donate $200,000 to Horizon. At first, Sherri was wary of the email but after some research and reaching out to the donor directly, she confirmed the offer was real. She felt that was a pivotal moment, tying together her work in marketing and fundraising nicely, "The hard work that [we] did on the brand and the reputation and the marketing and you know, building the relationships, I'm certain that played a role in this person knowing who we were."

Sherri has participated in a few CASE conferences but feels they are "tailored to larger universities that make it unreal for someone in a small, 2-year school." She has found more value in the peer group at TCSG: "Most of the time, no one else on campus does the same thing as this particular office," so it is "invaluable" to be able to speak with people that not only understand but also live the same experience. "Whereas nobody else on your college campus has a clue about what you're asking, you could call somebody [from the peer group] and they would," Sherri remarked. When I shared the CASE competencies with Sherri, she said, "I agree with every one of them."

One of the most poignant moments in Sherri's interviews was when her past president, one of the best fundraisers she knew, recently passed away. "He had a way of making everyone feel comfortable and he clearly cared about people. His enthusiasm, his honesty, and his ability to make people feel comfortable and valued were what I always tried to emulate as a fundraiser," she said. She shared with her past president a deep love for student success. "Because education is a great equalizer, and with an education, people can care for themselves," Sherri said. She added, "I have heard us described as a bus. People get on the bus at different stops in life and they get off the bus at different points, and our bus is moving forward, and we like to take everybody as far as they would like to go."

Sherri and I talked about her preferences for learning in her role. Sherri prefers to learn in-person, peer-to-peer, and one-on-one. "I like to be able to look at somebody, size them up, and see what they've got to say," Sherri says. When we reflected on Sherri's overall career together, she thinks provided learning opportunities rather than self-directed ones had been the most beneficial. “When you’re away at a conference, you’re away from distractions and you can sit there and think about how I can tailor this to my college. It provides me internal reflection, and if it wasn’t provided, I just might not think about it.”

Overall, Sherri noted that lack of time was her largest barrier to learning in her role as chief fundraising officer. “There’s just so many hours in the day, you know,” she remarked. She was complimentary of Horizon and TCSG, saying that she had always been encouraged to and been provided the financial resources for any professional development or conference she wanted to participate in, but that she often felt the push-pull tension of not having enough time to be gone from the college and get everything done. Sherri felt as though time constraints have been and remain the largest barrier to her learning and professional development in her career. “It is probably because I wear so many hats and when I leave campus [for a professional development or learning opportunity], I am leaving something undone that nobody is going to do.” Sometimes fundraising must be “on the back burner,” she explained, because it “is whatever is prominent at the time” that requires her attention and focus.

Sherri described three unique learning experiences she had in the last year: (a) participating in the GEAC conference as a board member and participant, (b) participating in TCSG peer group meetings, and (c) participating in internal staff development at Horizon.

GEAC

Sherri described the annual GEAC conference as an experience that allowed her to learn marketing, fundraising, and financial best practices for her foundation. The time commitment for the conference was a few days in November, and her status as a board member for the organization meant she could also contribute additional time to planning the conference in the months preceding it. The content at the conference encompassed alumni relations, annual fundraising, event planning, grant writing, marketing, communications, media relations, public-private partnerships, and other topics. Sherri described the learning at this conference as being instigated by the GEAC board as they planned and directed the content for the conference. She also explained that several different track sessions were available during the conference based on the attendee's area of interest and that she could pick and choose which sessions were appealing to her, so there was some element of self-selection in the learning process.

Sherri required financial and technological resources to participate. "We're always one phone call away, and you're still keeping up with what's going on back at home, even though you're there," she said. "In our position, nobody else at the college ever does our work while we are away." She did not consider it challenging to her learning at GEAC, but she did explain that sometimes she had to "adapt what [she] has learned to make it work for [her] college," since some of the presenters were from bigger or private institutions, unlike Horizon. She was able to take some of what she learned from marketing and communications, public-private partnerships, and annual fundraising and apply them to her work at Horizon, saying that she made a few tweaks to their campaign this year to see what difference it would make.

TCSG Peer Group

Sherri then explained the TCSG peer group meetings at which she convened with those across the state who were in the same position as her at their college. Those in-person meetings happened once in the Spring, Summer, and Fall. At those meetings, Sherri could engage in peer-to-peer discussions about a variety of topics, whether "it's taking in a major gift or sharing ideas about how something is done," which she described as "invaluable." Prior to the second interview, Sherri had just recently participated in a peer group discussion conference call, describing it as "best practices among the group that are already applicable to your setting because we're all in the same one [the TCSG]."

For the peer group, Sherri felt the time commitment was minimal—just a few hours over the course of the year for calls or webinars, and 2 or 3 days of intensive learning time during the three in-person meetings. The organization of the peer group is usually a function of the TCSG system office. Sherri, once again, had to contribute financial and technological resources to participate in these meetings: "We're all there to gain the best practices and you know, whether you are new or old, you can still benefit from the experience of somebody else." Sherri did not feel as though there were any obstacles or challenges to her learning via the TCSG peer group.

Internal Staff Development

Sherri also recognized Horizon's internal staff development as a learning experience for her within the last twelve months. Although it was not specific to fundraising, it was helpful to her learning experience overall. She explained that they hold these in-person meetings two or three times a year, usually between semester breaks, so there were no conflicts with teaching schedules for faculty. In the past, Sherri presented at the staff development meetings as a senior staff member. She said these presentations usually lasted an hour and would require her to prepare for 2 or 3 hours beforehand. When Sherri was participating in the meetings, she could listen to the length of the presentation and then take what she had learned with her without much prep work required beforehand. These staff development meetings were instigated by senior staff, of which Sherri is a member. The group convened before the meetings and determined what needed to be communicated and what was most pertinent to the meeting's agenda. These meetings still required the "big three." Sherri described them as "time, money, and technology" because it was a large investment on the part of Horizon in its faculty and staff. She did not feel any challenges or barriers to her learning within this setting because "the time is already set aside, and you just do it."

In reflecting back on all her career experiences with learning and professional development thus far, Sherrie thought back to a conversation with her former president where he said, "I knew you had all the raw materials for success, and I just had a great idea that you were going to do well." Sherri thought aloud, "I'm glad he felt that way, because I wasn't so sure at the time. But now I know, you learn, and you develop, and you build one skill on top of another one." Sherri admitted she questioned herself from time to time as she learned but that she had committed herself to learning and to building upon everything she was learning for future success. She still "learns every single day," and continues to build out her capacity and skillsets in the role. Additionally, in her 18 years at Horizon, she has seen a lot of changes and learned that adaptation is key. "When I started at Horizon, we barely had a website, and now look at us, having virtual meetings every day during COVID. And donors are a lot more savvy than they used to be, and we have to keep up. Technology has played a huge role."

Sherri's experience with GEAC, especially as a board member, stood out as her most valuable learning experience in her career thus far. She credited the people she met there as influential to her entire career and explained that with its local focus on Georgia, she was able to apply what she learned more easily to her job at Horizon. She also felt as though her TCSG peer group experiences had a great influence on her career. Today she feels as though she can contribute her own learning experiences as a knowledge base for others in the group: "There is nothing more compelling than somebody saying, I've been there, I've done this."

Finally, I asked Sherri, "How do you believe chief fundraising officers build professional capacity?" Sherri responded,

> In my mind it's a combination . . . of internal growing, professional development, and the professional capacity to grow. It's kind of like a plant. You get a seed, so somebody's gotta water it. You've gotta have some sunshine. You've gotta have enough water at the right time, the right temperature, and to me, you've got to grow just like a seed, and you don't know which interaction may be the thing that germinates or helps you to sprout. And then once you've sprouted, do you bloom, or do you wither and die? Nobody can grow in isolation, even if they read everything online, they do all the webinars and WebEx's. If you don't ever put it into practice, you are not growing.

Chapter 5

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

In analyzing the narratives, I adhered to the listening guide (LG) practice, which, according to Gilligan (2015), "establishes a contextual framework for understanding or interpretation" (p. 69) by "attending to voice and the interplay of voices within an interview transcript" (p. 69). Gilligan (2015) further explained,

> As voice is embodied and resides in language, it grounds psychological inquiry in physical and cultural space. But voice is also a manifestation of the psyche, a way of communicating experience or bringing the inner world out into the open. (p. 69)

The LG methodology incorporates three "listenings" (Gilligan, 2015, p. 69) or readings of the data, which all address a specific question in the following order: (1) What are the psychological features of this particular terrain?; (2) How does the "I" or first-person voice move across this terrain?; and (3) What voices within the transcript or text speak to or inform the researcher's question? (Gilligan, 2015, p. 69). The LG practice was informed by the work of Freud (1895) in that it "shifted the locus of knowledge to the patient" (Gilligan, 2015, p. 69), putting at the forefront the words, assumptions, and beliefs of the person being interviewed.

Additionally, Piaget’s (1926) work to encourage a “clinical method” (p. 69) that focused on the participant rather than the researcher influenced the viewpoint of LG. I attuned myself to ascertain better the context and setting in which each participant operates professionally and personally through listening to the plot and leveraging the first question of the LG methodology. I then looked for every “I” statement made by the participants in their interviews, which speaks to acting and being in the world, and answered the second question of the LG methodology. Finally, I employed the *listening for contrapuntal voices* phase through Question 3, which allowed me to “hear complexity” (Gilligan, 2015, p. 70) in participants’ narratives rather than “flatten the data” (p. 70) to a singular one-dimensional story.

This analysis technique dovetailed nicely with my coding procedure of *initial*, *process*, and then *pattern* coding. Initial coding allowed me to have an extremely open-minded approach to reading, understanding, and coding my narratives. Process coding, focusing on action-oriented language, was a perfect indicator of “I” statements and first-person points of view. Pattern coding allowed me to interweave the complexities of each participant’s narrative without reducing them to a single theme or concept.

From this practice, I constructed four themes presented as “I am...” statements as recommended in the LG ideology. I then added a gerund to convey each participant's action as an independent and unique actor in their own story. The four themes I found were (a) I am learning and living in community; (b) I am doing more than others realize; (c) I am leveraging available resources; and (d) I am learning, and I never stop learning.

Key Findings and Major Themes

I created major themes and articulated key findings from my research. I relied on my research question and sub-questions to influence what I consider the key findings.

Key Findings

To address my primary research question, *how do chief fundraising officers use learning experiences and learning projects to build professional capacity,* I found that chief fundraising officers use a variety of learning experiences and projects to build professional capacity. Some of these experiences are provided to them, such as the peer group meetings that several interviewees discussed in our conversations. Some of these experiences are self-initiated, like when Patricia started studying for her Certified Fund Raising Executive (CFRE) credential. Although financial resources and time constraints may have presented challenges to their ability to undertake these projects, these chief fundraising officers leveraged what they had available, and they used professional judgment to prioritize.

Research Sub-question 2: What are the learning experiences and projects of chief fundraising officers in the Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG)? The four participants undertook twelve unique learning projects over the last year. These experiences included attending conferences, working with consultants, researching databases, stock gift transactions, and capital campaigns, and studying for opportunities for advanced education.

Research Sub-question 3: What do these learning experiences and projects demonstrate about the professional capacity of chief fundraising officers in the TCSG? These learning experiences demonstrated that the professional capacity of chief fundraising officers in the TCSG was constantly evolving. These participants conveyed a real, sincere, and almost personal sense of responsibility for their learning and professional development. I also understood that time and multiple responsibilities challenged their learning experiences.

Research Sub-question 4: How can the learning experiences and projects of the chief fundraising officers in the TCSG help improve the professional capacity of two-year college fundraisers? I believe my study's results can help improve the professional capacity of two-year college fundraisers by contributing to the limited body of knowledge surrounding this unique setting and position. This contribution could help inform practice as well as budgetary and personnel considerations. Although these findings cannot be generalized, they could be applicable or transferable to 2-year systems.

I identified four major themes that were prevalent throughout the data. The following sections explain these themes and their relationship to my conceptual framework.

Major Themes

I Am Learning and Living in Community

All four participants appreciated learning and living in community with other chief fundraising officers within and outside the TCSG. All explicitly named the TCSG peer group as a professional development and learning resource. I was not surprised when this emerged as a commonality between the participants, given that most adult learning occurs in relationship with others (Tough, 2002). Additionally, this theme aligned with Hiemstra and Brockett's (2012) person-process-context (PPC) model in that it enveloped the person, process, and context in learning in community with others. Furthermore, the learning communities that Mitchell and Sackney (2011) found essential to professional capacity building were evident in the informal and formal networks the participants utilized to learn from and within. The participants described formal organizations, like the TCSG peer group and GEAC, and informal connections, like peer-to-peer learning with other chief fundraising officers. Herrero and Kramer (2020) identified *social networks* that fundraisers establish and engage in that allow them to *practice* fundraising, much like one would practice law or medicine on the job. I identified the concepts of shared purpose (professional capacity building), individual and collective responsibility (professional capacity building), and synergistic learning projects (learning projects) as theoretical framework components present in this theme.

In analyzing the participants' learning projects over the past 12 months, I found that a lot of the work was either encouraged by or done in collaboration with another person or multiple people. For instance, Thomas participated in GEAC with his employee and learned in a group setting while there. Thomas's participation in the TCSG peer group was something he considered mandatory as a function of his job, and it also occurred in a group setting. Though originally initiated by himself, his professional coaching was ultimately continued through his supervisor's support and financing. As Thomas sought information on CRMs, he turned to his peers and coach for understanding and advice.

Sherri expressed this sentiment well when she said, "Nobody can grow in isolation." That proved true for all four participants' learning projects and capacity building. They all highly regarded their peers, even citing some as friends and fundraisers whom they admired. As fundraising is a relational business, it makes sense that the work would occur in relationship to others, too.

I am Doing More than Others Realize

I surmised from these interviews that all four participants felt they were either misunderstood or poorly understood in their roles. All four considered it difficult to find others in the college who could fully understand and empathize with their role. They expressed that they were often doing more than others realized. Phrases like “wearing multiple hats” and “juggling multiple priorities” were common in each interview. Three of the four participants, in fact, had another department under their purview in addition to fundraising, and the one who did not have it under her purview at one time. The fourth edition of *The Complete Guide to Fundraising Management* (Weinstein & Barden, 2017), a how-to-guide on understanding and executing a fundraising function, clearly explains that “development officers wear several hats: planner, writer, volunteer trainer, communicator, project organizer, and ombudsman” (p. 22). Patricia explained that her misconception coming into the role was that she would only be responsible for fundraising when, in fact, she is responsible for so much more. This theme reminded me of when Annette described chief fundraising officers as the “victims of their own success,” with more success came more responsibility.

I considered, then, how this realization impacted the participants’ learning outcomes. I did not perceive this common element of doing more than others realized to hinder or slow the participants’ learning. However, as discussed previously, I could see how that perception might increase their need and appreciation for learning and living in community. The participants all spoke of feeling a burden, at times, when leaving campus for a learning experience, as it was often taking away the one person at the college who fulfilled the fundraising function. Reflecting on the theme of learning and living in community made me think of Mitchell and Sackney's (2011) intersectionality of personal, interpersonal, and organizational capacity in building professional capacity. Given that so much was expected of each of these chief fundraising officers, they may feel tension between each of these elements as they try to navigate and reconcile their personal learning goals with the demands of the interpersonal and organizational community within which they operate. The elements of individual and collective responsibility evident in professional capacity building were inherent to this theme.

I am Leveraging Available Resources

Leveraging available resources speaks directly to the lynchpins of self-directed learning through learning projects. Self-directed learning hinges on an adult learner taking responsibility for all elements of their learning, and that was just what these participants did in leveraging what resources were made available to them. All four expressed that they were doing more than others realized, and they all worked to maximize limited time and financial resources in the best interest of their professional capacity building. Patricia expressed this sentiment: "I feel like sometimes people can come into positions, and especially if staffing is lean and resources are lean, it's easy to see all the faults, easier to the see the faults, rather than the positives."

All four participants felt that fundraisers could be made, an opinion that indicated they believed fundraising could be a taught and learned exercise. Understanding that perception clarifies an imperative to evaluate the resources available to fundraisers to learn the job. On-the-job training (OJT), as Timsal and company (2016) explained, is the manifestation of learning that occurs while doing the job at hand.

Three of the four participants expressed a preference for self-initiated learning projects, while one expressed a preference for learning projects that were provided for the participant to accomplish. Both perspectives indicated leveraging available resources in that the participants were either applying resources to their learning or taking advantage of learning resources provided to them to build professional capacity. I could identify in participants' stories elements of supporting participation (fundraising-as-knowing in practice), learning by doing (fundraising-as-knowing in practice), shared purpose (professional capacity building), social context (adult learning theory), self-motivation, self-monitoring, and self-management (self-directed learning); experimentation (experiential learning); and induced and voluntary learning projects (learning projects).

I am Learning, and I Never Stop Learning

Annette summarized what all four participants said implicitly or explicitly with, "Don't ever stop learning, you've got to keep learning." Themes of lifelong learning, a natural curiosity, and an ever-changing industry that demanded continual education were prevalent in all conversations. The theory of fundraising-as-knowing in practice is an excellent example of this theme in action. For OJT to occur, learning must occur in harmony with the work. Additionally, experiential learning and learning projects fit nicely within this theme as the theories are built upon knowledge continuously gained from life experiences.

All four participants equated professional capacity building with learning, and each felt it had to be an intentional, continual exercise with effort. They also said they felt the profession was constantly changing, and they all believed it was their personal responsibility to be responsive and learn how to adapt to said changes. Patricia, for instance, subscribed to a life-long learning mentality:

> Learning in our field never really stops. There is always something that we have to keep up with, and we have to understand the trends and changes. You know, there are certain things that we know are consistent, but there is so much that changes that we need help with. Tax laws and every time an administration changes, whether it be federally, state, or locally, there are changes that occur that you have to be on top of. Continuous learning is fundamental for staying successful in this career.

This theme evidently included all of the components of adult learning theory, self-directed learning, and experiential learning. Additionally, interacting face-to-face (fundraising-as-knowing in practice) was sometimes present. The elements of learning by doing (fundraising-as-knowing in practice) and shared purpose, confronting biases, mutual respect, and psychological safety (professional capacity building) were also evident.

Implications for Practice

Institutional leaders may make more informed decisions to support the success of chief fundraising officers by having a more profound knowledge of their learning projects and the meaning that chief fundraising officers may derive from them. According to Patterson et al. (2012), community and technical institutions that want to achieve financial success must make fundraising investments on pace with those of their four-year counterparts. Although they lack the infrastructure to enable fundraising on a more significant economic scale, community and technical institutions are well-positioned to do so (Ciampa, 2009).

The themes I created from this study can significantly affect future practice. Understanding that each of these chief fundraising officers felt they were living and learning in community underscores the importance of investing in knowledge sharing opportunities. All the chief fundraising officers expressed positive feelings of comradery around their community, which could also have implications for sustaining and improving morale. This implication might suggest the need for provided community professional development as it will help dismantle learning in silos. I was surprised to learn just how positive each of the chief fundraising officers was about the professional development provided to them. As I disclosed in an earlier chapter, I felt frustrated with what I considered a lack of resources and professional development when I was in their position. This further demonstrated to me a bias I carried into this research but one that ultimately was worth compartmentalizing from the participants' experiences.

Although "I am doing more than others realize" could be a common theme for higher education settings in general, it is important to understand what this means to the context and success of chief fundraising officers in the TCSG. Leadership should reflect on what implications it may have on professional capacity building and financial success if chief fundraising officers were less strained in their roles. As one participant expressed, it is also essential that each chief fundraising officer sets boundaries and determines for themselves what is and is not a priority when balancing so much. Given the few professional pathways into the career and the fact that all four participants came to fundraising from other careers, it is imperative to use all available resources, and significant consideration should be given to increasing the available resources. Finally, understanding that all four participants were constantly learning could be helpful when providing benefits packages and professional development to the entire group. Budgeting time and financial resources for learning experiences and encouraging focused and deliberate learning projects could be helpful cultural practices for the TCSG.

Limitations

By the study's design, a limitation was that all participants must have been chief fundraising officers during the study period (2023-2024) within the TCSG and had accumulated five years of experience within higher education. A second limitation of the study was the singular focus on professional development, and excluding other work-related factors was not framed within the theoretical framework. A third limitation of the study that emerged through sampling was the lack of diversity among the participants. The issue of the lack of diversity impacts transferability and applicability. To ensure a diverse sample, I would recommend that future studies create a criterion that can be stratified (e.g., a range of tenures).

Recommendations for Future Studies

This study was a narrative inquiry with a limited and purposeful sample, which intentionally and by definition prevents it from providing much generalizability to the entire field of fundraising or even fundraising within the TCSG. Future studies could examine the perceptions of fundraising officers who had just entered the field to potentially juxtapose those findings with the implications of this study. A mixed-methods study incorporating the influence of the chief fundraising officers' learning projects on their professional capacity building in conjunction with the financial return on investment in each learning project would also be interesting. Additionally, I would be curious if there were similarities between the findings of this study and a similarly constructed design with chief fundraising officers in a larger university system like the University System of Georgia.

I also tied my major themes to potential recommendations for practice and the field of fundraising in general:

- I am Learning and Living in Community: Professional development organizations like CASE could consider providing learning opportunities specific to diverse communities, such as technical colleges. Diversifying resources so every institution has comparable professional development might encourage more community-based learning.
- I am Doing More Than Others Realize: When presented with the appropriate platform and opportunity, chief fundraising officers could educate peers on their campus about what they are doing to better bridge this gap in understanding. Efforts like a faculty-staff giving campaign, a newsletter, or a standing agenda item for all-staff meetings could be helpful reminders of the importance of this work.
- I am Leveraging Available Resources: Institutions might consider providing professional development on leveraging lean resources and crowd-share expenses between sister institutions for a more significant impact.
- I am Learning, and I Never Stop Learning: It will be essential for institutions and organizations to provide people with ways to continue

their learning in the least time-consuming method. Leadership should encourage chief fundraising officers to harness the personal drive and self-motivation elements associated with adult learning theory. Additionally, if there are opportunities for chief fundraisers to explore and expand their skills through voluntary, induced, and synergetic learning projects, they should be given the resources and encouragement to pursue them. Experiential learning can bridge the person with the process and provide a richer, more personal understanding of the subject matter.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to understand how chief fundraising officers use learning experiences and projects to build professional capacity. I sought to understand, *How do chief fundraising officers use learning experiences and projects to build professional capacity?* I used the following sub-questions to understand better how the chief fundraising officers might use their learning experiences and projects to build professional capacity:

(a) What are the learning experiences and projects of chief fundraising officers in the Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG)?

(b) What do these learning experiences and projects demonstrate about the professional capacity of chief fundraising officers in the TCSG?

(c) How can the learning experiences and projects of the chief fundraising officers in the TCSG help improve the professional capacity of 2-year college fundraisers?

By conducting and analyzing this series of interviews with Thomas, Annette, Patricia, and Sherri, I could better understand these chief fundraising officers' learning experiences and projects over the last twelve months. The group undertook twelve unique learning experiences and projects, many of which were ongoing. Some of the learning was provided, while some was self-imposed. Nearly all the experiences involved others, either organically or by design. The content varied for each professional, and so did the learning outcomes.

These learning experiences and projects demonstrated that the professional capacity building of chief fundraising officers in the TCSG was an ongoing and continual exercise that often happened in community, required balance between other professional obligations and roles, and made the most of resources available. Although the learning was intentional by the chief fundraising officer, they did not actively pause, reflect, and name it as professional capacity building.

These four individuals' experiences can help improve the professional capacity of 2-year college fundraisers because there is applicability between shared professional experiences. Although it was not the purpose of this study to provide generalizability, I want to leave space for practitioners to find solidarity in the learning projects and outcomes of those interviewed. Additionally, the findings from this research point towards the importance of learning projects and experiences in the lifespan of a chief fundraising officer's ability to build professional capacity.

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APPENDIX A: Correspondence between Researcher and Dr. Beth Breeze

Appendix A: Correspondence between Researcher and Dr. Beth Breeze

5/14/23, 9:34 AM Gmail - Re: Chat?

Gmail Kelsey Jones <kelseyjones229@gmail.com>

Re: Chat?

Kelsey Jones <kelseyjones229@gmail.com> Mon, Feb 7, 2022 at 4:29 PM
To: Beth Breeze <B.Breeze@kent.ac.uk>
Cc: Kelsey A Jones <kelseyajones@valdosta.edu>

Hi Dr. Breeze,

Thank you so much for your kind reply. I understand that and appreciate your consideration! I'll take a close look at the appendices.

Thank you,
Kelsey

On Mon, Feb 7, 2022 at 10:37 AM Beth Breeze <B.Breeze@kent.ac.uk> wrote:

Hi Kelsey,

It's good to hear about your research and I'm looking forward to seeing it when you publish.

Unfortunately I don't have capacity for a zoom call but in appendix B and C of my book I share the survey flow and the interview schedule which I hope you'll find useful.

All good wishes,

Beth

From: Kelsey A Jones <kelseyajones@valdosta.edu>
Date: Sunday, 6 February 2022 at 23:11
To: Beth Breeze <B.Breeze@kent.ac.uk>
Subject: Chat?

Hi Dr. Breeze,

I hope you are doing well. I am a doctoral candidate at Valdosta State University in the southwest part of GA, USA. I live in Atlanta and work as the ED of the Foundation for the Technical College System of Georgia. I am researching the lived experiences of chief fundraising officers in the technical college system through a qualitative narrative inquiry. I've read your book *The New Fundraisers*, and I'd like to structure my dissertation similarly to your work. I wondered if you

https://mail.google.com/mail/u/0/?ik=6e5835f9f5&view=pt&search=all&permmsgid=msg-a:r-1574782696387882268&dsqt=1&simpl=msg-a:r-15747826… 1/2

Appendix A: Correspondence between Researcher and Beth Breeze (continued)

would have some time to chat with me over video call or phone call in the coming weeks? I would love to hear about your experience in interviewing the fundraisers you've quoted in your book so that I may can structure my research similarly.

Thank you so much for your time and consideration,

Kelsey

Kelsey A. Jones

Ed.D. Candidate

e. kelseyajones@valdosta.edu/kelseyjones229@gmail.com

c. 229.376.1257

--
Kelsey J. Bassett
c. 229.376.1257

APPENDIX B: TCSG MOA between College and Foundation

Appendix B: Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG) Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between College and Foundation

POLICY: 3.1.12. (II. A. 2. f. iv.)
Cooperative Nonprofit Organizations

Revised:	March 7, 2013.
Last Reviewed:	September 7, 2022; and March 7, 2013.
Adopted:	June 7, 1990.

TCSG

POLICY:
Technical Colleges may associate with non-profit foundations or cooperative organizations that are established for the exclusive purpose of supporting the Technical College. Financial and operational arrangements between technical colleges and their non-profit foundations must be consistent with state requirements for the use of public resources. In addition, such arrangements must be documented and follow the format of the written System-Approved Memorandum of Understanding template.

RELATED AUTHORITY:
O.C.G.A. § 20-4-11 – Powers of Board.
O.C.G.A. § 20-4-14 – TCSG Established; Powers and Duties.
Attachment: 3.1.12.a1. Memorandum of Understanding Template.

Attachment: 3.1.12.a1. (II.A.2.f.iv.)

Memorandum of Understanding
(Insert Technical College Name) and
(Insert Name of College Foundation)

This agreement entered into as of the ______day of ______, 20___ is by and between the (Insert Technical College Name) Technical College ("College") and the (Insert Name of Foundation) Technical College Foundation ("Foundation").

This Memorandum of Understanding aims to guide and direct the parties in respecting their affiliation, cooperation, working relationship, and respective authorities, including anticipated future arrangements.

The Foundation was organized and incorporated in (enter year) under the laws of the state of Georgia and Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code to stimulate voluntary private support from individuals, corporations, foundations, and others for the benefit of the College in carrying out its programs and activities.

The Foundation exists (The Foundation has the option to include the following statement or add the purpose statement from their Articles of Incorporation) to raise and manage private resources that support the mission and priorities of the College, provide educational opportunities for students, and enhance institutional excellence in ways that would not be possible with state funds.

The Foundation is dedicated to assisting the College in building an endowment and addressing, through financial support, the long-term academic and strategic priorities of the College. Therefore, the Foundation shall not engage in any activities, programs, and services that are in conflict with or inconsistent with the policies, mission, and goals of the TCSG State Board, the TCSG System Office, the College, or the Foundation.

In consideration of the mutual commitments herein contained and other good and valuable consideration, receipt of which is hereby acknowledged, the parties agree as follows:

I. Foundation Name, Seal, and Logotype

Consistent with its mission to advance the plans and objectives of the College, the Foundation shall be entitled to use the name, symbols, and trademarks of the College in the promotion of its business and activities. The Foundation Board may also select and approve a logo as its identifying mark.

II. Governance

A. The Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG) is governed by the State Board of the Technical College System of Georgia, which is empowered by O.C.G.A. § 20-4-11 to

Establish and promulgate standards, rules, regulations, and policies for the orderly and efficient operation of the Technical College System of Georgia and of postsecondary technical colleges and programs to ensure that the needs of the citizenry, business, and industry are met to the highest possible degree.

B. The President of the College exercises the overall supervision and management of the College under the direction of the Commissioner of the TCSG. The State Board of the Technical College System and Commissioner have delegated to technical college Presidents the authority to solicit and receive funds from the general public, corporate underwriters, and foundations and to contract with local entities for the provision of programmatic or administrative services or activities within parameters established by State Board Policy and TCSG Procedures.

III. The Foundation Governance

A. The Foundation is a separately incorporated 501(c)(3) organization created to solicit, manage, distribute, and steward private resources to support the mission of the College.

B. The Foundation Board of Trustees is responsible for controlling and managing all assets of the Foundation, including prudent management of all gifts consistent with donor intent. The Foundation Board is further responsible for the performance and oversight of all aspects of its operations based upon a comprehensive set of bylaws addressing fiduciary responsibilities and ethical expectations for individual Board of Trustee members.

C. The Foundation may not abdicate to the College personnel its fiduciary responsibility for managing its funds.

IV. The College's Relationship and Responsibilities to the Foundation

A. The College shall create an environment that encourages the appropriate independence of the Foundation consistent with its standing as an independent public trust and with IRS guidelines for non-profit organizations.

B. The President is responsible for communicating the College's strategic plans and funding priorities to the Foundation.

C. The College and the Foundation shall not enter into any property lease agreement without the advance written approval of the Technical College System of Georgia State Board. The College will not encourage the Foundation to purchase property in anticipation of future financial gain facilitated by TCSG or the state of Georgia.

D. The College recognizes that the Foundation is a non-profit corporation with the responsibility to protect the confidentiality of its donors to the fullest extent of the law.

E. The President and Chief Advancement Officer of the College shall serve as non-voting ex-officio members of the Foundation Board of Trustees. In addition, they shall assume prominent roles in fundraising activities.

F. The College shall provide in-kind support for the general operation of the Foundation, including the services of a development officer, administrative support, office and meeting space, office furniture, technology equipment, and support, utilities and telephone service, and other support and services as the College may deem appropriate. The College shall provide this support in consideration of the Foundation's significant fiscal support and services to the College and its students. In addition, the College's support will be recognized as an in-kind contribution in the Foundation's annual audit.

G. The College shall assign the appropriate staff members, including the Chief Advancement Officer, to liaise between the College and the Foundation and to support the activities associated with this Memorandum of Understanding. College personnel serving in these roles are subject to the policies and procedures of the State Board of the Technical College System of Georgia and the Technical College System of Georgia.

H. The College is subject to the Georgia Open Records Act (O.C.G.A. § 50-18-70 *et seq*.), and, as such, any information or records received and maintained by the College will be subject to public disclosure unless specifically exempted by law. The College shall maintain the confidentiality of any records containing the personal information of donors or potential donors to the Foundation to the extent provided for in O.C.G.A. § 50-18-72 (a)(29), which states that records maintained by public postsecondary educational institutions in Georgia and associated foundations of such institutions that contain personal information concerning donors or potential donors to such institutions or foundations are exempt from disclosure; provided, however, that the name of any donor and the amount of donation made by such donor shall be subject to disclosure if such donor, or any entity in which such donor has a substantial interest, transacts business with the public postsecondary educational institution to which the donation is made within three years of the date of such donation. As used in this paragraph, the term "transact business" means to sell or lease any personal property, real property, or services on behalf of oneself or behalf of any third party as an agent, broker, dealer, or representative in an amount over $10,000.00 in the aggregate in a calendar year. The term "substantial interest" means the direct or indirect ownership of more than 25 percent of the assets or stock of an entity.

V. The Foundation's Responsibilities to the College

A. The Foundation shall create an environment conducive to increasing levels of private support for the mission and priorities of the College.

B. The Foundation, in consultation with the college President and supported by the Chief Advancement Officer, is responsible for planning and executing a comprehensive fundraising and donor-acquisition program to support the College's mission.

C. The Foundation will establish, adhere to, and periodically assess its gift-management and acceptance policies. It will promptly acknowledge and issue receipts for all gifts and provide appropriate recognition and stewardship of such gifts.

D. The Foundation shall lead and bear significant responsibility for fundraising. The College representatives will support fundraising initiatives with the Foundation, including annual funds, major gifts, and planned giving.

E. The President and Chief Advancement Officer will work in conjunction with the leadership of the Foundation. In addition, they will participate in public awareness and advocacy efforts to assist with identifying, cultivating, and soliciting prospects for private gifts.

F. The Foundation shall operate as an entity separate and independent from the College per the IRS regulations and institute all policies and procedures required for a 501(c) (3) organization. The Foundation shall operate per state laws that apply to non-profits, including annual registration with the Office of the Secretary of State. The Foundation shall adhere to the Donor Bill of Rights adopted by the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) and the Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP).

G. The Foundation, in partnership with the President and Chief Advancement Officer, shall identify the support needs of the Foundation, which shall in no way conflict with the rules, regulations, and guidelines of the State Board, TCSG, the College, or the Foundation.

H. The Foundation may earmark a portion of its unrestricted funds to a discretionary fund for the President. Those funds may be used for reimbursement for approved expenses per the Foundation's Expense Reimbursement Policy and the Foundation's approved annual budget. The Foundation may not provide to the President or any other personnel employed by the College any bonuses, pay supplements or other items of value that could be construed as imputed income under the regulations of the Internal Revenue Service. All College employees are subject to State Board policies and TCSG procedures governing standards of conduct and ethics for acceptance of gifts and payment of expenses by third parties.

I. The Foundation and the College shall avoid any potential conflict of interest or appearance of impropriety in the operations and transactions between the Foundation and the College.

VI. Asset Management and Risk Management

A. The Foundation will establish asset allocation, disbursement, and spending policies that adhere to applicable federal and state laws, including the Uniform Prudent Investor Act (UPIA) and the Uniform Prudent Management of Institutional Funds Act (UPMIFA).

B. The Foundation shall solicit, receive, hold and invest funds, administer property, and make expenditures to support the College's programs, activities, vision, and mission. The Foundation may not engage in activities contrary to this objective. In addition, the acts, deeds, functions, and activities of the Foundation shall in no way conflict with the authority of the College. Nor shall the Foundation solicit or accept gifts for any use specified by a donor that is inconsistent with the College's mission, goals, and objectives.

C. The Foundation will receive, hold, manage, invest, and disburse contributions, including immediately vesting gifts and deferred gifts that are contributed in the form of planned and deferred gift instruments.

D. The Foundation shall not accept any gift, donation, or grant which creates a future liability for the Technical College System of Georgia or the College without the advance and written approval of the TCSG Commissioner and the College President.

E. The Foundation shall use generally-accepted accounting principles in its financial record-keeping/reporting and will engage an independent accounting firm to conduct an audit of the Foundation's financial statements, including a management letter and an audit opinion, every three years with a financial review conducted by the other two years. Foundations with more than $500,000 in annual revenue are strongly encouraged to have annual audits of the Foundation's financial statements, including management letters and an audit opinion. The final report of the audit, financials reviews, and the annual IRS Form I-990 shall be delivered to the Foundation's Board of Trustees and the College each year by the date specified by the College to meet its audit requirements. In addition, the final audit or financial review report and the annual IRS Form I-990 shall also be delivered to the Office of Resource Development in the TCSG office to comply with GASB requirements.

F. The Foundation will engage the services of legal counsel for the review of contracts and other legal issues as necessary.

G. The Foundation will maintain general liability insurance, directors' and officers' insurance, and other insurance coverage as necessary or appropriate for liabilities that may arise in connection with its operations.

H. When distributing funds to the College, the Foundation will disclose any terms, conditions, or limitations imposed by the donor or legal determination of the gift. The College will abide by such restrictions and provide appropriate documentation to the Foundation when required.

I. The Foundation is the primary depository of private gifts. It will transfer funds to the College in compliance with donor intent, TCSG and College procedures, policies established by the State Board of the Technical College System of Georgia, and applicable state and federal laws.

J. The Foundation's disbursements on behalf of the College must be reasonable expenses that support the College and its mission, are consistent with donor intent and do not conflict with the law.

K. Neither the Foundation nor the College shall be liable for the other party's obligations, acts, or omissions. The Foundation shall indemnify and hold harmless the Technical College System of Georgia and the College from and against any third-party liability, losses, claims, demands, costs, and expenses, including without limitation attorneys' fees and litigation expenses, arising out of any personal injury or property damage arising in connection with the activities of the Foundation. None of the preceding indemnities shall apply if the damage, loss, etc., resulted solely from the College's negligence. If the College's negligence was partially responsible for the damage or other loss, the indemnities above from the Foundation should be reduced proportionally.

VII. Foundation Funding and Administration

A. The Foundation is responsible for establishing a financial plan to underwrite a portion of its programs and activities.

B. The Foundation has the right to use a reasonable percentage of annual contributions, earnings on endowments (by donor agreement), and earned interest on investments to support its operations and programs.

C. The Foundation will provide access to data and records to the College as needed and per applicable laws, policies and guidelines.

D. The Foundation will issue the College, donors, and the community an annual report of its revenue, expenditures, programs, and activities. Donors to the Foundation shall be acknowledged and recognized in the same manner and afforded the same privileges as donors to the College.

VIII. Terms of the Memorandum of Understanding

A. This Memorandum of Understanding has a term of one year and is renewable for successive one-year terms upon the written consent of both parties' authorized representatives. The MOU shall be submitted with the audit or financial review and the annual IRS Form I-990 to the TCSG Office of Resource Development in the TCSG system office prior to the start of each fiscal year. Upon 90 days prior written notice to the other, either party may terminate this agreement. Notwithstanding the preceding, either party may terminate this MOU in the event the other party defaults in the performance of its obligations and fails to cure the default within a reasonable time after receiving written show cause notice. The College's ability to perform its responsibilities under the MOU is subject to annual appropriations from the General Assembly and revenues from student tuition. Should funds be insufficient to fulfill its responsibilities, the College may terminate the MOU immediately and shall have no further obligations.

B. Suppose the Foundation is dissolved or ceases to exist per federal and state laws. In that case, all monies and items of value received by or held by the Foundation must be transferred to another non-profit similar in mission. Assets may be transferred to a merger partner that fits the same description.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties have caused this Memorandum of Understanding to be executed by their duly authorized officers as of the day and date first above written.

FOR THE (Insert Foundation Name)

____
(President/Chair)

FOR THE (Insert Technical College Name)

____
President

APPENDIX C: Email Request to Conduct Study

Appendix C: Email Request to Conduct Study

Gmail **Kelsey Jones <kelseyjones229@gmail.com>**

Request to Conduct Study

Kelsey Jones <kelseyjones229@gmail.com> Wed, May 3, 2023 at 12:08 PM
To: julie.post@westgatech.edu, deannia.clements@wiregrass.edu, egriswold@albanytech.edu, adaniel@athenstech.edu, vseals@atlantatech.edu, jermaine.whirl@augustatech.edu, iallen@centralgatech.edu, rnewcomb@chattahoocheetech.edu, lroberts@coastalpines.edu, mtodd@columbustech.edu, hpopham@gntc.edu, holstont@gptc.edu, gcannon@gwinnetttech.edu, tmcdonald@laniertech.edu, john.wilkinson@northgatech.edu, eharden@oftc.edu, ldurden@ogeecheetech.edu, klove@savannahtech.edu, jwatford@southgatech.edu, lcalhoun@southeasterntech.edu, irvin.clark@sctech.edu, jglass@southernregional.edu
Cc: "Kuezi-Nke, Marjorie" <mkuezi-nke@tcsg.edu>, Kelsey A Jones <kelseyajones@valdosta.edu>, Jamie L Workman <jworkman@valdosta.edu>, nprice@albanytech.edu, rallen@athenstech.edu, dvarner3@atlantatech.edu, wanda.gothie@augustatech.edu, dsteele@centralgatech.edu, tcollum@chattahoocheetech.edu, nking@coastalpines.edu, sscott@columbustech.edu, lodom@gntc.edu, byrdsongm@gptc.edu, mflanagan@gwinnetttech.edu, kminor@laniertech.edu, tschubring@northgatech.edu, danderson@oftc.edu, kmobley@ogeecheetech.edu, vdavis@savannahtech.edu, tobryant@southgatech.edu, tbroughan@southeasterntech.edu, kim.santerre@sctech.edu, cherring@southernregional.edu, Julia.watson@westgatech.edu, cheryl.acree@wiregrass.edu

TCSG Presidents:

I hope this e-mail finds you doing well. From 2016-2022 I had the privilege of working for TCSG in institutional advancement. I am a doctoral candidate at Valdosta State University and entering the phase of IRB approval with VSU/TCSG. One of the requirements of both entities is that I seek approval from college presidents whose employees I seek to interview (see below). The purpose of my study is to describe the impact of the learning experiences of chief fundraising officers on their professional capacity. I am conducting this research under the supervision of Dr. Jamie Workman, Associate Professor, copied here.

I am writing to formally ask for your written consent to e-mail your Vice President of Institutional Advancement (or the equivalent, with primary responsibility for fundraising for the institution's support) via my Valdosta State University e-mail address. This e-mail will include: an introduction of myself and my study; disclosure of my relationship to VSU and prior professional relationship to TCSG; information and disclosure of voluntary consent to participate in said study; and an invitation to participate in said study if they meet the study's qualifications. I am seeking participants who have 5 or more years experience within TCSG and are the primary person responsible for fundraising. Following that response, I would send those who expressed interest a Qualtrics survey seeking basic biographical information and informed voluntary consent to participate. I am seeking 4-7 participants if possible. I would then schedule three (3) 90-minute interviews with each participant over the course of several weeks. Attached to this e-mail you can find my draft interview guide. Measures will be taken to protect the confidentiality and integrity of interviews so that your employee and institutions are given pseudonyms. All data will be password-protected on an iPhone and computer.

Should you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me directly at kelseyajones@valdosta.edu/ kelseyjones229@gmail.com or at 229.376.1257.

If you do consent to the process outline aboved, please reply back from your president e-mail with: **I AGREE TO COOPERATE WITH THE STUDY AS DESCRIBED ABOVE, AND I UNDERSTAND MY INSTITUTION AND EMPLOYEES CAN CHOOSE TO NOT PARTICIPATE OR WITHDRAW FROM THE STUDY AT ANY TIME.** Your response with this statement does not obligate your employee or institution to participate in the study, it just grants permission for your employee to be contacted for the purpose of seeking their participation.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation and attention.

Kelsey

Kelsey J. Bassett
c. 229.376.1257

---------- Forwarded message ---------
From: **Kuezi-Nke, Marjorie** <MKuezi-Nke@tcsg.edu>
Date: Wed, May 3, 2023 at 11:01 AM

APPENDIX D: Email Invitation to Participate in the Study

Appendix D: Email Invitation to Participate in the Study

Invitation to Participate in Research Study IRB-04422-2023

Kelsey A Jones <kelseyajones@valdosta.edu>
Wed 7/26/2023 11:17 AM To:

attachments (216 KB)
Final Approval_Kelsey Jones (1).pdf;

Dear _________,

I hope you're doing well. I'm Kelsey Jones (Bassett), a Valdosta State University (VSU) doctoral candidate. I invite you to participate in my doctoral research study, *How Technical College Chief Fundraising Officers Build Professional Capacity: A Narrative Inquiry*. From 2016-2022 I had the privilege of working for TCSG in institutional advancement. Out of an appreciation for this work, I have chosen to conduct my doctoral research within this setting and with this population.

The purpose of my study is to describe the potential impact of the learning experiences and learning projects of chief fundraising officers on their professional capacity. I am conducting this research under the supervision of Dr. Jamie Workman, Associate Professor. I am seeking participants with five or more years of experience within TCSG and are the primary person at their college responsible for fundraising. I am seeking 4-7 participants if possible. Following survey responses, I will schedule three (3) 90-minute interviews with each participant over several months.

Your College President was notified via e-mail of my intent on May 3, 2023, and/or May 7, 2023, requesting approval to e-mail you a request to participate. Your College President replied affirmatively. Their response does not obligate you or the institution to participate in the study; it just grants permission for you, as an employee, to be contacted to seek participation.

Please review the informed, voluntary consent information provided below in italics. If you agree to the terms outlined and wish to continue with the invitation to participate, you can follow the Qualtrics survey link at the bottom of this e-mail. This survey will ask for basic biographical information and your informed, voluntary consent to participate. You will receive no direct benefits from participating in this research study's survey. However, your responses may help us learn more about how chief fundraising officers build professional capacity. There are no foreseeable risks involved in participating in this study other than those encountered in day-to-day life. Participation in this survey should take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete. You will receive a follow-up response from me via e-mail within 5-7 business days.

Your participation is voluntary. You may choose not to take the survey, stop responding at any time, or skip any questions you do not want to answer. Participants must be at least 18 years of age to participate in this study. Your affirmative completion of the survey serves as your voluntary agreement to participate in this research project and your certification that you are 18 or older.

Measures will be taken to protect your confidentiality and the integrity of your interviews so that you and your institutions are given pseudonyms. All data will be password-protected on an iPhone and computer. You have been assigned the following FIVE-DIGIT code in order to protect your responses to the survey and subsequent interviews. Please use 10056 as the FIVE-DIGIT code in your Qualtrics survey.

Should you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me at kelseyajones@valdosta.edu.

Appendix D: Email Invitation to Participate in the Study (continued)

Qualtrics Survey Link: **https://valdosta.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_5ju2Z5A1m7YlQtU**

Research Study #: IRB-04422-2023

You are being asked to participate in a survey research project entitled "How Technical College Chief Fundraising Officers Build Professional Capacity: A Narrative Inquiry," which is being conducted by Kelsey Jones, a doctoral candidate at Valdosta State University. The purpose of the study is to describe the potential impact of the learning experiences and learning projects of the Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG) chief fundraising officers on their professional capacity. You will receive no direct benefits from participating in this research study's survey. However, your responses may help us learn more about how chief fundraising officers build professional capacity. There are no foreseeable risks involved in participating in this study other than those encountered in day-to-day life. Participation in this survey should take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete. Your participation is voluntary. You may choose not to take the survey, stop responding at any time, or skip any questions you do not want to answer. Participants must be at least 18 years of age to participate in this study. Your survey completion serves as your voluntary agreement to participate in this research project and your certification that you are 18 or older. You may print a copy of this statement for your records. Questions regarding the purpose or procedures of the research should be directed to Kelsey Jones at kelseyajones@valdosta.edu. This study has been exempted from Institutional Review Board (IRB) review in accordance with Federal regulations. The IRB, a university committee established by Federal law, is responsible for protecting the rights and welfare of research participants. If you have concerns or questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the IRB Administrator at 229-253-2947 or irb@valdosta.edu. The supervising chair for this study is Dr. Jamie Workman, Associate Professor, and you may contact her at 229-333-5633 or jworkman@valdosta.edu. This research has been initiated in cooperation with the IRB committee of TCSG. You may contact their committee chair, Dr. Marjorie C. Kuezi-Nke, Executive Director for Accountability & Institutional Effectiveness, at 404-679-1614 or mkuezi-nke@tcsg.edu.

Also, TCSG's IRB process requires that I share with you: "Research should be conducted at times that do not interfere with college work schedules or the schedules of any participants from the college. No TCSG personnel or resources may aid [me] in [my] research... the study is a personal venture associated with [my] doctoral studies independent of TCSG, and that participation in the study is strictly voluntary." You can read the entire letter of cooperation from TCSG as an attachment to this email.

Thank you for your time and attention, and most importantly, for your important work at TCSG.
Best,
Kelsey

Kelsey Jones Bassett (*she/her*)
Ed.D. Candidate
e.
kelseyajones@valdosta.edu/kelseyjones229@gmail.com
c. 229.376.1257

APPENDIX E: CITI Certification

Appendix E: CITI Certification

CITI PROGRAM

Completion Date 24-Apr-2023
Expiration Date 24-Apr-2026
Record ID 49103265

This is to certify that:

Kelsey Jones

Not valid for renewal of certification through CME.

Has completed the following CITI Program course:

Human Research
(Curriculum Group)
IRB Basic
(Course Learner Group)
2 - Refresher course
(Stage)

Under requirements set by:

Valdosta State University

CITI
Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative

101 NE 3rd Avenue, Suite 320
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301 US
www.citiprogram.org

Verify at www.citiprogram.org/verify/?wb2c08b4c-5eeb-4fd8-89bf-69a58683a978-49103265

APPENDIX F: IRB Protocol Exemption Report

Appendix F: IRB Protocol Exemption Report

VALDOSTA STATE UNIVERSITY

Institutional Review Board (IRB)
for the Protection of Human Research Participants

PROTOCOL EXEMPTION REPORT

Protocol Number: 04422-2023 **Responsible Researcher:** Kelsey Jones

Supervising Faculty: Dr. Jamie Workman **Co-Investigator:** n/a

Project Title: *How Technical College Chief Fundraising Officers Build Professional Capacity: A Narrative Inquiry.*

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD DETERMINATION:

This research protocol is **exempt** from Institutional Review Board (IRB) oversight under 45 CFR 46.101(b) of the federal regulations, **category 2**. If the nature of the research changes such that exemption criteria no longer apply, please consult with the IRB Administrator (irb@valdosta.edu) before continuing your research study.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

- *Upon completion of the research study, collected data must be securely maintained and accessible only by the researcher(s) for a minimum of 3 years. At the end of the required time, collected data must be permanently destroyed.*
- *Exempt protocol guidelines **permit** the recording of interview sessions provided recordings are made to create an accurate transcript. Exempt guidelines **prohibit** the collection, storage, and/or sharing of recordings. Upon creation of the transcript, the recorded interview session must be deleted immediately from recording and storage devices.*
- *As part of the informed consent process, recordings must include the researcher reading aloud the consent statement, confirming participant understanding, and establishing their willingness to take part in the interview. Participants must be provided with a copy of the research statement.*
- *To ensure confidentiality of participants, pseudonym lists must be kept in a separate secure file from corresponding name lists., email addresses, etc.*

☒ ***Please submit any documents you revise to the IRB Administrator at tmwright@valdosta.edu to ensure an updated record of your exemption.***

Elizabeth W. Olphie 07.07.2023
Elizabeth W. Olphie, IRB Administrator Date

Thank you for submitting an IRB application.
Please direct questions to irb@valdosta.edu or 229-259-5045.

Revised: 06.02.16

APPENDIX G: TCSG Approval to Conduct Research

Appendix G: TCSG Approval to Conduct Research

Technical College System of Georgia

Brian P. Kemp
Governor

Gregory C. Dozier
Commissioner

July12, 2023

Ms. Kelsey Jones,
11 Dunwoody Springs Drive
Atlanta, GA 30328

Dear Ms. Jones:

The Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG) has reviewed the general description of your intended dissertation research entitled "*How Technical College Chief Fundraising Officers Build Professional Capacity: A Narrative Inquiry*". We have received your IRB approval/ Exemption Protocol Report from Valdosta State University and TCSG approves your request to conduct research at the colleges that have approved your study (listed below).

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Albany Technical College
Athens Technical College
Augusta Technical College
Central GA Technical College
Coastal Pines Technical College
Columbus Technical College
Georgia Northwestern Technical College
Georgia Piedmont Technical College
North GA Technical College
Oconee Fall Line Technical College
Ogeechee Technical College
Savannah Technical College
South GA Technical College
Southeastern Technical College
Southern Crescent Technical College
Southern Regional Technical College
West GA Technical College
Wiregrass GA Technical College

In accordance with the TCSG IRB process, as well as the documents you submitted to TCSG with regard to the parameters and intent of your study, we authorize you to continue with the research project at the colleges listed above. The following stipulations apply to this authorization. Your research should be conducted at times that do not interfere with college work schedules or the schedules of any participants from the college. No TCSG personnel or resources may aid you in your research.

Please make it clear to participants that the study is a personal venture associated with your doctoral studies independent of TCSG and that **participation in the study is strictly voluntary**.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. I may be reached at (404) 679-1614 or mkuezi-nke@tcsg.edu

Sincerely,

Marjorie Kuezi-Nke

Marjorie Kuezi-Nke, Ph.D.
Executive Director Accountability and Institutional Effectiveness

1800 Century Place, Suite 400 • Atlanta, Georgia 30345-4304 • 404.679.1600

Appendix G: TCSG Approval to Conduct Research (continued)

Technical College System of Georgia

Brian P. Kemp
Governor

Gregory C. Dozier
Commissioner

cc: Dr. Kathryn R. Hornsby
Mr. Richard Young
Ms. Christine Green
Ms. Leigh Keever
Presidents and VPIEs of Technical Colleges on approved list

1800 Century Place, Suite 400 • Atlanta, Georgia 30345-4304 • 404.679.1600

APPENDIX H: Interview Guide

Appendix H: Interview Guide

Category	Interview Questions	Data for which RQs
Start of Interview #1		
Prior experience	Can you tell me a little bit about your education and experience in fundraising prior to your career at TCSG? How did you learn about TCSG? How would you describe your college now?	RQ1
Prior experience	How did you get into fundraising?	RQ1
Prior experience	Can you tell me about initial training or mentorship when you first started?	RQ1
Prior experience	Do you recall professional development that was made available to you? If yes, can you describe some about it?	RQ1
Prior experience	When you first started, what was your great hindrance or challenge?	RQ1
Prior experience	Do you believe that fundraisers are born or made? (Breeze, 2017)	RQ1
Prior experience	How can you tell that someone is a good fundraiser? (Breeze, 2017)	RQ1
Prior experience	How can you tell that someone hasn't 'got it'? (Breeze, 2017)	RQ1
Prior experience	What distinctive qualities do good fundraisers *tend* to have? (Breeze, 2017)	RQ1
Prior experience	Are there any essential equalities that fundraisers *must* have? (Breeze, 2017)	RQ1

Prior experience	Are you familiar with Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE)? Have you attended any conferences, webinars, etc.?	RQ1
Prior experience	I'm sharing on the screen a list of CASE competencies for a professional fundraising officer. Which of these resonate most with you? Why?	RQ1
Prior experience	Who is the best fundraiser you know? Why?	RQ1
Prior experience	What is your "why" for fundraising?	RQ1
Prior experience	What has been your most memorable ask or campaign to date?	RQ1
End of Interview		
Start of Interview #2		
Learning projects	My research is about what local fundraisers learn in order to fulfill their role and how they go about learning it. Everyone learns, but different people learn different things–and in different ways. I'm interested in listing the things you have tried to learn during the past year, particularly in your role as a fundraiser. When I say 'learn' I don't just mean learning things that people learn in schools and colleges. I mean any deliberate effort at all to learn something or to learn how to do something. Perhaps you tried to get some information or knowledge, or gain new skills, or improve your old ones, or increase your sensitivity or understanding or appreciation. Can you think of any efforts like this that you have made during the past 12 months? (Tough, 1975; Smeltzer, 2016)	RQ2

Appendix H: Interview Guide (continued)

Learning projects	Think back over the past 12 months, all the way back to (name of month) last year. I am interested in any deliberate effort you made to learn anything at all related to your role as a fundraiser. It does not matter if it was easy or difficult, big or little, important or trivial, serious or fun. Can you think of anything else? (Tough, 1975; Smeltzer, 2016).	RQ2
Learning projects	Now I have a list of some of the things people may learn in a chief fundraising officer role. It may remind you of other things that you have tried to learn during the past 12 months. Take as lo you want to read each word, and to think about whether you have tried to learn something similar (Tough, 1975; Smeltzer, 2016). Please let me know if any of these resonate with your own learning experiences within the last 12 months?	RQ2
Learning projects	Now, I'd like for us to talk about each project in more depth, discussing: Content Time spent Who instigated the project (51% or more responsibility) What resources were necessary (human or non-human) Obstacles and challenges *Each project was addressed separately for these talking points.*	RQ2
Learning projects	Here is an additional list of challenges and obstacles to learning that may resonate with you, do any of these seem applicable to you? (Tough, 1975; Smeltzer, 2016)	RQ2
End of Interview		
Start of Interview #3		

Appendix H: Interview Guide (continued)

Reflection	In reflecting on these experiences, you have shared with me, what, if any, impact do you feel these had on your professional role? For this study, I am defining professional role as the day-to-day position management within the context of your unique environment	RQ3
Reflection	For the purpose of this study, I have defined professional capacity as "the continuum of professional learning that results in increased knowledge, skills, and application of leadership" (Zugelder, 2021, p. 25). I often associate the word with capacity building, an effort to grow knowledge in an exploratory and open manner (Sackney, Walker, & Mitchell, 2005). In reflecting on these experiences, what, if any, impact do you feel these had on your professional capacity?	RQ3
Reflection	What was your most impactful professional development experience and how did you incorporate that into your work?	RQ3
Reflection	Referring back to the CASE competencies we discussed in the first interview, have any of your professional development and learning projects influenced your understanding of those competencies/value systems?	RQ3
Reflection	If you have provided professional development, what would your team say is the most impactful professional development you have delivered?	RQ3
Reflection	What has been the most persistent challenge in acquiring or engaging in learning over the ___ years that you have been in this role? How have you overcome this challenge	RQ3
Reflection	What do you believe has been the most fruitful for you–provided professional development or self-directed professional development?	RQ3

Appendix H: Interview Guide (continued)

Reflection	What have been the biggest misconceptions you have had to overcome or negotiate in your role? (Internally and externally)	RQ3
Reflection	What advice would you give a new or unseasoned chief fundraising officer? What professional development would you recommend? What are some go-to-resources?	RQ3
Reflection	Are you currently mentoring anyone and if yes, can you share a little about that with me?	RQ3
Reflection	My study's research focuses on answering a single central question, and I would like to pose it to you, too. How do you believe chief fundraising officers build professional capacity?	RQ3
End of Interview #3		

APPENDIX I: Slides for Interview 1 and Interview 3

Appendix I: Slides for Interview 1 and Interview 3

You are being asked to participate in an interview as part of a research study entitled ***How Technical College Chief Fundraising Officers Build Professional Capacity: A Narrative Inquiry***, which is being conducted by **Kelsey Jones**, a **student** at Valdosta State University. The purpose of the study is **to describe the impact of TCSG chief fundraising officers' learning projects on their professional capacity.** You will receive no direct benefits from participating in this research study. However, your responses may help us learn more about chief fundraising officers' learning projects. There are no foreseeable risks involved in participating in this study other than those encountered in day-to-day life. Participation should take approximately 4.5 hours (3-90 minute interviews over the course of several weeks-months). The interview will be audio recorded to capture your concerns, opinions, and ideas. Once the interview recording has been transcribed, the recording will be deleted from recording devices. **This research study and your participation will be kept confidential.** Your identifiable information will be replaced with a pseudonym in publications or presentations. No one, including the researcher, will associate your responses with your identity. Your participation is voluntary. You may choose not to participate, to stop responding, or to skip questions you do not want to answer. You must be at least 18 years of age to participate in this study. Your participation in the interview serves as your voluntary agreement to participate in this research project and your certification that you are 18 years of age or older.

Questions regarding the purpose or procedures of the research should be directed to Kelsey Jones at kelseyajones@valdosta.edu. This study has been exempted from Institutional Review Board (IRB) review in accordance with Federal regulations. The IRB, a university committee established by Federal law, is responsible for protecting the rights and welfare of research participants. If you have concerns or questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the IRB Administrator at 229-253-2947 or irb@valdosta.edu.

Appendix I: Slides for Interview 1 and Interview 3 (continued)

CASE Competencies

- Personal Integrity
- Confidentiality
- Public Trust
- Disclosure
- Compensation

Principles of Practices for Fundraising Professionals at Educational Institutions, 2020

APPENDIX J: Slides for Interview 2

Appendix J: Slides for Interview 2

You are being asked to participate in an interview as part of a research study entitled ***How Technical College Chief Fundraising Officers Build Professional Capacity: A Narrative Inquiry***, which is being conducted by **Kelsey Jones**, a **student** at Valdosta State University. The purpose of the study is **to describe the impact of TCSG chief fundraising officers' learning projects on their professional capacity.** You will receive no direct benefits from participating in this research study. However, your responses may help us learn more about chief fundraising officers' learning projects. There are no foreseeable risks involved in participating in this study other than those encountered in day-to-day life. Participation should take approximately 4.5 hours (3-90 minute interviews over the course of several weeks-months). The interview will be audio recorded to capture your concerns, opinions, and ideas. Once the interview recording has been transcribed, the recording will be deleted from recording devices. **This research study and your participation will be kept confidential.** Your identifiable information will be replaced with a pseudonym in publications or presentations. No one, including the researcher, will associate your responses with your identity. Your participation is voluntary. You may choose not to participate, to stop responding, or to skip questions you do not want to answer. You must be at least 18 years of age to participate in this study. Your participation in the interview serves as your voluntary agreement to participate in this research project and your certification that you are 18 years of age or older.

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Appendix J: Slides for Interview 2 (continued)

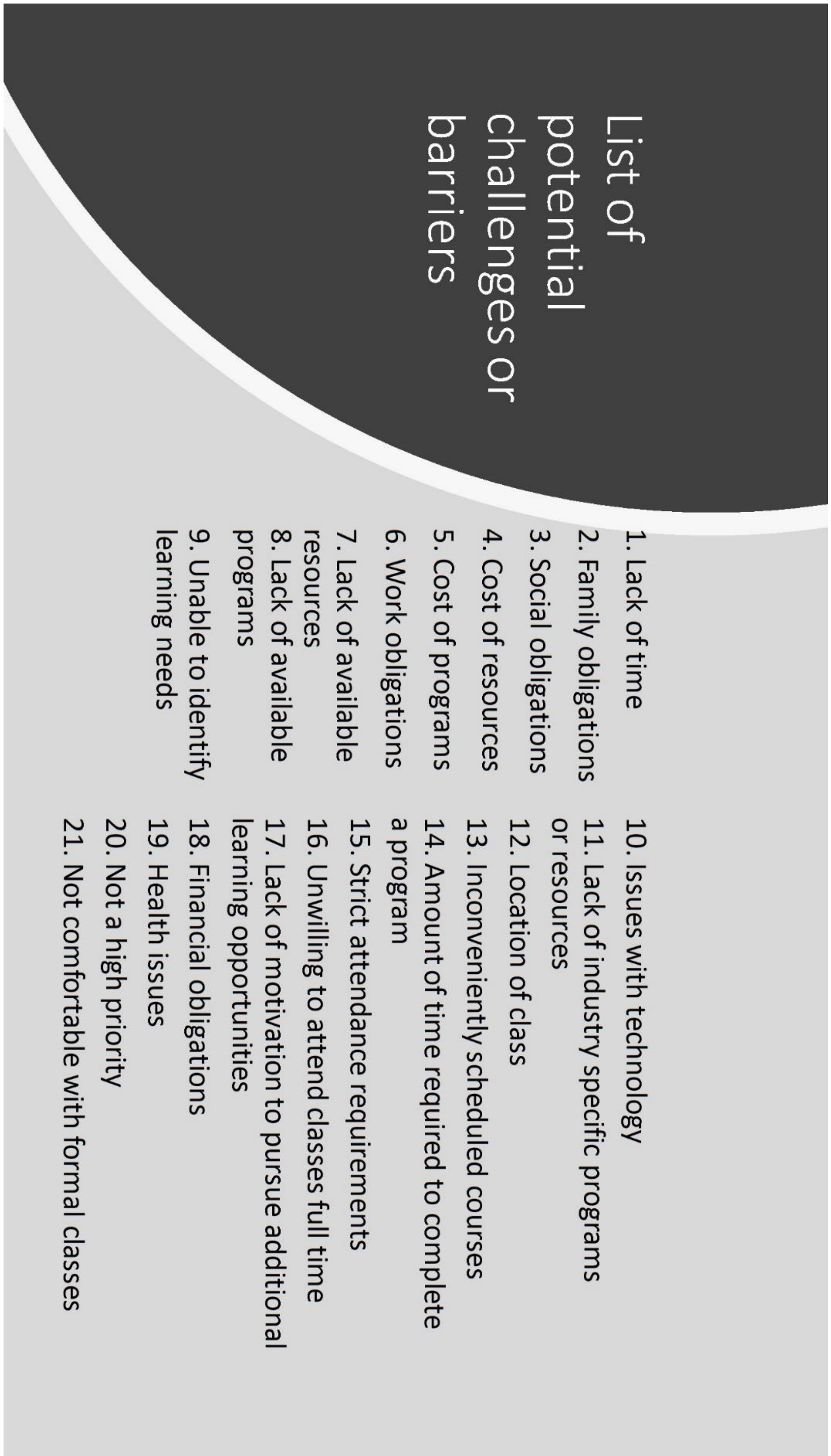
List of topics some people may learn

- Alumni relations
- Annual fund-fundraising
- Board management
- Budgets
- Building Trust
- Campaign organization
- Capital improvement planning
- Vision/mission
- Conflict management
- Contract management
- Coping with difficult people
- Creativity and innovation
- Data management
- Decision-making
- Delegation skills

- Digital literacy
- Diversity
- Economic development
- Ethics in government
- Estate planning
- Event planning
- Financial analysis
- Grant writing
- Human resources
- Initiative and Risk taking
- Internal control & auditing
- Interpersonal communication skills

- Legal compliance
- Legislative issues
- Major gifts
- Marketing and communications
- Media relations
- Mediation and negotiation
- Networking
- Performance management
- Public-private partnerships
- Research prospective donors
- Risk management
- Speech writing
- Strategic planning
- Succession planning
- Volunteer management

Appendix J: Slides for Interview 2 (continued)



APPENDIX K: CASE Principles of Practice for Fundraising Professionals at Educational Institutions

Appendix K: CASE Principles of Practices for Fundraising Professionals at Educational Institutions

Principles of Practice for Fundraising Professionals at Educational Institutions

Published Date: March 12, 2020

These principles are intended to supplement and complement the CASE Statement of Ethics<https://www.case.org/resources/case-statement-ethics>, which was revised by the CASE Board of Trustees on 12 March 2020.

Philanthropy is a voluntary exchange in which the values and aspirations of donors are matched with the values and aspirations of those we bene t.

Educational fundraising professionals work on behalf of those served by our organisations during this exchange of values and represent our schools, colleges, and universities to donors, volunteers, and the larger public. In doing so, we also represent the integrity of the organisation and of the fundraising profession. We must, in discharging responsibilities, observe and promote the highest standards of personal and professional conduct and continually strive to increase our knowledge of the profession.

The following principles are consistent with CASE's position on commission-based compensation<https://www.case.org/resources/case-statements-compensation-fundraising-performance> originally developed by the CASE Commission on Educational Fundraising (now the Commission on Philanthropy) in 1991, and the Donor Bill of Rights<https://www.case.org/resources/donor-bill-rights>, developed in 1993. We are intended to provide guidance and direction to educational fundraisers and volunteers as we make ethical choices during the philanthropic exchange of values. The principles are not, and cannot be, an exhaustive list of rules to be applied to every decision in which ethical principles may be involved.

These ethical principles go hand-in-hand with the expectation that educational fundraising professionals are expected to comply with the letter and the spirit of all laws relevant to charitable giving. In addition, individuals will follow national guidance and regulations relevant to our own institution.

Personal Integrity

Individuals will:

- be fair and honest and conduct ourselves with integrity;
- not maintain any vested interest in a professionally related activity that could result in personal gain, or be perceived as a potential con ict of interest, without prior full disclosure and organisational approval;
- respect that our relationships with prospective donors, donors, volunteers, and employees are professional relationships and will not be exploited;
- Ensure that any philanthropic support arrangements or discussions are fully independent of the organisation's policies on student admissions, faculty/sta recruitment, research, athletics, academic freedom, and any other relevant areas.

Con dentiality

Individuals will:

- safeguard and respect donor and prospective donor information;
- honor the wishes of an individual and/or organisational constituent with regard to how directory information and/or giving history is used or shared;
- record and keep only information relevant to cultivation, solicitation, and stewardship;
- identify the source of retained information;
- safeguard prospective donor, donor, and other constituent lists compiled by the organisation as the property of the organisation; these lists may not be distributed or used for unauthorized purposes or for personal gain;
- make every e ort to ensure that volunteers, vendors, and external entities with access to constituent information understand and agree to comply with the organisation's con dentiality and public disclosure policies.
- commit to following the organisation's privacy policies and procedures

Public Trust

Individuals will:

- ensure donated funds are used in accordance with donors' directions and intentions and that agreement is in place should it not be possible to follow donors' wishes;

English

Appendix K: CASE Principles of Practices for Fundraising Professionals at Educational Institutions (continued)

Principles of Practice for Fundraising Professionals at Educational Institutions

Published Date: March 12, 2020

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These ethical principles go hand-in-hand with the expectation that educational fundraising professionals are expected to comply with the letter and the spirit of all laws relevant to charitable giving. In addition, individuals will follow national guidance and regulations relevant to our own institution.

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- respect that our relationships with prospective donors, donors, volunteers, and employees are professional relationships and will not be exploited;
- Ensure that any philanthropic support arrangements or discussions are fully independent of the organisation's policies on student admissions, faculty/sta recruitment, research, athletics, academic freedom, and any other relevant areas.

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- record and keep only information relevant to cultivation, solicitation, and stewardship;
- identify the source of retained information;
- safeguard prospective donor, donor, and other constituent lists compiled by the organisation as the property of the organisation; these lists may not be distributed or used for unauthorized purposes or for personal gain;
- make every e ort to ensure that volunteers, vendors, and external entities with access to constituent information understand and agree to comply with the organisation's con dentiality and public disclosure policies.
- commit to following the organisation's privacy policies and procedures

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