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Addressing Basic Needs Security at Santa Monica College

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ADDRESSING BASIC NEEDS SECURITY AT

SANTA MONICA COLLEGE

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Addressing Basic Needs Security at Santa Monica College

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An Applied Dissertation submitted to Department of Education Policy and Leadership in partial

fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education

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and passion for the field of higher education, thank you. To Dr. Ashley Tull, thank you for allowing me to carve my own way through the program and for guiding me through every independent study. I am grateful for your time and commitment. To Dr. Kate Montgomery, cohort-mate, friend, and colleague, thank you for being a bastion of encouragement and positivity.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Basic needs insecurity, defined as a lack of "access to nutritious and sufficient food; safe, secure, and adequate housing—to sleep, to study, to cook, and to shower; healthcare to promote sustained mental and physical well-being; affordable technology and transportation; resources for personal hygiene; and childcare and related needs," is gaining recognition as a significant barrier to completing a postsecondary credential (The hope Center, 2021, p. 6). Emerging research indicates that basic needs insecurity among community college students is a significant factor in negative persistence and retention rates among all institution types (Maroto et al., 2015; Martinez et al., 2018; Phillips et al., 2018; The hope Center, 2021). Several studies noted that students attending community colleges experience food insecurity, "a household-level economic and social condition of limited or uncertain access to adequate food" (United State Department of Agriculture, 2021, para. 3), at rates higher than the general United States population (Maroto et al., 2015) as well as rates higher than peers attending four-year institutions (Goldrick-Rab et al., 2017; Goldrick-Rab et al., 2018).

Indeed, postsecondary institutions are acknowledging that student basic-needs insecurity is a problem they can no longer afford to ignore, especially among traditionally underrepresented groups who continue to struggle with credential attainment. Research has shown that students enrolled at two-year institutions, or community colleges[1], experience basic needs insecurity at

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[1] Given that the definition of community colleges has moved beyond the "public two-year" college designation originally applied by the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), I have adopted the Community College Resource Center's definition of community colleges as "postsecondary institutions that are funded primarily by state and local sources and that offer mainly sub-baccalaureate (but also, in some cases, baccalaureate) education and training in a broad range of fields to meet community education and workforce needs. This is the definition that state and local policymakers and the colleges themselves tend to use, and it is similar to what the American Association of Community Colleges uses in creating its count of "public community colleges" in its popular Fast Facts flyer" Fink, J., & Jenkins, D. (2020, April 30, 2020). Shifting Sectors: How a Commonly Used Federal Datapoint Undercounts Over a Million Community College Students. *The Mixed Methods Blog, CCRC*. https://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/easyblog/shifting-sectors-community-colleges-undercounting.html.

rates higher than those enrolled at four-year institutions (Broton & Goldrick-Rab, 2016, 2018; Broton et al., 2018; Broton et al., 2020; Goldrick-Rab, 2016, 2018; Goldrick-Rab et al., 2017; Goldrick-Rab et al., 2018; "Hungry and Homeless on Campus," 2018). Community colleges across the nation serve approximately 11.8 million students (American Association of Community Colleges, 2020), of which majority enrollments stem from historically underrepresented populations (Cohen et al., 2013). Therefore, organizational failure to acknowledge and address basic needs insecurity as detrimental to student success undermines the fundamental mission of community college: to provide an accessible education for all.

Problem of Practice

Given the community college's expansive mission of serving adult learners, serving as transfer institutions, and offering vocational training, developmental education, and community education (Hirt, 2006), it is imperative that these institutions attempt to mitigate basic needs insecurity by identifying innovative solutions tailored to their specific student populations. Postsecondary institutions generally invest significant human and financial resources to ensure student success. Community colleges in particular have become adept at identifying creative solutions to address student persistence and success challenges (Cohen et al., 2013) despite declining state and federal investments in higher education over the last thirty years. One way they have done so is through the development of targeted, academic support services (Tull et al., 2015) designed to improve student retention and persistence.

These activities include the development of academic and co-curricular programming designed to produce well-rounded citizens equipped with the critical thinking and social skills necessary to obtain gainful employment and meaningfully contribute to society upon graduation. These activities also include pre-college advising, first-year advising, college mentoring, early

alert systems and *guided* or *completion* pathways (e.g., program mapping, development of metamajors, and enhanced advising efforts) (Barnett & Kopko, 2021). Further, financial aid assistance, academic advising, career services, tutoring, academic workshops, student activities, special services for at-risk groups, and psychological counseling, plus technology-based advising resources and student success courses are also necessary to ensure student success (Bailey et al., 2015). Community colleges have seen improvements in student retention rates as a result of implementing such activities (Engstrom & Tinto, 2008; Tinto, 2008, 2010).

Responses to student basic-needs insecurity have also evolved from individual faculty and/or staff members providing snacks to establishing campus-wide food pantries, emergency aid grants (Goldrick-Rab, 2016), early alert systems, and moving toward a case management system designed to provide ongoing outreach, resources, and wrap-around services (e.g., counseling, health and wellness programs, and food/housing security initiatives) to students who need them (Goldrick-Rab, 2016; Hallett et al., 2019; Hallett & Freas, 2018). Taken together with the academic support systems, these wrap-around services provide a holistic approach to addressing student needs.

Purpose of the Study and Research Design

The original aim of this study was to explore the utility of the planned change framework in understanding how a partnership between a postsecondary institution (Santa Monica College) and a nonprofit organization (Swipe Out Hunger) led to the development and implementation of programs/services designed to address food insecurity. After an introductory discussion with a Santa Monica College (SMC) representative, it became clear that the focus of the study required broadening to investigate how the institution addressed *basic needs insecurity* because the partnership between SMC and SOH was limited to the use of a survey. Broadening the scope of

the study to incorporate more holistic wrap-around services and supports allowed for more robust data collection and a better understanding of how SMC supports students. The revised aim of this case study was to understand how organizational culture influenced SMC's ability to provide holistic, creative solutions to address basic-needs insecurity for their student population.

SMC is a four-year, primarily associates degree-granting institution located in Santa Monica, California (National Center for Education Statistics, 2020a). The SMC District's service area includes Santa Monica and Malibu, and is comprised of the main campus, three satellite campuses (Airport, Bundy, and Emeritus), the Center for Media and Design, and the Performing Arts Center (Santa Monica College, 2020g). The District is situated within the California Community College System, which is made up of 116 community Colleges (California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office, 2020c). SMC's core missions include academic transfer as evidenced by the institution's high transfer rate (67%) (Santa Monica College, 2020i), and occupational education. SMC has been listed as California's number one in transfer for over 25 years with transfers to the University of California, University of Southern California, and Loyola Marymount University (Santa Monica College, 2020d). Additionally, the institution prides itself "on preparing students for careers of the 21st century, in growing fields like interaction design, cloud computing, technical theatre, and global trade and logistics" by offering over 180+ career-focused degrees and certificates (Santa Monica College, 2020d, para. 8). The College has an extensive offering of student support services including computer labs, counseling, a library, tutoring, a transfer center, health and safety programs and services, and various student life resources (Santa Monica College, 2020k). The combination of SMC's robust student services and the relative dearth of research on community colleges are why this institution was selected as the case study site.

A review of the organizational culture literature suggested that the Planned change approach was useful for understanding how higher education institutions (e.g., community colleges) move through a complex decision making process to engage in programs/services designed to address student success challenges (e.g., basic needs insecurity) (Beer & Nohria, 2000; Bess & Dee, 2012; Burnes, 2004a, 2017). However, as the case study progressed, it became clear that an alternative theoretical framework (Tierney, 2008a) was necessary to frame an interpretation of the data. This research contributes necessary insight to both academic and student affairs administrators who are interested in collaboratively addressing basic needs insecurity on their own campuses. More broadly, understanding how organizational culture influenced institutional efforts to progress from identification of an issue through implementation and evaluation of a solution provides a mechanism for understanding why institutions pursue certain activities (e.g., establishing basic needs insecurity programs/services and/or establishing partnerships with community nonprofit organizations) to address a variety of institutional challenges (e.g., improving student success and retention through programming designed to address basic needs insecurity).

A qualitative research design was selected for this study because the goal was to understand "*the meaning people have constructed*; that is, how people make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world," which could not be accomplished through a quantitative design (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 15). Organizational decision making is an inherently complex process that is difficult to quantify for a purely numerical data-driven study, especially within the context of a higher education institution that employs numerous people with unique viewpoints. The study is guided by three research questions: (1) Why did institutional leadership decide to address basic needs insecurity? ; (2) What did the institution do

to address basic needs insecurity? ; and (3) How has the institution implemented and sustained basic needs insecurity initiatives? Given these questions, a qualitative case study is an appropriate investigation method because it represents an "in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 37) and an opportunity to "learn more about a smaller, more tightly defined area" (Holley & Harris, 2019, p. 114).

The adverse effects associated with basic needs insecurity have been shown to diminish institutional efforts to ensure student success therefore institutions should proactively evaluate their own campuses to determine whether their students can benefit from the establishment of basic needs insecurity programs/services. Given that community colleges serve as a means of social mobility (Labaree, 1997) for traditionally underrepresented students and that these institutions enroll the greatest number of students than any other postsecondary institution type (Cohen et al., 2013), the negative effects of basic needs insecurity on their ability to complete a credential, among other educational goals, is extremely troubling. If community colleges are to uphold their social contract to provide an accessible education for all (Amey, 2017), then there is a widespread need to implement holistic student services designed to wrap-around their students.

Dissertation Overview

The chapters that follow are organized into a literature review, research methods, findings, and recommendations and conclusions. First, the literature review will guide the reader through an overview of who experiences basic needs insecurity and why postsecondary institutions like community colleges should be concerned. This section will provide contextual details on community colleges, specifically their institutional definition/purpose, their organizational structure, governance, and decision making, demographics of the students they serve, and the environmental pressures they experience which impact student retention and

success. Next, the reader will find a rationale for shifting to Tierney's (2008) organizational culture framework after initially selecting the Planned organizational change framework. The reader should note that as data analysis progressed, shifting to an alternative framework became necessary given that the data could not support the presence of a Planned change effort.

Second, the reader will find an overview of the research design methods which focus on the data collection and analysis portion of the case study. This section will provide justification for employing a qualitative case study design and will discuss the case study site-selection process. Included in this discussion are highlights on human-subjects training, the Institutional Research Board (IRB) approval process, participant selection, and participant data security and anonymity. The data analysis component of the research design will also cover trustworthiness/triangulation, the use of thick description, and discussion of researcher positionality. This section provides a justification and explanation for the use of the Creswell and Poth (2018) data analysis spiral. Finally, this section provides a discussion of the potential research limitations and provides an in-depth discussion of Santa Monica College, the case study site.

Third, the reader will find an in-depth look at the findings which include an overview of the study and a note on the effects of the pandemic. SMC's enrollment numbers dropped from 31,000 students in 2019 to roughly 29,000 students in 2020 as a direct result of pandemic-related resource constraints. This section will further elucidate the three emergent themes: a *desire to help/enhance student success*, *program types/initiatives* (broken into food insecurity and housing insecurity/homelessness), and *shared governance and strategic decision making*, and the overarching theme of a *culture of caring*. A *culture of caring* is defined here as a student-centric focus on normalizing and destigmatizing basic needs insecurity. Incorporating the lessons

learned outlined by Cady et al. (2019), a *culture of caring* includes reviewing student data, considering students' contexts, asking students about their challenges, seeking student feedback, addressing needs proactively, and educating themselves. It also includes moving from a one-dimension support model (e.g., offering a food pantry or emergency grant) to multi-dimensional, wrap-around support model that includes case management, academic support, curriculum development, and college-wide hiring and evaluation practices (Goldrick-Rab & Cady, 2018). This section is organized in alignment with the research questions, which aimed to answer why, what, and how Santa Monica College addressed basic needs insecurity. The goal of this chapter was to provide a cohesive story about the ways in which Santa Monica College's leadership assists their students.

The final chapter summarizes the purpose of the study, key findings, implications, recommendations for practice, recommendations for future research, and wraps up with final conclusions. Implications suggest that tailoring programming and involving students in decision making reinforces SMC's *culture of caring* which positively impacts student retention and success. SMC tailors their programming through the gathering and sharing of internal and external resources with their students, which both signals a genuine dedication to student success and reinforces SMC's *culture of caring*. These actions subsequently foster and reinforce an organizational culture whereby student retention and success remain within reach to their students because of SMC's willingness to provide ongoing basic needs insecurity programs/services.

Recommendations for practice stem from the emergent themes which align with each of the research questions: *a desire to help/enhance student success* (why), *program types/initiatives* (what), *shared governance and strategic decision making* (how); and the overarching theme of

culture of caring which grounds each of the emergent themes. Recommendations for future

research are categorized into: *understanding environmental contexts and pressures*, *building on*

the current case study, and *building on the change literature*.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The original aim of this study was to explore the utility of the planned change framework in understanding how a partnership between a postsecondary institution (Santa Monica College) and a nonprofit organization (Swipe Out Hunger) led to the development and implementation of programs/services designed to address food insecurity. After an introductory discussion with a Santa Monica College (SMC) representative, it became clear that the focus of the study required broadening to investigate how the institution addressed *basic needs insecurity* because of the limited scope of the partnership. Broadening the scope of study allowed for more robust data collection to inform the revised aim of this case study, which was to understand how organizational culture influenced SMC's ability to provide holistic, creative solutions to address basic needs insecurity for their student population.

Three research questions guided both the study and the following literature review: (1) Why did institutional leadership decide to address basic needs insecurity? ; (2) What did the institution do to address basic needs insecurity? ; and (3) How has the institution implemented and sustained basic needs insecurity initiatives? The first section, *Who Experiences Basic Needs Insecurity and Why Postsecondary Institutions Should Care*, provides important contextual information needed to ground the first research question, specifically the prevalence and consequences of basic needs insecurity and its impact on postsecondary students. The next section, *Community Colleges*, details the role of community colleges in providing an accessible education to 11.8 million demographically diverse students and provides contextual information necessary to ground research questions one and two. The final section, *Organizational Change: Rationale for Theoretical Model Selection*, represents an effort to apply the planned organization

change framework to better understand the decision making process an institution moves through to enhance student success and aimed to ground research question three.

The sections below will guide the reader through an overview of who experiences basic needs insecurity and why postsecondary institutions like community colleges should be concerned. This section will provide contextual details on community colleges, specifically their institutional definition/purpose, their organizational structure, governance, and decision making, demographics of the students they serve, and the environmental pressures they experience which impact student retention and success. Next the reader will find a rationale for shifting to Tierney's (2008) organizational culture framework after initially selecting the Planned organizational change framework, as well as an overview of the key components of the framework. The reader should note that as data analysis progressed, shifting to an alternative framework that was more focused on organizational culture became necessary, given that the data could not support the presence of a Planned change effort.

Who Experiences Basic Needs Insecurity and Why Postsecondary Institutions Should Care

Basic needs insecurity, defined as a lack of "access to nutritious and sufficient food; safe, secure, and adequate housing—to sleep, to study, to cook, and to shower; healthcare to promote sustained mental and physical well-being; affordable technology and transportation; resources for personal hygiene; and childcare and related needs," is gaining recognition as a significant barrier to completing a postsecondary credential (The hope Center, 2021, p. 6). The research literature contained within this section focuses predominantly on the food insecurity side of basic needs insecurity with some references to housing insecurity and/or homelessness interwoven. While researchers are focusing on these two aspects of basic needs insecurity, there has been significantly more research published on food insecurity, which is reflected here.

Empirical research has shown that food insecurity has deleterious effects on children, adolescents, and adults (Alaimo et al., 2001, 2002; Holben, 2010; Hughes et al., 2011; Jyoti et al., 2005; Perez-Escamilla & de Toledo Vianna, 2012). Murphy et al. (1998) indicated that children who were hungry or at risk for hunger were twice as likely to display psychosocial dysfunction and impaired academic performance. Jyoti et al. (2005) linked food insecurity to developmental consequences for boys and girls in kindergarten. Cook and Frank (2008) found in a study on infants and toddlers that the highest prevalence of food insecurity occurred in 22.4% of Black households, 17.9% of Latino households, 16.7% of households with children younger than 6, and 30.8% of single-mother households. Many other researchers have noted that basic needs insecurity, especially food insecurity, housing insecurity and/or homelessness, has a disparate impact on historically underrepresented, low socioeconomic status (low SES) student groups including Black and Hispanic individuals, single parents, former foster youth, veterans, and first-generation college students; however, emerging research has only recently begun to show the widespread impact on students enrolled in postsecondary institutions (Broton & Goldrick-Rab, 2018; Broton et al., 2018; Goldrick-Rab, 2016; Goldrick-Rab et al., 2017; Goldrick-Rab et al., 2018; Hallett & Freas, 2018; Maroto et al., 2015; Pavlakis, 2014).

A postsecondary education provides a mechanism for social mobility (Labaree, 1997), which is essential for students from historically underrepresented populations (e.g., Black and Hispanic individuals, single parents, former foster youth, veterans, and first-generation college students). These student populations are the most likely to enroll in community colleges and experience food insecurity and higher attrition rates than their food-secure peers. For example, Maroto et al. (2015) found that African American, Hispanic, and Asian students were more likely to be food-insecure than White students. Maroto et al. (2015) suggested that community

college students may be experiencing food insecurity at rates greater than the general United States population *and* that food insecurity may be more prevalent and severe among students from lower-income urban areas. Hallett et al. (2019) indicated that inconsistent access to food among individuals experiencing homelessness and housing insecurity complicates students' ability to focus on their education. Indeed, many students who experience food insecurity, homelessness, or both have lower grade point averages (GPAs) than those who are basic needs secure.

Chaparro et al. (2009) found that 45% of the students surveyed in their study experienced food insecurity at nearly three times what had been reported for the state of Hawai'i between 2004-2006; whereas Patton-Lopez et al. (2014) found that over 59% of the students in their study also experienced food insecurity at rates higher than the state of Oregon. Morris et al. (2016) found an association between food security status and race with a high number of African American students having "less high food security and more very low food security than was expected" (p. 379). Meza et al. (2019) also found that food insecurity is "notably higher than the national average" and "is more prevalent among college students of underrepresented backgrounds, making it harder for these students to succeed academically and ensure their future economic potential" (p. 1713). Silva et al. (2015) found that food insecurity and housing instability makes attending class difficult, produces fatigue, difficulty concentrating, and increases anxiety and irritability, all of which can impact student performance and grade point average (GPA). Morris et al. (2016) indicated that food insecurity is associated with "undernourishment, chronic diseases, inflammation, obesity, and mental health conditions such as anxiety, depression, and aggression" (p. 377). Silva et al. (2015) noted that students experiencing food insecurity were "nearly 15 times more likely to have failed courses and were

six times more likely to have withdrawn or failed to register for more courses" (p. 11). Patton-Lopez et al. (2014) suggested that students experiencing food insecurity are "less likely to report a GPA greater than or equal to 3.1" (p. 212); and Maroto et al. (2015) reported that students experiencing food insecurity are 22% less likely to earn a 3.5-4.0 GPA after controlling for other background factors. Payne-Sturges et al. (2018) found that food-insecure students are at an "increased risk of health, academic, and housing instability problems" and note that these issues require action by institutional administrators because they "represent mechanism[s] by which food insecurity might undermine important academic outcomes including grade point average, retention, and on-time graduation" (p. 352).

Additionally, numerous variables affect student engagement during the higher education experience. For example, students matriculating to a residential college for the first time move through a series of transitions, which Goodman et al. (2006) defined as "any event, or non-event, [which] results in changed relationships, routines, assumptions, and roles" (p. 33). These transitions can occur simultaneously and potentially include shifting from a high school student to a college student, shifting from an adolescent to an 'emerging adult,' and shifting from food secure to food insecure. Goodman et al. (2006) indicated that such transitions are often long term and sometimes require assistance from knowledgeable "helpers" to guide them through those transitions (p. 31). Patton et al. (2016) noted that

> engaging actively in the environment is a prerequisite for student learning and growth. College and university educators play a significant role in creating opportunities for students to be involved in meaningful and transformational educational experiences outside and inside the classroom, setting the foundation for students to make developmental strides (pp. 45-46).

These studies suggest that a need for addressing food insecurity among postsecondary students exists given the negative effects it can have on student retention and success (e.g., credential attainment). However, some scholars have noted that providing access to food is sometimes not enough (Cook & Frank, 2008; Silva et al., 2015). Silva et al. (2015) indicated that while 39.2% of students surveyed at the City University of New York reported experiencing food insecurity, only 7.2% reported taking advantage of campus-based assistance programs (e.g., utilizing the food pantry or signing up for food stamps). This suggests attempts to integrate student food security programs into the campus culture requires participation from various campus constituents (e.g., administration, faculty, staff, students, and community partnerships), and ongoing assessment to ensure that solutions continue to meet student needs.

Facilitating access to and subsequent use of food security initiatives raises the question of how capacity for a supportive institutional structure and culture can be built and maintained to ensure that students take advantage of the program(s). Broton and Goldrick-Rab (2016) suggested keeping the solutions local by leveraging institutional and community-based resources already available by reviewing and adapting policies or procedures to better serve their students. This included involving students who benefit from such programming in the decision making process. Broton and Goldrick-Rab (2016) noted that students have suggested locating community services, like a food bank or food pantry, on campus for easier access; and those students report an "increased sense of belonging and integration with the college when officials advertise poverty-alleviation supports as just another student support service" (p. 20). The authors also indicated that some institutions work with their cafeterias or food vendors to support food-insecure students by disseminating discounted food vouchers to students through a variety of

services (Broton & Goldrick-Rab, 2016). Likewise, Cliburn Allen and Alleman (2019) suggested that

> taking into account the voices and stories of those they are trying to serve. Only then will stakeholders understand the features of the campus environment that powerfully shape students' academic and social experiences; these must be accounted for in any initiatives that faculty and administrators try to promote (p. 67).

Rachel Sumekh, CEO and Founder of Swipe Out Hunger asserted that

> [w]hen it comes to addressing student hunger, we must not be content with simply giving people food and treating them as though they cannot be part of the solution. Instead, we need to take it a step further by empowering others to create systems that become a part of the effort to support students' basic needs (2020, pp. 115-116).

Encouraging access and usage therefore represents a shared endeavor between institutional administration, faculty, staff, student advocates and student beneficiaries. Indeed, in their investigation of food-insecure minority community college students, Ilieva et al. (2018) found that institutional food policies and vendor contracts exacerbated food insecurity and led to increased student distrust. The authors findings also suggested that students want both assistance from institutional leaders and to be part of the discussion on proposed solutions.

Given this research, it is necessary for institutional administrators and students to engage in activities that enhance student success together. To ignore the negative effects basic needs security has on student development and learning means that institutions are undermining their own efforts to enhance student success. Thus, to ensure a commitment to student success it is necessary to understand the benefits of implementing basic needs security programs/services on campus. As noted above, "Community college students may be more likely than the general U.S.

population to suffer from food insecurity, and that food insecurity may be more common and more severe among community college students" (Maroto et al., 2015, p. 524). The next section will provide general institutional context for community colleges. This context includes an institutional definition or purpose, governance and organizational structure, demographic characteristics, environmental pressures and student retention and success.

Community Colleges

Community colleges are vital to the education of millions of students given the numerous policy initiatives designed to increase credential attainment (Kamer & Ishitani, 2020) for the sake of ensuring the country's economic stability (Labaree, 1997). They are known for their expansive missions which include serving adult learners, serving as transfer institutions, and offering vocational training, developmental education, and community education (Hirt, 2006). They are also known for their ability to rapidly evolve, compared to their four-year counterparts, by adjusting their roles, missions, and structures to the needs of their local communities (Kuk, 2015). Subsequently, these institutions are defined in numerous ways. For example, Cohen et al. (2013) suggested that community colleges represent any non-for-profit institution regionally accredited to award the associate in arts or the associate in science as its highest degree. This definition is inclusive of both public and private comprehensive two-year colleges and technical institutes, and community colleges which collaborate with universities to offer baccalaureate degrees. Conversely, this definition excludes publicly supported area vocational schools, adult education centers, proprietary colleges, and community colleges which confer their own baccalaureate degrees (Cohen et al., 2013). Fink and Jenkins (2020) defined the community college as "public postsecondary institutions that are funded primarily by state and local sources and that offer mainly sub-baccalaureate (but also, in some cases, baccalaureate) education and

training in a broad range of fields to meet community education and workforce needs" (para. 7).

This definition is employed by the Community College Research Center and the American

Association of Community Colleges and is therefore the definition I subscribe to for the purposes

of this case study.

Organizational Structure, Governance, and Decision Making

Birnbaum (1991) outlined four organizational archetypes (e.g., bureaucratic, collegial,

political, and anarchical), which he argued are useful to institutional leaders to better understand

the organizational behavior of specific institutions. Bureaucratic institutions (e.g., community

colleges) focus on aligning goals, have a chain-of-command decision making style, top-down

leadership, operate by directives, and change occurs by mandates (Kezar, 2011). Collegial

institutions (e.g., small private universities) are characterized by agreed-upon goals, consensus-

based decision making, "distributed leadership, but with more power among certain groups,"

operate by agreed-upon values, and change occurs through dialogue and conversation (Kezar,

2011, p. 250). Political institutions (e.g., regional state universities) are characterized by

contested goals, bargaining and negotiation, conflict and confrontation between bottom-up and

top-down leadership, and "operate based on negotiated agreements," and "change occurs when

competing interests clash" (Kezar, 2011, p. 250). Anarchical institutions (e.g., large public

universities) are characterized by ambiguous goals, unclear decision making processes,

leadership emerging from anywhere, "operations are based more on individual decision making

and professional values," and "change occurs on the margins of the organization, based on the

work of innovative individuals" (Kezar, 2011, p. 250).

Garfield (2008) provided this simplified organizational structure for community colleges:

the overall legal responsibility for the institution is held by a governing board, which selects a

president and other senior management. The governing board sets overall policy, which is carried out by senior management who also oversee the day-to-day operations. Finally, the faculty senate makes some decisions on curricular issues while faculty committees contend with academic policies and some operational issues. While Birnbaum's (1991) archetypes are a useful starting point for evaluating organizational behavior, some governance and decision making characteristics, specifically in community colleges, have evolved in distinct ways compared to other institution types. Alfred (2008) suggested thinking of governance "as a correlate of decision making" that is subject to various internal and external pressures. Community colleges are therefore subject to a variety of organizational models and governance structures, which are shaped by their environment and local contexts (Amey et al., 2008; Cohen et al., 2013; Kuk, 2015; Levin, 2008; Schuetz, 1999; Tull et al., 2015).

Indeed, if we review the unique mission and student population of community colleges, their organizational structures appear to be "increasingly mission-driven and resource dependent" (Tull et al., 2015, p. 54). Kater (2017) attributed the adaptive and reactive nature of community colleges to their local, state, regional, and international contexts (e.g., the global economy). The global economy, in particular, has resulted in states exerting pressure on their community colleges to produce an educated adult workforce (Amey et al., 2008). This pressure in turn has an impact on institutional governance and decision making (Kater, 2017).

Shared governance is defined as the "meaningful involvement of faculty and other campus constituencies in deliberations contributes to effective institutional governance" (Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges, 2010). While the literature on *shared governance* has generally focused on traditional four-year institutions (Baldridge et al., 1977; Baxter Magolda, 2014; Chou et al., 2017; Kezar, 2004; Kezar & Eckel, 2004; Smart &

Paulsen, 2011), there are a few examples specific to community college. Garfield (2008) noted

that typical community colleges do not generally follow the shared governance model employed

by four-year institutions, but the typical community college faculty do have input into

instructional and academic decisions. Alfred (2008) indicated:

> In the short span of forty years, community colleges have evolved from small
>
> organizations administered by leaders with almost unlimited authority to complex
>
> multifaceted organizations staffed principally by specialists and part-time personnel in
>
> departments and administrative units detached from the center of the organization (p. 80).

The detachment of faculty and staff from the center of the organization is important to consider

given the effect on institutional decision making (Alfred, 2008). For example, the shift in the

faculty labor market at community colleges has shifted to an increase in part-time staffing that

has resulted in decreased participation in institutional governance (Amey et al., 2008). Similarly,

Donohue (2014) indicated that faculty participation in shared governance enhances their

understanding of institutional issues, fosters collegiality, and creates a sense of common purpose.

Miller and Miles (2008) argued that Birnbaum's (1991) description of the community

college as a bureaucracy has failed to account for the evolution from the teacher's college to the

multi-mission institutions they are today. They suggest that the wide variety of changes (e.g.,

growing role in transfer education, service to international populations, and offering a broader

variety of services) have produced decision-making opportunities and challenges for institutional

leaders (Miller & Miles, 2008). While faculty, students, staff, trustees, external accrediting

bodies, unions for faculty and staff, and special interest groups influence shared governance, they

are still important components of the process (Miller & Miles, 2008). In regard to student and

participation in the governance process, Miller and Miles (2008) indicated that students engage in important personal and social development activities. Further, sharing decisions with staff

> leads to a more central approach to decision making that includes input from individuals closest to the problem, cross-functioning teams that can support each other, an increased feeling of value by the staff members, and a greater number of responses potentially developed to resolve problems or challenges (Miller & Miles, 2008, p. 40).

Demographics

In their *Fast Facts 2020*, the American Association of Community Colleges noted that there are 1,050 community colleges across the nation, which serve approximately 11.8 million students. Of those 11.8 million students, 6.8 million are enrolled in credit-bearing courses (e.g., courses leading to a degree or certificate). Of those 6.8 million students, 4.4 million (64%) enrolled part-time, and 2.4 million (36%) enrolled full-time. The National Student Clearinghouse Research Center reported that "[b]etween full-time and part-time entrants, the gap in stop-out rate has been widening across cohorts… between 2009 and 2014 the stop-out rate [among part-time starters] increased significantly (44.8% to 54.4% by year six), while this rate declined for full-time starters (29.7% to 26.6%)" (Lang et al., Feb 2021, p. 5). According to the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center (2021), students pursuing an Associate's degree are most likely to do so in the following fields: liberal arts, sciences, general studies and humanities; health professions and related clinical sciences; business, management, marketing, and related support; computer and information sciences and support services; security and protective services; visual and performing arts; multi/interdisciplinary studies; biological and biomedical sciences; education; and engineering technologies/technicians.

Student demographic characteristics include: an average age of 28 years, with a median age of 24 years; 57% women and 43% men; 45% White, 26% Hispanic, 13% Black, 6% Asian/Pacific Islander, and 1% Native American; 29% are first-generation college students, 20% are students with disabilities, 15% are single parents, 9% are non-U.S. citizens, 8% are students with prior bachelor's degrees, and 5% are veterans; 72% of all part-time community college students work (38% full-time versus 34% part-time) whereas 62% of full-time community college students work (21% full-time versus 41% part-time) (American Association of Community Colleges, 2020). Cohen et al. (2013) noted that students who entered community colleges instead of universities were generally less academically prepared and were from lower socioeconomic classes.

These demographic figures suggest that community colleges are engaged in efforts to fulfill "an implied social contract with the public to act as "'the people's college,' serving local and regional goals" (Amey, 2017, p. 95). However, community colleges are challenged to uphold this "social contract" despite an increasing number of competing missions such as educating students with various levels of academic preparation (e.g., developmental education) and educational goals, preparing students for transfer to four-year institutions, and providing mass accessibility by virtue of low tuition rates and minimal admissions criteria (Amey, 2017; Tull et al., 2015). Indeed, Ma et al. (2020) reported that state and local appropriations at public associate institutions (community colleges) decreased from 59% in 2007-2008 to 55% in 2017-2018 compared to an increase in net tuition revenue from 26% in 2007-2008 to 30% in 2017-2018. This decline in state and local appropriations and increase in net tuition and revenue is indicative of community college efforts to offset state disinvestment and the inability of federal funding to subsidize the cost of higher education (Goldrick-Rab, 2016). However, community colleges are

inherently bound by their missions to remain accessible because, for many students, "the choice is not between the community college and a senior residential institution; it is between the community college and nothing" (Cohen et al., 2013, p. 63). As a result, community college leaders must be resourceful in identifying creative solutions designed to maintain accessibility for all students while simultaneously ensuring their retention and success.

Environmental Pressures and Student Retention and Success

One way that community colleges prove resourceful is in the development of academic and student support services, which are crucial to creating completion pathways (or guided pathways); these are "integrated sets of institutional policies, practices, and programs… designed to maximize students' progress" (Tull et al., 2015, p. 200). Barnett and Kopko (2021) noted that guided pathways are used to frame student success efforts at over 300 community colleges within the United States. They noted that guided pathways incorporate a set of core principles and activities (e.g., meta-majors, program mapping, enhanced advising etc.) to help define students' trajectory from matriculation through completion (Barnett & Kopko, 2021). However, despite deliberate institutional attempts to create and implement these pathways, external environmental pressures on students can and do undermine these efforts. For example, community colleges and universities only began acknowledging the reality of basic needs insecurity at their institutions within the last twenty years. Emerging research indicates that basic needs insecurity among college students is a significant factor in negative persistence and retention rates among all institution types (Maroto et al., 2015; Martinez et al., 2018; Phillips et al., 2018); and there is evidence of a disproportionate impact on community college students (Broton & Goldrick-Rab, 2018; Goldrick-Rab, 2016; Goldrick-Rab et al., 2017; Goldrick-Rab et al., 2018), especially those from minority populations (Ilieva et al., 2018). Many researchers

have noted that student basic needs insecurity has a disparate impact on historically underrepresented, low socioeconomic status (low SES) student groups including Black and Hispanic individuals, single parents, former foster youth, veterans, and first-generation college students (Broton & Goldrick-Rab, 2018; Broton et al., 2018; Goldrick-Rab, 2016; Hallett & Freas, 2018; Ilieva et al., 2018; Maroto et al., 2015; Pavlakis, 2014), which are all groups predominantly served by community colleges.

Although federal programs like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) exist to help low-income individuals, eligibility requirements vary by state (USDA Food and Nutrition Service, 2021a, 2021b), applications are challenging for students to complete on their own, and it is common for a first-time applicant to be rejected (Swipe Out Hunger, 2020). It is therefore necessary for community colleges to devise solutions that remove the need for students to choose between attending to their basic needs and completing their educational goals. O'Banion and Culp (2021) noted, "Student success is not about getting students admitted, enrolled, and graduated within a limited time frame. Student success is about redesigning community colleges to support students in a manner consistent with each college's mission, goals, student population, and resources" (p. xv). Understanding how organizational-change efforts progress from identification of an issue through implementation and evaluation of a solution provides a mechanism for understanding why institutions, like community colleges, might address basic needs insecurity.

Institutions can investigate such efforts through an audit of their organizational culture. While the original aim of this project was to understand how organizational change impacted institutional responses to basic needs insecurity, as data analysis progressed, shifting to an alternative framework became necessary given that the data could not support the presence

change efforts. The data suggested that organizational culture played a larger role in *why* and *how* Santa Monica College addressed basic needs insecurity. Therefore, the next section provides a rationale for employing Tierney's (2008) framework of organizational culture. The revised literature review provides a rationale for the shift but continues to offer a brief introduction to Planned change, and its counterpart, Emergent change. The reader should note that the Emergent change approach has received much less scholarly attention than Planned change, which accounts for the sparse discussion.

Organizational Culture versus Organizational Change: Rationale for Theoretical Model Selection

Although numerous theoretical models could have guided this study, I originally opted to employ the Planned change framework because the goal was to understand organizational behavior and decision making surrounding the adoption, implementation, and evaluation of basic needs insecurity programs/services. Specifically, the study was narrowly focused on understanding how a partnership between a postsecondary institution (Santa Monica College) and a nonprofit organization (Swipe Out Hunger) led to the development and implementation of programs/services designed to address food insecurity. After an introductory discussion with a Santa Monica College (SMC) representative, it became clear that the focus of the study required broadening to investigate how the institution addressed *basic needs insecurity* because the partnership between SMC and SOH was limited to the use of a survey.

I considered Kotter's eight-step model for *creating* change (Kotter, 1995) but determined the model hinged on a top-down change initiative rather than change initiatives originating from the bottom-up or a combination thereof. Bardach's eightfold path (Bardach, 2016) was considered, but I subsequently determined the model was better suited to a cost-benefit analysis

of options available to institutions for addressing student basic-needs insecurity. Given that the case study institution was already engaged in a variety of basic needs insecurity programs/services, and the goal of the study was to understand the decision making process and organizational behavior that led to the development and implementation of such programs/services, Bardach's model would not be useful. I also considered Schein's elaboration of Lewin's planned change model (Schein, 1996) but determined that this model was focused on a single aspect of the planned change model (e.g., learning), instead of providing a framework for understanding the complex environmental pressures considered by all four components of Lewin's model (e.g., field theory, group dynamics, action research and the three-step model).

As the case study progressed through data analysis, it was unclear whether the Planned change could explain SMC's response to basic needs insecurity. However, it did become clear that organizational culture was a significant contributing factor to understanding why and how SMC adopted, implemented, and regularly evaluated basic needs insecurity programs/services. As a result, Tierney's (2008) organizational culture framework was retroactively applied to frame my interpretation of the data given the presence of an overarching *culture of caring* which appears to have guided such efforts. Although there is no explicit definition for *culture of caring* available in the research literature, Cady et al. (2019) articulated several lessons Amarillo College learned in their successful shift toward a *culture of caring*, which can be applied broadly to other institutions seeking a similar shift. These lessons include reviewing student data, considering students' contexts, asking students about their challenges, seeking student feedback, addressing needs proactively, and educating themselves (Cady et al., 2019). Goldrick-Rab and Cady (2018) highlighted Amarillo College as an exemplar institution because of their intentional shift to a student-centered organizational culture focused on students' basic needs, ongoing

faculty and staff professional development regarding challenges impoverished students experience, and incorporation of lessons learned into institutional programs and policies. Amarillo College committed to moving beyond providing food pantries or emergency grants "by supplementing those actions with case management, academic support, curriculum development, and college-wide hiring and evaluation practices" (Goldrick-Rab & Cady, 2018, p. 1).

Organizational Culture

Tierney (2008a) suggested that in order to better understand organizational change, one must first understand an organization's culture. He argued that an investigation of the organization's mission, environment, leadership, strategy, information, and socialization can lead to a better understanding of culture and, potentially, an informed means of enacting an appropriate change strategy. Table 1, taken from Tierney (2008a, p. 30), highlights important questions to consider when evaluating these often overlapping and connected components of an organization's culture.

Table 1

A Framework of Organizational Culture

Environment	• How does the organization define its environment? • What is the attitude toward the environment? (Hostility? Friendship?)
Mission	• How is it defined? • How is it articulated? • Is it used as a basis for decisions? • How much agreement is there?
Socialization	• How do new members become socialized? • How is it articulated? • What do we need to know to survive/excel in this organization?
Information	• What constitutes information? • Who has it? • How is it disseminated?
Strategy	• How are decisions arrived at? • Which strategy is used? • Who makes decisions? • What is the penalty for bad decisions?
Leadership	• What does the organization expect from its leaders? • Who are the leaders? • Are there formal and informal leaders?

According to Tierney (2008b), organizations exist within a physical *environment* but individuals' interpretation of the organization's presence within a physical environment is also important to consider. An organization's *mission* represents the institution's overarching ideology, how the institution provides meaning, direction, and purpose. *Socialization* represents how individuals learn about the institution's values. *Information* represents who has access to information and how it is shared. *Strategy* represents who participates in decision making and what the rewards or consequences are for perceived good or bad decisions. Finally, *leadership*

represents how leaders are defined, who serves as leaders, and whether leadership is formal or informal is determined by institutional culture.

Bess and Dee (2012) referred to the framework as a cultural audit, which should be conducted in advance of any organizational change effort. For example, Kezar and Eckel (2002) conducted a multi-case investigation of six institutions to understand how culture shapes an institution's change processes or strategies. The authors found that different campuses enacted change strategies in different ways. Similarly, those change strategies may be acceptable within some organizational environments and not others. Further, in instances where change strategies violated cultural norms, the strategies were unlikely to be successful.

Planned and Emergent Change at A Glance

Available research employing the Planned and Emergent change frameworks stem from the change management literature. The Planned change approach dominated the organizational development (OD) field from the 1940s until the 1980s (Burnes, 2017). From the 1980s to the early 2000s, detractors criticized the Planned change approach for its inability to address continuous or rapid and transformational change, and its attempt to impose a linear change sequence on processes that are inherently messy and complex (Burnes, 2017). As a result, the Emergent change approach surfaced to account for those continuous change processes which "focused on the interrelatedness of individuals, groups, organizations and society" (Burnes, 2004d, p. 292), but was never fully realized and has largely fallen out of favor (Burnes, 2017).

Overview of the Planned Change Approach

The Planned approach to change originates in research conducted by Kurt Lewin, a German psychologist whose work shifted from child development to organizational change over the course of his career (Burnes, 2017; Papanek, 1973). Lewin subscribed to Gestalt psychology,

which views perceptual patterns or configurations as a construct of the mind, and which "stresses that change can be successfully achieved only by helping individuals to reflect on and gain new insights into the totality of their situation" through learning (Burnes, 2017, p. 333). Planned change is typically nested within the organization development (OD) literature and is based on four mutually reinforcing concepts that include Field Theory, Group Dynamics, Action Research, and the Three-Step Model (Burnes, 2017). Burnes (2017) explained that Lewin originally envisioned all four concepts to function as an integrated approach to change. However, Burnes (2017) also noted that many of Lewin's supporters have focused on the Three-Step Model, which is inherently underdeveloped as a stand-alone approach to change. For the purposes of this case study, all four concepts are employed to provide a holistic understanding of the change process.

The Planned approach is steeped in Lewin's background as a humanitarian and German Jew in Nazi Germany (Burnes, 2009). Papanek (1973) noted that it was Lewin's "ambition to develop highly sophisticated, philosophically, logically, and mathematically impeccable theory in psychology" (p. 318). Burnes (2004c) maintained that "Lewin's work stemmed from his concern to find an effective approach to resolving social conflict through changing group behavior (whether these conflicts be at the group, organizational or societal level)" (p. 995). Lewin believed that

> the key to resolving social conflict was to facilitate learning and so enable individuals to understand and restructure their perceptions of the world around them…For Lewin, change was more about individuals and groups learning about themselves, and in so doing being prepared of their volition to change their behavior (Burnes, 2009, p. 366).

The discussion that follows will briefly describe each of Lewin's four mutually reinforcing concepts: Field Theory, Group Dynamics, Action Research and the Three-Step Model (see Figure 1). The Three-Step Model represents the most well-developed concept within the Planned change approach and will thus receive significantly more attention in this section.

Figure 1

Conceptual Framework for the Planned Change Approach
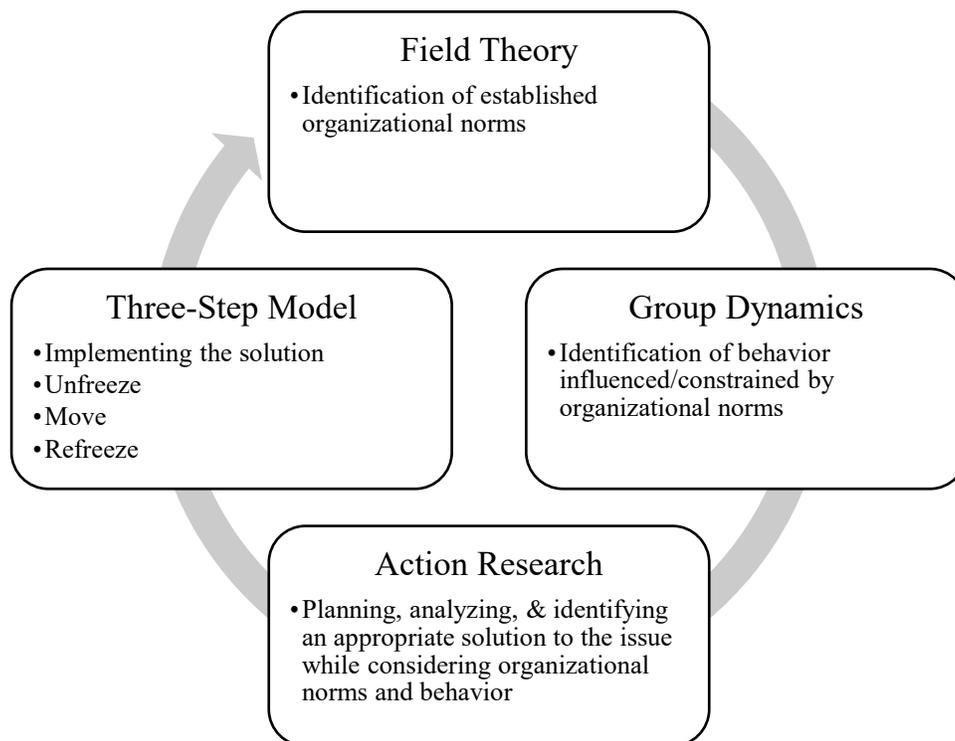
Note. Adapted from *The Origins of Lewin's Three-Step Model of Change*, by B. Burnes, 2020, p. 49.

Field Theory considers the *interdependent forces* which constrain how individuals (within an organization) respond to change. According to Burnes (2017), Lewin felt that these forces represented the status quo, or the way things are done, and referred to them as 'life spaces' or 'fields' (Burnes, 2017, p. 330). These represent organizational norms, values and culture, and

subsequently dictate how an organization will respond to change. Burnes (2017) noted that "Lewin conceived of behavioral changes as movement from one part of the field to another in order to create a 'new' status quo," and that achieving this new state requires removing or 'unfreezing' restraining forces which prevent movement (e.g., group norms) (p. 330). Field Theory, then, provides a method of mapping the complexity of these restraining forces and subsequently provides a way to identify the restraining forces that "govern group behavior and maintain the status quo" (Burnes, 2017, p. 330).

Group Dynamics represent group behavior, which is informed and/or constrained by the field the group exists within. Schein (1988) suggested that Lewin felt group behavior was inherently responsible for shaping and/or maintaining the restraining forces of the group, which include "group norms, roles, interactions and socialization processes" (Burnes, 2017, p. 332). Burnes (2017) noted that Lewin "recognized the need to provide a process whereby group members could be engaged in and committed to changing their behavior," which led to the development of Action Research and the Three-Step Model (p. 332).

Lewin suggested that it was necessary for groups to go through an iterative process (Action Research) to address change. Action Research draws on both Field Theory and Group Dynamics to plan, act, and fact-find by raising the following questions: What is the present situation? What are the dangers? What shall we do? (Burnes, 2017, p. 331). Action Research emphasizes that change requires action and "successful action depends on analyzing the situation correctly, identifying all possible alternative solutions, and choosing the most appropriate solution to the current situation" (Burnes, 2017, p. 333). Action Research represents a "cyclical process whereby research leads to action, and action leads to evaluation and further research" (Burnes, 2017, p. 333). Further, Action Research

draws on Lewin's work on Field Theory to identify the forces that bear on the group to which the individual belongs. It also draws on Group Dynamics to understand why group members behave in the way that they do when subjected to these forces…Action Research stresses that for change to be effective, it must take place at the group level and must be a participative and collaborative process which involves all of those concerned (Burnes, 2017, p. 334).

Lewin posited that a successful change project must progress through three steps: unfreezing, moving, and refreezing (Burnes, 2004c). First, the equilibrium established by cultural norms of individuals within an organization or "the way things are done" need to be destabilized or 'unfrozen' "before old behavior can be discarded and new behavior successfully adopted" (Burnes, 2004c, p. 985). In essence, a disruption in how individuals think and act should create a moral/ethical imperative for seeking alternative ways of doing things. Second, this moral/ethical imperative presents an opportunity for individuals to engage in evidence-based learning about, and potential adoption of, more acceptable ways of doing things (moving). Finally, with the adoption of more acceptable ways of doing things comes the issue of ensuring that behavior does not regress to its previous state. Thus, the final step in the three-step model is finding ways of reinforcing (refreezing) the adoption of new ways of doing things. Burnes (2004c) argued that "Lewin saw successful change as a group activity, because unless group norms and routines are also transformed, changes to individual behavior will not be sustained" (p. 986).

Most recently, Burnes (2020) aimed to show that Lewin's three-step model represents a "well-developed approach to changing behavior" through an in-depth discourse on field theory, group dynamics, and action research, which began in the 1920s (p. 52). He argued that field theory represents a metatheory upon which all of Lewin's work rests and thus, the three-step

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model is a "robust approach to understanding the complexity of human behavior and how it can be changed" (p. 52). The next section will briefly discuss Emergent change, which is largely a collection of criticisms of Planned change. The available literature on Emergent change is limited and, as mentioned by B. Burnes (personal communication, April 8, 2021), "because there are 300,000 articles on planned change and two and a half articles on emergent change, it becomes difficult to have the same level of confidence in the emergent elements up front whereas if you have empirical data, then it looks like a planned versus emergent change."

Overview of the Emergent Change Approach

The Emergent change approach literature largely represented a collection of criticisms related to the limitations of the Planned change approach in the 1980s and 1990s. These included: (1) the Planned approach was developed to address organizations operating in a predictable and controlled environment, which is unrealistic; (2) the Planned approach appears to have an emphasis on incremental and isolated change instead of radical, transformational change; (3) the Planned approach assumes that everyone within the group can come to an agreement on the change project and be willing to engage with it; (4) the assumption of universal agreement ignores the role of conflict and politics; (5) change initiatives vary, which suggests that there is no such thing as a one-size-fits-all approach; and (6) the Planned approach is less responsive to crises situations (e.g., rapid, transformational change) (Burnes, 2004b, 2004c, 2009, 2017, 2020; Burnes & By, 2012; Dawson, 1994; Dunphy & Stace, 1992, 1993; Garvin, 1993; Harris, 1985; Hatch, 1997; Kanter et al., 1992; Miller & Friesen, 1984; Nonaka, 1988; Pettigrew, 1980, 1990a, 1990b; Pettigrew et al., 1989; Pfeffer, 1994; Stacey, 1993; Wilson, 1992). While there is no single agreed-upon model available in the literature, B. Burnes (personal communication, April 8, 2021) suggested that Rosabeth Moss Kanter and John Kotter

developed approaches which could align with Emergent change: the *Ten Commandments for Executing Change* and the *8-Step Process for Leading Change*, respectively (Kanter et al., 1992; Kotter, 1995). These models appear to align with the notion that there is no one-size-fits-all approach and there are elements which appear to overlap (see Table 2).

Table 2

Comparison of Select Emergent Change Approaches

Ten Commandments for Executing Change	8-Step Process for Leading Change
1. Analyze the organization and its need for change.	1. Establishing a sense of urgency.
2. Create a shared vision and a common direction.	2. Forming a powerful guiding coalition.
3. Separate from the past.	3. Creating a vision.
4. Create a sense of urgency.	4. Communicating the vision.
5. Support a strong leader role.	5. Empowering others to act on the vision.
6. Line up political sponsorship.	6. Planning for and creating short-term wins.
7. Craft an implementation plan.	7. Consolidating improvements and producing still more change.
8. Develop enabling structures.	8. Institutionalizing new approaches.
9. Communicate, involve people and be honest.	
10. Reinforce and institutionalize change.	

Note. Source: Kanter et al. (1992, pp. 382-383); Kotter (1995).

Conclusion

A review of the literature highlighted three important facets of this study: the prevalence and consequences of basic needs insecurity and its impact on postsecondary students; the role of community colleges in providing an accessible education; and the application of Tierney's (2008) organizational culture framework to better understand the decision-making process an institution moves through to enhance student success. Who experiences basic needs insecurity and why postsecondary institutions should be concerned, and the role of community colleges were discussed to provide important contextual details needed to frame the study. Additionally, the reader was provided with a justification for the shift in theoretical frameworks to organizational culture from the planned and emergent change frameworks as data analysis progressed. The next chapter outlines the research methods appropriate for an applied case study project. This chapter details the study's purpose, introduces the case study site, Santa Monica College, and discusses the data collection and analysis techniques that were employed. The chapter also includes a discussion of the researcher's positionality, limitations of the study, and provides an in-depth institutional profile on Santa Monica College.

Chapter 3: Methodology

The original aim of this study was to explore the utility of the planned change framework in understanding how a partnership between a postsecondary institution (Santa Monica College) and a nonprofit organization (Swipe Out Hunger) led to the development and implementation of programs/services designed to address food insecurity. However, the data could not support the presence of a planned change effort and, therefore, the aim of this study shifted to understanding how organizational culture influenced SMC's ability to provide holistic, creative solutions to address basic needs insecurity for their student population. This research contributes necessary insight to both academic and student affairs administrators who are interested in collaboratively addressing basic needs insecurity on their own campuses. More broadly, understanding how organizational culture influences change efforts as they progress from identification of an issue through implementation and evaluation of a solution provides a mechanism for understanding why institutions pursue certain activities (e.g., establishing basic needs insecurity programs/services and/or establishing partnerships with community nonprofit organizations) to address a variety of institutional challenges (e.g., improving student success and retention through programming designed to address basic needs insecurity).

Research Design

A qualitative research design was selected for this study because the goal was to understand "*the meaning people have constructed*; that is, how people make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world," which could not be accomplished through a quantitative design (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 15). Creswell and Poth (2018) noted that case study research "provides an in-depth understanding of the case" through the collection and

integration of various forms of qualitative data (e.g., interviews, observations, documents, and audiovisual materials) (p. 98). For the purposes of this study, the unit of analysis is a public higher education institution, Santa Monica College (SMC), in Santa Monica, California. Holley and Harris (2019) noted that case studies provide a flexible design, place emphasis on real-world context, and "contribute to and advance knowledge of professional practice" (p. 91). Further, Yin (2018) suggested that case studies offer a unique strength in their ability to deal with various types of evidence, including documents, artifacts, interviews, direct observations, and participant-observation (p. 12). Similarly, Holley and Harris (2019) indicated that the case study approach "generally requires the collection of all types of qualitative data including interviews" (p. 89). A single-case study design was also selected because the case appeared to represent an unusual case which deviated from theoretical norms and thus represented an opportunity for exploratory research (Yin, 2018).

Organizational decision making is an inherently complex process, which is difficult to quantify for a purely numerical data-driven study, especially within the context of a higher education institution that employs numerous people with unique viewpoints. The study was guided by three research questions: (1) Why did institutional leadership decide to address basic needs insecurity? ; (2) What did the institution do to address basic needs insecurity? ; and (3) How has the institution implemented and sustained basic needs insecurity initiatives? Given these questions, a qualitative case study is an appropriate investigation method because it represents an "in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 37), and an opportunity to "learn more about a smaller, more tightly defined area" (Holley & Harris, 2019, p. 114). COVID-19 pandemic-related travel restrictions hampered on-site data collection therefore data collection and analysis predominantly centered on semi-structured

virtual interviews conducted via Zoom since Merriam and Tisdell (2016) claimed that interviews are necessary when the researcher cannot observe behavior.

Case Study Site Selection

Maroto et al. (2015) suggested that community college students may be experiencing food insecurity at rates greater than the general United States, which makes this type of public higher education institution the ideal location for case study research. Indeed, much of the available literature on basic needs insecurity has been conducted among community college students and suggests that community college students experience food insecurity at a higher rate than students attending a four-year institution (Broton & Goldrick-Rab, 2018; Goldrick-Rab, 2016, 2018; Goldrick-Rab et al., 2017; Goldrick-Rab et al., 2018). As an institutional type, community colleges represent an ideal case study locale given their need to develop creative solutions and strategies to address limited financial resources and unique student demographics and needs. Given these challenges, community colleges are required to be much more adaptive to a changing environment in a shorter period of time than traditional four-year institutions (Cohen et al., 2013; Tull et al., 2015).

This case study started with a narrow focus on a partnership between a postsecondary institution with a nonprofit organization focused on student food insecurity called Swipe Out Hunger (SOH). In spring of 2020, I compiled a list of all the institutions that had established a partnership with SOH, which was available on their website, and institutional details (e.g., state, public or private, enrollment, when the partnership was founded, and the food service provider) obtained from the National Center for Education Statistics College Navigator website. My goal was to select an institution that had an established partnership of at least five years assuming that the amount of time lapsed would have given the institution an opportunity to implement the

program and subsequently analyze its efficacy. At that time, SOH had 121 institutional partners listed on their website. Once I narrowed the scope of the institutions down to those that had founded a partnership with SOH between 2009 through 2016, 18 institutions were left which, for the exception of SMC, consisted of four-year institutions (see Appendix A). In consultation with my dissertation co-chair, I selected SMC as my case study site because of the comparative dearth of research on community colleges. An institutional profile of SMC can be found below.

Santa Monica College Institutional Profile

SMC is a four-year, primarily associates degree-granting institution located in Santa Monica, California (National Center for Education Statistics, 2020a). The institution opened in 1929 as Santa Monica Junior College just 49 days before the stock market crashed (Santa Monica College, 2020a, 2020b). In 1933, The College was forced to temporarily relocate to a village of wood-framed tents after the Long Beach earthquake (Santa Monica College, 2020a). Four years later, the College opened its Technical School and began purchasing land for its main campus in 1940 (Santa Monica College, 2020a). The College was renamed to Santa Monica City College in 1945 in an effort to combine its dual roles of academic and workforce education, and finally became SMC in 1971 to match its broadened service region (Santa Monica College, 2020a).

Over the course of 90 years, SMC has grown from 153 students and 8 faculty members (Santa Monica College, 2020b) to a district serving over 32,000 students (Santa Monica College, 2020a) and employing 352 full-time and 984 part-time instructional faculty members (National Center for Education Statistics, 2020a). SMC fits within the large, relatively flat organizational structure described by (Cohen et al., 2013). Student demographics for the fall 2019 cohort indicated that: student attendance is comprised of 60% part-time students and 40% full-time

students; student gender is comprised of 54% women and 46% men; student race/ethnicity is comprised of 41% Hispanic/Latino, 23% White, 10% Non-resident alien, 9% Asian, and 8% Black or African American, and less than 1% each for American Indian or Alaskan Native and Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander; and 70% of students are ages 24 and under whereas 30% are ages 25 and over (National Center for Education Statistics, 2020c).

SMC noted that the educational goals of their student population includes: 67% transfer, 7% career, 6% associate degree or certificate, 4% educational development, and 3% university students taking courses (Santa Monica College, 2020i). The College is also comprised of the following special populations: 52% first-generation, 36% enrolled in one or more distance education courses, 6% disabled student programs and services, 3% undocumented (AB 540), 2% veterans, and 1% current or former foster youth (Santa Monica College, 2020i). Faculty demographics for the fall 2019 semester indicated: 75% are temporary faculty and 25% are tenured/tenure track; faculty gender is comprised of 57% women and 43% men; faculty race/ethnicity is comprised of 18% White, 13% Hispanic, 11% Multi-Ethnicity, 10% Black/African American, 3% Asian, and 1.5% Pacific Islander (California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office, 2020a).

The SMC District's service area includes Santa Monica and Malibu, and is comprised of the main campus, three satellite campuses (Airport, Bundy, and Emeritus), the Center for Media and Design, and the Performing Arts Center (Santa Monica College, 2020g). The District is governed by a seven-member board of trustees who are elected to four-year terms (elected by qualified voters who reside in Santa Monica and Malibu), and a student trustee who serves a one-year term as a non-voting member (elected by the SMC students) (Santa Monica College, 2020e). The District is situated within the California Community College System, which is made

up of 116 community Colleges (California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office, 2020c).

The California Community College System is overseen by the Chancellor's office, which

"operates under the direction of the state chancellor who is guided by the Board of Governors.

The state chancellor is appointed by the board and board members are appointed by the

Governor" (California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office, 2020b, para. 6). Interestingly,

the SMC District board policy stipulates that members of the board, including the student trustee,

who attend all board meetings may be compensated for their service (Santa Monica College,

2020f).

In the 2018-2019 budget year, California adopted the Student-Centered Funding Formula

(SCFF), which calculates funding "based on three main factors: Base Allocation (enrollment),

Supplemental Allocation (number of low-income students served measured by financial aid

distribution), and Student Success (number of student success outcomes achieved" (Santa

Monica College, 2020c, p. 2). Allocations were originally designed to roll out over a three year

period: (2018-2019) 65% Base Allocation, 20% Supplemental Allocation, and 10% Student

Success Allocation; (2019-2020) 60% Base Allocation, 20% Supplemental Allocation, and 20%

Student Success Allocation; and (2021-2022) 70% Base Allocation, 20% Supplemental

Allocation, and 10% Student Success Allocation (Santa Monica College, 2020c). However, the

state revised the SCFF and the actual 2019-2020 allocations were 70% Base Allocation, 20%

Supplemental Allocation, and 10% Student Success Allocation (Santa Monica College, 2020c).

The Santa Monica Community College District proposed adopted budget for the 2019-

2020 budget year was $636M. The budget is comprised of nine funds: an unrestricted general

fund, a restricted fund, a special reserves fund (capital), four bond funds, a student financial aid

fund, and a scholarship trust fund. Auxiliary operations are included in the budget but remain

separate from all other funds (Santa Monica College, 2020c). Institutional revenues and expenses for SMC indicate that core expenses are primarily driven by instruction (46%), student services (17%), institutional support (16%), other core expenses (11%), and academic support (9%) (National Center for Education Statistics, 2020c). Core revenues are primarily driven by state appropriations (30%), government grants and contracts (24%), tuition and fees (20%), other core revenues (13%), and local appropriations (11%) (National Center for Education Statistics, 2020c). Total core expenses were slightly higher at $15,489 per full-time equivalent (FTE) enrollment than were total core revenues at $15,230 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2020c).

SMC's core missions include academic transfer, as evidenced by the institution's high transfer rate (67%) (Santa Monica College, 2020i), and occupational education. The College is listed as California's number one transfer College for over 25 years with transfers to the University of California, University of Southern California, and Loyola Marymount University (Santa Monica College, 2020d). Additionally, the institution prides itself "on preparing students for careers of the 21st century, in growing fields like interaction design, cloud computing, technical theatre, and global trade and logistics" by offering over 180+ career-focused degrees and certificates (Santa Monica College, 2020d, para. 8). The College has an extensive offering of student support services including computer labs, counseling, a library, tutoring, a transfer center, health and safety programs and services, and various student life resources (Santa Monica College, 2020k). The College also has athletic offerings including: basketball, cross country, football, soccer, softball, swimming and diving, tennis, track and field, volleyball, water polo (Santa Monica College, 2020h).

Demographic Context

As an institution within a single college district, SMC does not compete with other institutions for funding. Additionally, this institution, which services Santa Monica and Malibu, is located in an affluent neighborhood. Despite their location, only ten percent of their student population is from Santa Monica. The majority of their students travel to SMC from other parts of southern California, sometimes bypassing two or more other community colleges. Additionally, SMC's students are predominantly Hispanic, 42%, and come from low socioeconomic status backgrounds. The juxtaposition between SMC's location with their student population is an important contextual component of the case study. In particular, SMC is an institution with direct access to well-resourced community members and organizations and knowledgeable professional staff and administrators who are aware of and attempt to mediate barriers to student success (e.g., basic needs insecurity). Students are subsequently drawn to SMC because of the institution's reputation for providing student services that other community colleges are unable to offer and because of their high rates of transfer. Table 3 provides a snapshot of the population and race/ethnicity differences between SMC, the city of Santa Monica, and Los Angeles County (National Center for Education Statistics, 2020b; United States Census Bureau, 2020). Table 4 provides a comparison of poverty and employment rates between the city of Santa Monica, Los Angeles County, the state of California, and the United States as a whole (Los Angeles Almanac, 2021; State of California Employment Development Department, 2020; United States Census Bureau, 2020).

Table 3

Comparison of Population and Race/Ethnicity at the College, City, and County Levels

Demographic Indicator	Santa Monica College	Santa Monica City, California	Los Angeles County, California
Population			
	25,948**	93,076*	10,014,009*
Race/Ethnicity			
American Indian and Alaska Native*	<1%**	0.3%*	1.4%*
Asian*	9%**	10.2%*	15.4%*
Black or African American*	8%**	4.5%*	9.0%*
Hispanic or Latino*	42%**	15.4%*	48.6%*
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander*	<1%**	0.1%*	0.4%*
Two or More Races*	5%**	5.9%*	3.1%*
White*	26%**	75.9%*	70.7%*
White, not Hispanic or Latino*	-	64.6%*	26.1%*
Race/ethnicity unknown**	6%**	-	-
Non-resident alien**	5%**	-	-

* United States Census Bureau (2020)

** National Center for Education Statistics (2020b)

Table 4

Comparison of Poverty and Unemployment Rates

Demographic Indicator	Santa Monica City, California	Los Angeles County, California	State of California	United States
Persons in poverty				
	9.9%*	13.2%*	11.5%*	11.4%*
Unemployment rate				
	5.2%***	12.3%**	9.1%**	6.5%**

* United States Census Bureau (2020)

** State of California Employment Development Department (2020)

*** Los Angeles Almanac (2021)

Data Collection

  The following section includes details on Institutional Research Board (IRB) approval from Southern Methodist University (SMU) and Santa Monica College (SMC), participant selection, and participant data security and anonymity. While IRB details are not normally included in the dissertation, it was important to include them here because a request to identify the case study site was requested and approved before the data collection process began.

IRB Approval

  Institutional Research Board (IRB) approval to conduct this study was obtained via application from Southern Methodist University (SMU) and Santa Monica College (SMC) in June 2021 in advance of data collection. A request to identify SMC was submitted and approved as part of the SMC IRB application process. Identifying SMC as the case study site allows higher education administrators to research and fully understand the local, state, institution, and system level policies which impact the College's ability to provide a robust response to student basic needs insecurity. These contextual details are integral to modeling this institutional response and would be missing if SMC were deidentified.

Participant Selection

  I employed purposeful sampling, described by Creswell and Poth (2018), which aims to "intentionally sample a group of people that can best inform the researcher about the research problem under examination" (p. 148). This type of nonprobability sampling was the most appropriate course of action given the topic under study and the need to identify participants who were knowledgeable about basic needs insecurity programs/services at SMC (Singleton & Straits, 2010). Snowball sampling was also employed as a means of gathering additional members of the target population to ensure broad representation and perspectives on the topic

under study (Singleton & Straits, 2010). The most significant data collection and analysis

occurred via semi-structured interviews with knowledgeable institutional informants from July 1

through September 11, 2021. An initial conversation with an administrator was solicited in

January 2021 to aid in site selection and to identify potential informants. In addition, this initial

connection was helpful in establishing rapport with other SMC participants in advance of data

collection and interviews.

Once data collection began, a total of 13 full interviews and one partial interview were

collected. Informants were drawn from faculty, staff, students, and administrators who directly

engage in basic needs support services at SMC, and from community partners/affiliates. Thirty-

four individuals from SMC were solicited for interviews and 12 agreed to participate. One of the

12 participants was only able to complete a portion of the interview due to a scheduling conflict.

Two additional attempts were made to reschedule an appointment with the participant to

complete the interview but were unsuccessful. Additionally, 10 potential informants were

solicited from known SMC community partners/affiliates but only two agreed to participate.

Interviews ranged from 27-94 minutes.

Participants were solicited via an introductory email (see Appendix B). The introductory

email indicated the purpose of the study, any potential risks to the participant, the amount of time

that would be required to participate, and links to a calendar sign-up and to a Qualtrics survey

which collected the participants' informed consent (see Appendix C). All 14 participants

consented to the interview being recorded. However, only a portion of one interview was

recorded given that I forgot to start the recording. I recorded my notes and impressions after that

interview concluded to reference during the data analysis phase. All interviews were conducted

virtually via Zoom and were recorded with consent to conduct and record the interview collected

ahead of time via the aforementioned Qualtrics survey. The interview protocol contained an informed consent statement, which was read aloud to the participant as a reminder before the interview began (see Appendix D). The informed consent document set up through Qualtrics allowed for a signed copy of the informed consent form to be automatically delivered electronically to the participant upon completion of the survey. None of the participants declined consent or requested that their interview data be rescinded from the study from the time the interview was conducted until present.

Participant Data Security and Anonymity

Zoom automatically records meetings into a variety of formats (e.g., audio plus video and audio only) and also provides a rough transcription of the meeting. The audio only recordings were retained for data analysis purposes and are stored in my university-sponsored Box account which requires dual-factor authentication security. All recordings were removed from the university-sponsored Zoom account online as soon as the audio only recordings became available for download in order to maintain the participants' anonymity. It should be noted that, at the initial request for participation stage, potential informants at the institution were forwarding the request for interview messages to each other rather than communicating potential participants directly with me. It is possible this unforeseen activity potentially compromised participant anonymity. However, each of the participants were assigned an alias and no identifying information (e.g., name, title, academic rank, department, school/college, etc.) was recorded in order to maintain their anonymity. Interviews were transcribed through a paid electronic service offered by Rev.com. Audio files were uploaded to Rev.com with transcriptions available for download roughly 24-48 hours afterward. Transcribed interviews were subsequently loaded into MAXQDA for qualitative data analysis.

Data Analysis

The following section includes details on the Creswell and Poth (2018) data analysis spiral, which includes the following steps: managing and organizing the data, reading and memoing emergent ideas, describing and classifying codes into themes, developing and assessing interpretations, and representing and visualizing the data (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The section continues with a discussion of trustworthiness and thick description, limitations of the case study, and researcher positionality statement.

The Data Analysis Spiral

I adopted the Creswell and Poth (2018) data analysis spiral as a model for evaluating data obtained from semi-structured interviews in this study. This analysis strategy is appropriate for qualitative research because it recognizes that analysis does not occur within a linear fashion as it would with quantitative analysis. Rather, "[o]ne enters with the data of text or audiovisual materials…and exits with an account or a narrative… Within each spiral, the researcher uses analytic strategies for the goal of generating specific analytic outcomes" (Creswell & Poth, 2018, p. 185). The spiral is composed of five steps between data collection and providing an account of the findings. These steps include managing and organizing the data, reading and memoing emergent ideas, describing and classifying codes into themes, developing and assessing interpretations, and representing and visualizing the data (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Discussion of each of the steps utilized in the data analysis process is outlined next.

Step 1: Managing and Organizing the Data

The first step involved the creation of a dedicated interview file folder within my personal university-sponsored Box account. This account requires dual-factor authentication, which added a second layer of security for the interview data. Further, my university-sponsored

Zoom account was used to conduct the interviews. This service also required dual-factor authentication to obtain the interview recordings. The audio only recordings were downloaded to the established Box folder as soon as they were available and deleted from the Zoom account along with the audio plus video recordings and transcripts. All files were renamed by date to ensure anonymity of the participant. The audio only recordings were subsequently uploaded to Rev.com, an online transcription service, where they were transcribed verbatim. Transcription files were downloaded to the Box folder as soon as they were available and subsequently loaded into MAXQDA, a qualitative analysis software platform, for manual coding and analysis.

Step 2: Reading and Memoing Emergent Ideas

The second step involved note taking during individual interviews and later while reading the interview transcripts. Large segments of the text were initially highlighted to emphasize the *culture of caring*, that would become a prominent theme. MAXQDA allows the user to load multiple transcript files into a project and highlight text segments with the same code or new code, which could be exported into a code-specific file. The software also allows the user to insert code definitions and memos, which were reviewed and updated throughout the analysis process.

Step 3: Describing and Classifying Codes into Themes

I employed the initial coding method in the first round of coding to identify processes and, later, the properties and dimensions of categories which bring together similarly coded data (Saldaña, 2021). Saldaña (2021) noted that initial coding "creates a starting point to provide the researcher analytic leads for further exploration" and "all proposed codes during this cycle are tentative and provisional" (p. 149). These initial codes were later sub-coded as additional data was collected, organized and analyzed. I then used the pattern coding method for the second

round coding, which was conducted to identify emerging themes (Saldaña, 2021). The focus at this stage was identifying how SMC was able to provide basic needs insecurity programs/services and why. Three emergent themes began to take shape as the coding process unfolded: *desire to help/enhance student success*, *program types/initiatives*, and *strategic decision making*. Each emergent theme appeared to align with each of the research questions: (1) Why did institutional leadership decide to address basic needs insecurity? ; (2) What did the institution do to address basic needs insecurity? ; and (3) How has the institution implemented and sustained basic needs insecurity initiatives? ; and these were embedded within an overarching theme of *culture of caring*.

Step 4: Developing and Assessing Interpretations and Step 5: Representing and Visualizing the Data

For these final two steps, I used Miro.com to produce a mind map to help explicate three emergent themes associated with the research questions, specifically *why*, *what*, and *how* SMC addressed basic needs insecurity. These emergent themes included *desire to help/enhance student success*, *program types/initiatives*, and *strategic decision making*, respectively, and ultimately extend from a *culture of caring*. Creating the mind map helped identify connections within these emergent themes, which are discussed in detail in the Findings chapter.

Trustworthiness/Triangulation and Thick Description

Merriam and Tisdell (2016) suggested that the researcher as a data collection instrument allows for a closer assessment of the lived experience as opposed to an alternative instrument (e.g., self-administered survey). Collecting semi-structured interviews helped capture the lived experience of the participants and provide a method of confirming the researcher's interpretation of the lived experience under study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Merriam and Tisdell (2016) also

promoted the use of various strategies to promote data validity and reliability. Several strategies were employed in this study including triangulation, thick description, peer review, and researcher positionality. Triangulation is a process whereby multiple sources of data were used to confirm emerging findings. This process involved the exploration of Santa Monica College's website, local and national news articles, and through two community partner/affiliate participant interviews. Thick description was used to provide a "highly descriptive, detailed presentation of the setting" to enhance the possibility of transferability (p. 257). The reader will find the use of thick description through a review of the available research literature as well as information on the case study site below. As such, my interpretations of the data were evaluated utilizing publicly available institutional documents and institutional website information, and through ongoing discussions with my dissertation chair (peer review) to promote data reliability and validity throughout the data analysis process. Finally, the researcher positionality outlined below provides a critical self-reflection of my worldview and biases that potentially affected the study.

Limitations

A multi-case study project would have provided a breadth of understanding into the ways in which different community colleges are addressing basic needs insecurity. However, the time commitment required for such an endeavor was beyond the scope of this applied study and thus a single in-depth case study was pursued. SMC represents a unique case study site in that there is state and local interest and investment in enhancing credential attainment, especially for traditionally underrepresented students. This interest and support are also shared by many of the administrative staff at SMC proper, which translates into a unique institutional culture. Additionally, SMC as a single college district does not have to compete with other institutions within their own district for resources to address basic needs insecurity. It is important to

recognize that each of these variables has an impact on the ability of other community colleges to reproduce similar programs/services at their own institutions.

Out of the twelve interviews collected from SMC-based participants, only two student interviews were captured, which potentially biased the findings and conclusions of the study in favor of the organization. However, while the study could have benefitted from additional student input, it was necessary for participants to have a significant understanding of institutional decision-making processes and only one of the two student participants met that qualification. Additionally, while the additional two community partner/affiliate interviews helped verify some of the SMC engagement activities that addressed basic needs insecurity, their breadth of knowledge was also limited to the work of their respective organizations. Further, I was unable to obtain an interview with individuals knowledgeable about other aspects of the institution (e.g., financial aid and upper administration), which would have added a beneficial layer of depth and verification.

Finally, it does appear that SMC was moving toward enhancing their basic needs insecurity response prior to the pandemic. Indeed, the pandemic was mentioned, at least once, by each of the participants as the interviews progressed. It is worth mentioning that, had the pandemic not occurred prior to data collection, findings may have been interpreted differently. However, given that organizational culture typically requires a significant amount of time to change, it is likely that the *culture of caring* (see Findings) would still have been a prominent aspect of the institution prior to the pandemic. The study would also have benefitted from a broader range of strategic decision-making data specifically concerning external resources (e.g., local funding and/or donations, state funding, CARES Act funding, etc.). However, many of

these types of external resources were only mentioned in passing by the participants and were not the direct focus of the interview questions.

Researcher Positionality

My role as researcher was to serve as the primary data collection and analysis instrument. Potential for bias existed given that I am a first-generation college student of mixed ethnic heritage from a poor, rural, southern locale. I have graduate-level training and experience in cultural anthropology research methods, including participant observation and interviewing informants. Additionally, I have nearly 18 years of experience working at a four-year private institution of higher education in progressively responsible administrative positions. These experiences provided me with a unique understanding of administrative decision-making processes which allowed me to build rapport, through shared empathy, with participants.

Conclusion

As Yin (2018) noted, one way to assure the reliability of the case study is to "make as many procedures as explicit as possible" (p. 46). A qualitative, single-site case study design was employed to garner a deeper understanding of how Santa Monica College (SMC) provided holistic, creative solutions to address basic needs insecurity for their student population. The study began with a narrow focus on food insecurity and was later broadened to encompass basic needs insecurity, which includes food insecurity, housing insecurity and/or homelessness. Broadening the scope of the case study and conducting semi-structured interviews with knowledgeable participants allowed for the collection and analysis of data which provided a greater depth of understanding. The next chapter provides a general overview of the institutional context from which three emergent themes stem, briefly discusses the impact of the pandemic

(COVID-19) and explicates how each theme connects to SMC's *culture of caring* as exhibited by institutional participants and wraps up with a summary of the findings.

Chapter 4: Findings

The original aim of this study was to explore the utility of the planned change framework in understanding how a partnership between a postsecondary institution (Santa Monica College) and a nonprofit organization (Swipe Out Hunger) led to the development and implementation of programs/services designed to address food insecurity. However, the data could not support the presence of a planned change effort and, therefore, the aim of this study shifted to understanding how organizational culture influenced SMC's response to basic needs insecurity. The findings of this case study led to a better understanding of the *why*, *what*, and *how* behind SMC's student support services, specifically those aimed at addressing and alleviating basic needs insecurity, and how other institutions may apply similar practices. The study was guided by three research questions: (1) Why did institutional leadership decide to address basic needs insecurity? ; (2) What did the institution do to address basic needs insecurity? ; and (3) How has the institution implemented and sustained basic needs insecurity initiatives? Semi-structured interviews were employed to obtain specifics on the *why*, *what*, and *how*; and the findings show that an overarching *culture of caring*, defined as a student-centric focus on normalizing and destigmatizing basic needs insecurity. Incorporating the lessons learned outlined by Cady et al. (2019), a *culture of caring* includes reviewing student data, considering students' contexts, asking students about their challenges, seeking student feedback, addressing needs proactively, and educating themselves. It also includes moving from a one-dimension support model (e.g., offering a food pantry or emergency grant) to multi-dimensioned, wrap-around support model that includes case management, academic support, curriculum development, and college-wide hiring and evaluation practices (Goldrick-Rab & Cady, 2018).

The sections that follow will introduce the participants and the Basic Needs Committee, provide a general overview of the institutional context from which three themes stem, briefly discuss the impact of the pandemic (COVID-19), and explicate how each theme connects to SMC's *culture of caring* as exhibited by institutional participants. The chapter will wrap up with a summary of the findings in the conclusion.

About the Participants and the Basic Needs Committee

Fourteen individuals participated in this case study. Participants were recruited from student affairs, development and external affairs, student government and nonprofit organizations focused on housing insecurity and/or homelessness. Pseudonyms were assigned with purposefully vague affiliations to maintain participant anonymity (see Table 5). Additionally, participants were classified as short-term (1-3 years), medium-term (4-10 years), and long-term (10+ years) to provide an additional layer of depth to their responses. The reader should note that some professional staff members also served as adjunct faculty, though those designations were not included in Table 5 to ensure participant anonymity.

Table 5

Participant Table

Participant	Affiliation
Andrea Nash	Medium-term administrator (student affairs)
Anna Latham	Medium-term professional staff member (student affairs)
Ascanio Ferara	Long-term student
Cathy Baird	Long-term staff member (student affairs)
Dali Harimau	Medium-term professional staff member (student affairs)
Derek Gaunt	Medium-term community partner/affiliate (housing focus)
Desandra Kral	Medium-term professional staff member (student affairs)
Hally Smith	Medium-term professional staff member (student affairs)
Jim Shrapshire	Long-term professional staff member (student affairs)
Julie Olsen	Short-term student
Leah Cornick	Short-term community partner/affiliate (housing focus)
Mercy Thompson	Medium-term administrator (development and external affairs)
Moira Keller	Long-term professional staff member (student affairs)
Warren Smith	Medium-term administrator (student affairs)

Note. Short-term = 1-3 years, Medium-term = 4-10 years, and Long-term = 10+ years.

Each of the participants I spoke with detailed various means by which SMC views students and the solutions necessary to address basic needs insecurity holistically. The findings demonstrate an understanding of the student population being served and the available resources and/or services they need to attain their desired goal(s). The findings also demonstrate how SMC's collegial work environment encourages a shared governance model, which I argue is key

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to the Basic Needs Committee's ability to address and alleviate basic needs insecurity for their

student population. At the time of participant interviews, the Basic Needs Committee (BNC)

comprised a 20-member group made up of faculty, staff, students, and administrators from across

campus (see Table 6). It is a collaborative group designed to help inform decision making around

student basic needs. Though largely drawn from student affairs, the committee also includes

representatives from custodial operations, auxiliary services, financial aid, information

technology, and the SMC Foundation. The BNC is advisory to the Associate Dean for Health

and Wellbeing, who also chairs the committee[2]. Additionally, the BNC is co-chaired by the

Director of Student Judicial Affairs and the SMC Foundation President & Dean of Institutional

Advancement. Membership on the committee is stable although the Associate Dean for Health

and Wellbeing recently noted that membership was scaled down to reduce the redundancy of

representatives from the same office[3].

The committee was created about five years ago when the Chancellor's Office awarded

Student Life with "Hunger Free" funding to spearhead basic needs insecurity initiatives. The

Office of Student Life subsequently put a committee together to inform best practices and the

institution kept the committee going. At the time, SMC was charged with developing and

implementing basic needs programs/services for SMC students. As of 2021, the committee was

allocated an ongoing budget of $400,000 to continue their basic needs security efforts. In

addition to these funds, SMC recently signed a contract for a CalFresh Outreach grant, in the

amount of $195,000 annually, through the Center for Health Communities at California State

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[2] Although the Basic Needs Committee does not have a dedicated website, all information about their current programming can be found at https://www.smc.edu/student-support/health-wellbeing/.
[3] Follow-up conversation on April 6, 2022.

University, Chico. The grant can be used toward any work connected to CalFresh Outreach and is renewable.

Table 6

Basic Needs Committee Membership

Membership
Administrative Assistant, Student Affairs*
Associate Dean, Financial Aid and Scholarships
Associate Dean, Special Programs*
Associate Dean, Student Life*
Case Management Coordinator, Student Services*
Counselor, Scholars Program*
Custodial Operations Supervisor
Director, Auxiliary Services
Director, Financial Aid
Director, Health and Wellbeing*
Director, Student Judicial Affairs*
Foundation President & Dean, Institutional Advancement
Information Technology
Resource Specialist*
SMC Student Leader/Inter-Club Council Chair
SMC Student Leaders (2)
Supervisor, EOPS/CARE, Guardian Scholars Coordinator*
Vice President, Student Affairs*

Note. * = position housed under student affairs.

Overview and a Note on the Pandemic (COVID-19)

Although there is no explicit definition for *culture of caring* available in the research literature, Cady et al. (2019) articulated several lessons Amarillo College learned in their successful shift toward a *culture of caring*, which can be applied broadly to other institutions seeking a similar shift. These lessons include reviewing student data, considering students' contexts, asking students about their challenges, seeking student feedback, addressing needs proactively, and educating themselves (Cady et al., 2019). Goldrick-Rab and Cady (2018) highlighted Amarillo College as an exemplar institution because of their intentional shift to a student-centered organizational culture focused on students' basic needs, ongoing faculty and staff professional development regarding challenges impoverished students experience, and incorporation of lessons learned into institutional programs and policies. Amarillo College committed to moving beyond providing food pantries or emergency grants "by supplementing those actions with case management, academic support, curriculum development, and college-wide hiring and evaluation practices" (Goldrick-Rab & Cady, 2018, p. 1). The discussion that follows suggests that SMC's organizational culture aligns well with this description of a *culture of caring*.

Three dominant themes provide the foundation from which *culture of caring* is built at SMC and include: a *desire to help/enhance student success*, *program types/initiatives*, and *shared governance and strategic decision making*. Employees across the institution work together to ensure that the programs and services SMC provides are tailored to address the student body holistically. This suggests that rather than focusing on a single aspect of improving student success and/or retention (e.g., academic tutoring), SMC takes the time to understand other barriers students may be encountering so that they can guide students to additional

resources. Such barriers include financial constraints, mental or physical health concerns, food and/or housing insecurity or homelessness, et cetera. SMC's recognition that students face numerous hurdles to their success is a fundamental component in their ability to impart a *culture of caring*. When asked who was involved with addressing basic needs insecurity on campus, Moira stated:

> Well, really, we all are. I mean, it's a top-down effort from our president, senior staff. [The] SMC Foundation is very involved. They have given a lot of money towards food programs; obviously within student affairs because [they are the] main contact with students on a daily basis; many of our faculty. Our faculty are very good about referring students if they're not sure. [They] walk students over to the office if they have a student that's in need, even addressing it within classroom settings. I think it's all campus… it's not just one area.

The global pandemic left no industry unscathed, especially higher education. Two-year institutions, notably community colleges, were hit the hardest with enrollment losses (Lang et al., Feb 2021), and SMC was not immune to the devastation. Mercy indicated that in 2019, SMC enrolled over 31,000 students while that number dropped to roughly 29,000 in 2020. This drop in enrollments is a direct result of the additional resource constraint experienced by SMC's already under-resourced student population. Given that two-year colleges serve the largest number of students seeking credentials beyond a high school diploma, it was essential that institutional administrators recognized and worked to mediate these enrollment losses. The pandemic forced higher education institutions, and many other industries, to adapt to an environmental threat in a very short period of time. As a result, many institutions, including SMC, switched to a virtual

modality. Although this transition appeared seamless to many people outside higher education, that was far from the case for SMC or the student population they serve. Andrea noted:

> I think one of the things that COVID did was shed light on what we already knew was happening. So the food insecurity just dramatically increased because people were losing their jobs left and right, when, prior to COVID, we already knew 50% of our students were struggling with food insecurity. But what it did was it really put it in your face. And so I think, whereas people might not have considered higher education the place to be able to address these kinds of things. I think folks' minds have changed…we need to be able to do this if students are going to stay in school. They can't be on campus and take a class or be remote and take the class if they don't have enough food to eat. They're going to have other priorities. Or if they are struggling with extreme anxiety, they're going to have other priorities.

The next section outlines the first major theme or *why* SMC addresses basic needs insecurity on campus.

A Desire to Help/Enhance Student Success

SMC is mindful that a significant portion of their student population are from low socioeconomic status backgrounds and that there may be other environmental conditions impacting their success. Take, for example, the Guardian Scholars program that is specifically designed to assist current and former foster youth. Services associated with the program include academic counseling, priority enrollment, financial aid assistance, tutoring, meal assistance, transportation assistance, mental health therapy, student success workshops, and other forms of referrals and resources. Guardian Scholars is one example of several specialty programs and services SMC offers, which are tailored to the unique needs of a specific subpopulation of the

student body. While SMC has long recognized that students were experiencing basic needs insecurity before it garnered widespread public attention during the pandemic, scholarly research in this area has helped highlight the negative impacts students experienced and how institutions could work to mediate them (Broton & Cady, 2020; Dubick et al., 2016, October; Goldrick-Rab, 2016; Goldrick-Rab et al., 2019; Goldrick-Rab et al., 2017; Goldrick-Rab et al., 2018; Hallett et al., 2019). Indeed, the array of programs/services SMC provides to ameliorate basic needs insecurity aligns with existing research on the importance of providing holistic support (Goldrick-Rab, 2016; Goldrick-Rab et al., 2019; Goldrick-Rab et al., 2017; Goldrick-Rab et al., 2018) given that students experiencing basic needs insecurity are frequently forced to prioritize the acquisition of food and/or housing over continuing their education on a day-to-day basis according to Andrea. The underlying rationale being that for students to be academically successful, their basic needs (e.g., food, water, shelter) must be met (Broton & Goldrick-Rab, 2018; Broton et al., 2018; Broton et al., 2020). Anna commented:

> We're really, as a campus, so highly invested in our students' success and want to make sure that we set them up for the best possible outcomes. And that really starts at the very bottom, which is the basic basic thing that you need to survive, [which] is food in your belly and a roof over your head.

Anna's comment is symbolic of SMC's investment in ensuring that their students attain their goal(s), however they might be defined, while also exhibiting an awareness of what student success involves. Indeed, Anna's comment was similar to other participants who also demonstrated a fundamental understanding that student academic success begins with achieving basic needs security. Stated another way, participants understood that in order for students to focus on their studies, they must be fed, well-rested, and feel secure in their surroundings.

Another participant, Moira noted, "[T]he campus itself is very student centered… whatever we're doing is going to be for the betterment of students, whether it's graduation, whether it's transfer, whether it's feeding the student." Andrea and Desandra also noted that the students come first. This student-centric sentiment also cropped up in discussions of "warm handoffs" between personnel in different organizational units. Desandra noted:

> Our campus is really good about that warm handoff. Of course, now, it's a warm email exchange. But I feel like by building rapport with folks on campus, the more folks know, and we have really good people on campus that I feel really advocate for our students and we try to find good people that would also help our students and that's the beautiful thing about this. We were able to connect with a lot of folks who don't have that same stigma about this and that it's bad and awful. We want to support students and this is how we can do it.

Participants felt it was important to convey a warm, friendly, nonjudgmental environment to students who were requesting assistance so that they would feel comfortable returning for help, if/when necessary. Many of the participants either obtained postsecondary training or professional development in areas like counseling, higher education administration, and social work, which likely informed their perspective on how to help/enhance student success and meet students where they are. It is therefore evident that SMC participants' commitment to student success is informed by scholarly research and professional training, and supported by the programs/services SMC provides, which reinforces a *culture of caring*.

Indeed, evidence that SMC is focused on the 'betterment of students' manifests in the wide array of resources and services available, and through the ongoing involvement of SMC faculty, staff, administrators and students in addressing basic needs insecurity (e.g., via Basic

66

Needs Committee participation). Institutional participants intimated that basic needs insecurity

programs/services were designed as part of their endeavor to help/enhance student success and

retention efforts. Desandra and Warren spoke at length regarding the Gateway to Persistence and

Success (GPS), a newly implemented early alert retention software (also known as Starfish).

Several participants indicated that GPS is designed to allow faculty or staff to raise a concern or

"flag," or allows a student to raise their own flag requesting assistance. The system provides

centralized reporting and triages flags to a designated office or staff member such that "Faculty

can proactively reach out to students to get them involved and supported in their academic

success" (Santa Monica College, 2020m). GPS also allows faculty to send kudos to keep

students motivated while also allowing students to have nearly instant access to a variety of

resources including support services, counseling, tutoring and more (Santa Monica College,

2020m). Dali noted:

> The other thing that we did that's been helpful is that when a student is identified or
>
> flagged through [GPS], they automatically [receive an] email with resources. It'll say,
>
> here's a website with information, here's the Meal Project. If you need housing, here is a
>
> safe place for you. It's just nice knowing that they will get an automatic guide for what to
>
> do. If we get a lot of reports and we're not able to get to all of them, at least they have the
>
> information and then one of us will reach out to them, and then assess them, determine
>
> what they're needing and refer them to any of the programs that we have that might be
>
> helpful, but also to any community agencies that might also be helpful to those students.

Andrea suggested that the idea is to provide holistic or wrap-around services, which she

envisioned as a model with a student at the center, surrounded by various service "bubbles". She

noted that these services include attending to students' mental health, physical health, basic

needs, academic counseling, financial aid, problems in the classroom, leaves of absence, student

clubs, and anything else the student needs to thrive in an academic environment, which aligns

with the promotion of student success "through a process of identifying, securing, and

coordinating relevant supports" described by Yu et al. (2020, para. 1). Indeed, SMC's provision

of wrap-around services including counseling, health and wellness programs, and food/housing

security initiatives align well with the wrap-around services model outlined by Hallett et al.

(2019). When asked about the biggest lessons learned when addressing student basic needs

insecurity, Warren responded:

> Overall, well-being and basic needs contribute to their success as individuals and as
>
> students. And if we can help students be well, we're also ultimately going to help them
>
> succeed in their academics and in the goals that they're hoping to achieve with SMC. We
>
> need to take care of the student as a whole, not just make sure that they have the classes
>
> and that they're on route to graduate and they're on enroute to transfer.

Several participants conveyed that students often experience multiple basic needs

insecurities in tandem. For example, students from a low socioeconomic status background are

more likely to experience food and/or housing insecurity or homelessness, and may need

additional financial support plus food and/or housing resources to increase their chances of

remaining in school. Hally contemplated the student's perspective by reflecting on how a student

attends to other needs in order to take classes. Speaking as a former foster youth and someone

who has participated in basic needs programming as a student, Ascanio noted that "it sometimes

comes down to a choice between, do I pay for food or do I pay for a textbook, or do I pay for my

house in a lot of situations." The student perspective is central to *why* SMC actively works to

address basic needs insecurity. Andrea stated that their students already request such services

and, if they were not available, the students would either demand them or stop attending altogether:

> I think if we didn't offer these services to students, I think students in student government would be asking us, demanding that we provide these services, period. I think students would ask for it because they're already asking for it. We've partnered with our student government to increase the level of support that we provide to students through our food security programs, so they're not only in full support, they're wanting us to do this work.

Likewise, Mercy noted that "we've done some of our own data analyses, and we've found that the retention rate among students who have been enrolled in our programs has soared." Therefore, offering a wide array of basic needs insecurity resources and services tailored to their student body while simultaneously considering the students' perspective bolsters SMC's retention efforts and concurrently reinforces a *culture of caring*.

One of SMC's biggest challenges is ensuring that students take advantage of the resources made available to them. The most common way institutional participants committed to this effort is through communication and/or outreach. Communication and/or outreach was interpreted as any attempt to get the word out about available resources (e.g., via email and social media), and also included efforts to normalize/destigmatize basic needs insecurity. Anna noted that although communication and/or outreach is generally targeted to identified students experiencing basic needs insecurity, there is also a heavy reliance on faculty and other campus constituents to share resource information with their students:

> We don't have solid communication across the board. Most of the time [when] we want to get a message out to students [then] we have to go through our faculty. We email all of our faculty and say, "Here's, what's happening, please push this content out to your

students." We're really dependent on that. We don't have messaging that we can send out to all of our students when things are happening. That's definitely an area that we're working on.

Communication and/or outreach also occurred on a peer-to-peer basis. Desandra indicated that students reluctant to seek out basic needs insecurity resources on their own will show up at the behest of a friend or classmate who has benefited from the programs/services.

SMC is cognizant that their ability to reach *all* students in need is largely dependent on student self-identification, which is problematic given the stigma associated with experiencing food and/or housing insecurity and given that there is no means of identifying all students experiencing basic needs insecurity. Anna said, "We know that data is so woefully underreported. The stigma associated with food and housing insecurity and students don't often disclose or volunteer that information." Likewise, SMC participants know that students forego requesting assistance due to the mistaken assumption/belief that there are other more needy or deserving students. Nevertheless, there are some common indicators (e.g., current or former foster youth status, single parents, veterans, first-generation status, and/or low socioeconomic status), which are leveraged to identify students experiencing basic needs insecurity. Several participants indicated that enrollment in affinity or specialty programs (e.g., Adelante, Black Collegians, DREAM, Guardian Scholars, Extended Opportunity Programs and Services (EOPS), and Veterans Success) provides another channel for identifying students who may need basic needs insecurity assistance. Moira noted that some programs/services to address basic needs insecurity were born from these affinity or specialty programs because the students being served required additional assistance to ensure their success. For example, Moira noted that the Guardian Scholars program was originally grant funded to assist current and former foster youth

and it was the first to offer a food pantry. Many programs are tailored to specific student group needs, which is indicative of SMC's desire to maximize student engagement and suggests a comprehensive understanding of the student population being served by the institution.

SMC employees also engaged in student-centric activities when they worked to destigmatize and/or normalize basic needs insecurity. Several participants suggested that the scale of basic needs insecurity on SMC's campus is likely very high while the rate of self-reporting is very low due to stigma associated with being food insecure, housing insecure, or homeless. SMC's major contribution to ensuring students take part in basic needs insecurity programs/services is working to normalize basic needs insecurity as well as destigmatize utilization of the programs. Desandra mentioned that

> the team that's working on basic needs is really focusing on destigmatizing what it is to be basic needs insecure, whether that's housing or food for both students and the employees. There's a lot of stigma around basic needs in general. And to let students know that if you're struggling, there are folks available to help you, to reach out, and there's no judgment that comes when you walk into the door and you talk to one of us.

Similarly, Warren spoke about working with SMC's marketing team to create an inconspicuous meal voucher to provide students enrolled in the free lunch voucher program known as FLVR (pronounced "flavor"). The effort exerted to ensure that students are treated with dignity and respect is yet another example of how SMC works to destigmatize/normalize basic needs insecurity.

Members of the Basic Needs Committee also work to provide information to the SMC community of faculty, staff, administrators and donors about what it means to be basic needs insecure and how providing various supports works to decrease additional stressors and/or

burdens that their students carry. SMC engages in a marketing strategy designed to bring

awareness about basic needs insecurity to students and on- and off-campus constituents (e.g.,

faculty, staff, administrators, donors, etc.) as a means of destigmatizing basic needs insecurity.

For example, Mercy spoke about SMC's 90th anniversary celebration, which included tents with

statistics breaking down what basic needs insecurity meant for attendees to read. Mercy also

spoke of a fundraising campaign, featuring SMC students, which was designed to appeal to

donors by using slogans like *Feed their hopes*, *Feed their dreams*, and *Feed their success*. Mercy

commented that fundraising for student basic needs security is about "inspiring student success"

in a meaningful way rather than a "pity party".

Indeed, one of the most visible demonstrations of SMC participants' commitment to

destigmatizing/normalizing basic needs insecurity is an annual event which began in 2020 in

response to the global pandemic. "Giving Thanksgiving" featured the fixings for a full

Thanksgiving dinner for either home preparation (cooking instructions included) or individual

prepared meal pick-up; and garnered national spotlight and a sizeable donation toward expenses

on the Today Show in November 2021. The 2021 event involved over 150 SMC volunteers

working together to pack and distribute 1,470 meals (Santa Monica College, 2021). While the

campus-based event has been an active success for the last two years, it actually started three

years earlier when an administrator opened their home to anyone from SMC who was homeless

so that they could enjoy a sit-down meal. Participation in both the home-based and campus-

based Giving Thanksgiving events provided a tangible measure of the basic needs insecurity

experienced by members of the SMC community. Current estimates indicate that 59 percent of

the SMC community is experiencing food insecurity (Santa Monica College, 2021). That SMC is

both willing and able to provide such a comprehensive service to their students is symbolic of

their dedication to ensuring student success. These events serve to humanize the student

population experiencing basic needs insecurity and subsequently normalize and destigmatize

seeking assistance because they are given an opportunity to *see* that they are not alone. These

student-centric means of communication/outreach also add value to available programs/services

by conveying and reinforcing a *culture of caring*. Desandra stated, "I think that a hallmark of a

successful program is when students feel like they're cared for and that they're valued."

SMC's clear understanding of their students and the specific resources they require to be

successful elucidates *why* the institution elects to address basic needs insecurity. The activities

that SMC has engaged in pre- and post-pandemic are indicative of an interest in student health

and wellbeing, which reflects a *culture of caring*—making individuals feel welcome, treating

them with dignity, showing them compassion, and normalizing the utilization of available

resources. The next section, representing the second major theme, will discuss *what*

programs/services SMC has developed to address basic needs insecurity.

Program Types/Initiatives

Although SMC offers a host of wrap-around services to address basic needs insecurity,

interview data tended to focus primarily on discussions around food and housing insecurity and

homelessness programs/services. As such, the discussion that follows will focus on food and

housing insecurity and/or homelessness programs/services. Data on programs/services was

divided into two main categories: those related to food insecurity and those related to housing

insecurity and/or homelessness. Resources devoted to food and housing insecurity/homelessness

were further divided into internal and external. Internal resources refer to major

programs/services offered directly to SMC students, and were largely subsidized by the SMC

Foundation or by the Associated Students. External resources refer to programs/services offered indirectly to SMC students (e.g., via information sharing or sign-up assistance).

When asked about missing resources, half of the participants pointed to the lack of housing options given SMC's status as a community college and commuter institution. Other participants pointed to the benefits of a permanent budget to move away from a reliance on inconsistent one-time funding options. Similarly, a long-term staff member suggested that one area requiring further exploration is material fees (e.g., textbooks) that institutions take for granted. This participant noted that the CARES Act helped address material fee expenses during the pandemic but mentioned that it was a short-term patch for a long-term need. This participant also pointed to the limited availability of alternative funding sources like federal work study and other financial aid barriers which prevent students from persisting. Ascanio stated that important and overlooked resources include communication and connection with students, which is "really about building that community and relationship, and it's not a tangible resource, but without that, students won't have access to [SMC's] tangible resources."

The bulk of the forthcoming discussion will focus on the internal resource category of food insecurity programs/services because that is where participant discussion often led, and because SMC is unable to offer residential housing. A brief discussion of the housing insecurity/homelessness options available to SMC students through community partners/affiliates will follow.

Food Insecurity. As a community college, SMC is more readily equipped to address food insecurity through the efforts expended by institutional students, staff, and administration, and the SMC Foundation. Moira spoke of food security programming/initiatives being a primary focus because SMC wants "to make sure that as many students who need to be fed are fed, so at

least, that's one thing they don't have to worry about." These services included the free lunch voucher program (FLVR) (pronounced "flavor"), decentralized departmental food pantries, Meal Project Bento (geofenced restaurant meals), Meal Project Everytable (food delivery service), Bodega (centralized food pantry), farmers market, and the Everytable SmartFridge Lounge (cafeteria). External categories consisted of food donations from community partners/affiliates like the West Side Food Bank and Vicente Foods for the food pantry and drive-through food pantry, as well as assistance signing up for the state-administered federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) known as CalFresh. Several participants mentioned that SMC provides CalFresh information sessions and/or assistance signing up for the program, but external categories were typically only mentioned in passing (with a lot of gratitude).

The free lunch voucher program (FLVR) was originally created and funded by the Associated Students. Anna told me that FLVR required students to self-identify that they were food insecure and meet with a counselor a couple of times per semester to take advantage of the program. Anna, Desandra and Ascanio noted that, in turn, students would receive a food voucher which could be used to acquire food from the cafeteria vendors. Jim indicated that the program initially offered fifteen $5 food vouchers three times per semester, and was later increased to eighteen $8 food vouchers three times per semester. Warren indicated that, unfortunately, the pandemic shut down SMC's campus and the vendors and the FLVR program fell away. At the time interviews were collected, there was no discussion or speculation regarding whether the program would be reinstated once campus returned to pre-pandemic operation.

Moira noted that there were about twelve decentralized food pantries spread across campus prior to the pandemic, which emerged over time in response to an unmet need. Cathy stated:

We have different special programs. Within those special programs, they started seeing more and more students struggling in school. Through counseling, they were identifying [the] reasons why they were struggling. From that... we started a food pantry in one of our special programs. Then we took that as a model to open it up around campus. [Then] other things like emergency housing...were starting to be identified. We started programs to address some of these issues that were coming up in counseling sessions.

Cathy also mentioned that SMC has been fortunate because of the work undertaken by the Basic Needs Committee. Prior to the pandemic, the committee was getting ready to open up a centralized food pantry and clothing closet called Bodega on campus, located outside of the cafeteria. While the pandemic delayed opening the food pantry until the fall 2021 semester, the committee was able to organize a weekly drive-through food pantry. The committee also coordinated new programming options that helped them address food insecurity during the pandemic. Mercy mentioned that all programs related to food security fall under "Meal Project," which consists of two programs: Meal Project Bento and Meal Project Everytable. Meal Project Bento represents an innovative solution in that it provides locally geofenced restaurant meals for students to pick up. Students registered for the program use a phone application to identify restaurants in their nearby geographic location where they can pick up a hot meal for free. Similarly, Meal Project Everytable works like other mail-order food delivery services (e.g., Blue Apron, HelloFresh, or Home Chef). Meal Project Everytable delivers seven or eight meals a week to students at home, free of charge to the student. Mercy noted that SMC spends about $50-$60 per student on the service and they had roughly 600 students enrolled in Meal Project Bento or Meal Project Everytable at the time of interview.

Mercy and Desandra mentioned that, prior to the pandemic, SMC had also created a program called Food Bell, which was an application-based program that would notify students when there was food left over anywhere on campus. Mercy indicated that while the campus operated remotely at the height of the pandemic, students enrolled in the program received messages regarding the drive-through food pantry and any specials being offered as a means of reassuring SMC students that those resources were still available to them. As SMC has partially resumed in-person classes, the Basic Needs Committee opted to sunset the drive-through program and move toward the grand opening of the Bodega during the fall 2021 semester. Reflecting on the decision to sunset the drive through program in lieu of moving forward with Bodega's opening, Ascanio noted his disagreement with the decision. He argued that the shift to requiring students to come on campus, find a parking space, and obtain food pantry resources in person directly from Bodega during a set time frame (e.g., 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. or 12:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.) on a single day of the week would decimate student participation in the program given the ongoing pandemic. Ascanio indicated he also understood the trade-offs. For example, the parking lots where the drive through food pantry was hosted would need to be reopened for in-person operations, and staff supporting the drive through pantry would need to return to their regular on-campus duties. Ascanio explained:

> I understand the challenges…It's a great idea to have a centralized pantry, but I don't
> think [at] the expense of not [being able] to drive through. And, I also understand that the
> long-term drive through might not make sense for the college either. There's not really an
> easy drive through place that's not going to impact people's parking spots.

Although I did not obtain a comprehensive timeline of the food insecurity programs/services SMC offered through the interview process, it was evident that participants

were heavily engaged in creating and implementing programming/services that best suited the needs of their students at different points in time. For example, the free lunch voucher program (FLVR) was an early attempt to formally address student food insecurity on campus, but it was not without its problems. Initially, the vouchers were given out on a first-come-first-served basis in an effort to eliminate stigma, which led to issues with homeless individuals enrolling in courses as a means of obtaining the vouchers. Jim noted that the program later evolved into a system where students would receive the vouchers if they met with a counselor regularly to ensure they were receiving all of the assistance they might need. The expansion of food insecurity programs/services, especially at the onset of the pandemic, is representative of SMC's commitment to their students and their *culture of caring*.

At the height of the pandemic in spring 2020, the SMC Foundation raised three-million dollars toward basic needs insecurity programs/services to help alleviate the additional burden many students encountered. The funding allowed SMC to troubleshoot how to keep students progressing in their coursework if they were homeless without stable access to an internet connection or even a computer. SMC was able to purchase Chromebooks for their students to borrow and use while the world moved to a virtual platform. The funding also allowed SMC to devise alternative solutions for students who were once able to acquire food from one of the campus pantries. Over the course of the pandemic, SMC created a weekly drive-through pantry that allowed students to drive up to campus and pick up a bag of fresh groceries to help sustain themselves and/or their families. For those students who were unable to drive up to campus to take advantage of the drive-through food pantry, SMC was able to devise two different meal programs: Meal Project Bento and Meal Project Everytable.

Housing Insecurity / Homelessness. When asked what resources were missing, half of the participants noted, with frustration, SMC's inability to provide permanent residential housing solutions. For example, Julie mentioned that "…even though SMC isn't giving housing directly to students, I think it's important to work towards…a more efficient way to help students with housing directly instead of just giving housing resources that are off campus." Although SMC is not equipped to offer housing to students because they are a commuter institution without residential facilities, they have been able to secure some housing options through community partners/affiliates. Participants spoke of nonprofit partners like The Opportunity House, Safe Place for Youth (SPY), and Students4Students (formerly Bruin Shelter), who also serve students from other nearby postsecondary institutions (e.g., UCLA). Moira and Jim mentioned that the high cost of living combined with a general housing shortage in California (and the Los Angeles area in particular), has required that SMC rely on local nonprofits for assistance. A novel partnership with Los Angeles Room & Board, a nonprofit organization behind The Opportunity House, has been fruitful in supplying a dozen beds to SMC students. Leah mentioned that Safe Place for Youth (SPY) represents a housing case management option for students up to age 25, though the option is not without its challenges. Leah indicated that she has only been able to place two students into housing within the last two years because the housing shortage in Los Angeles. Derek also noted Students4Students supplies a full-spectrum of support from long-term housing and three meals per day to medical and social services, and discretionary funding for life-related expenses (e.g., car repairs).

While SMC may not be able to offer their students direct housing options, they have demonstrated a commitment to finding alternative options through ongoing relationships with community partners/affiliates who do have available facilities. Like food insecurity, SMC

participants are aware of the negative impact housing insecurity and/or homelessness has on their students. SMC's efforts to secure housing represents another example of the *culture of caring* present at the institution. Jim and Warren spoke at length regarding a potential housing intervention known as Safe Park, which grew out of the Safe Parking LA program (SafeParkingLA, 2022). The idea is to provide a safe and legal place for homeless individuals to park their vehicles overnight, while also allowing access to restroom facilities. Jim and Warren also noted that the state of California was working on a piece of legislation that would have required community colleges to implement a similar program, but the legislation eventually fell through. The Basic Needs Committee determined that the program may prove beneficial to their students and continued investigating whether they would be able to offer the program. Regarding the Safe Park intervention, Warren told me that

> we were able to… tease out that proposal really well, because most of the folks that needed to be a part of those conversations were at that table. Our college president also came in at times to those conversations, because she was the one that was putting up the money for that specific initiative in terms of the overnight parking. [At one meeting, the] College president walks in, sits down and is just listening. And she's like, "Okay. Is it going to cost $80,000?" I can get you $80,000."

The committee ultimately concluded that the cost of providing the program was beyond their ability to cover so the program was never launched. Nonetheless, the fact that the committee was still willing to investigate the plausibility of the program after the state legislation fell through, again, suggests a deeply embedded *culture of caring* and willingness to identify potential options to assist their students.

To recap, SMC's clear understanding of their students and the specific resources they require to be successful elucidates *why* the institution elects to address basic needs insecurity. The activities that SMC has engaged in pre- and post-pandemic are indicative of an interest in student health and wellbeing, which reflects a *culture of caring*—making individuals feel welcome, treating them with dignity, showing them compassion, and normalizing the utilization of available resources. *What* SMC has done in response is devised programs/services which leverage a variety of internal and external resources to address food insecurity, housing insecurity and/or homelessness. Although an exhaustive discussion of the available resources is beyond the scope of this project, the wide swath of programs/services discussed here are representative of SMC's commitment to the health and well-being of their student body (and underscores SMC's *culture of caring*). The next section will outline the final theme or *how* SMC has been able to successfully (in most cases) create, implement, and sustain these programs/services.

Shared Governance and Strategic Decision Making

One of the reasons SMC is notable within the California Community College system is because they have held the title of 'number one in transfer' to the University of California (UC) system for over 30 years. Another reason they are notable is because of their wrap-around services, which include mental health, physical health, basic needs, case management, academic counseling, financial aid, student clubs, and affinity groups, all while centering the needs of their students through "a truly campus-wide effort" according to Andrea. Mercy indicated that many students bypass other community colleges closer to their homes, sometimes spending upward of two hours traveling each way (see Figure 2), because of the wide swath of wrap-around services offered by SMC (Santa Monica College, 2020j). Indeed, a careful review of the map in Figure 2

suggests that some students bypass upwards of two or three community colleges to attend SMC, which raises the question of how the institution can sustain such robust offerings.

Figure 2

Santa Monica College Enrollment Map (2018-2019 academic year)
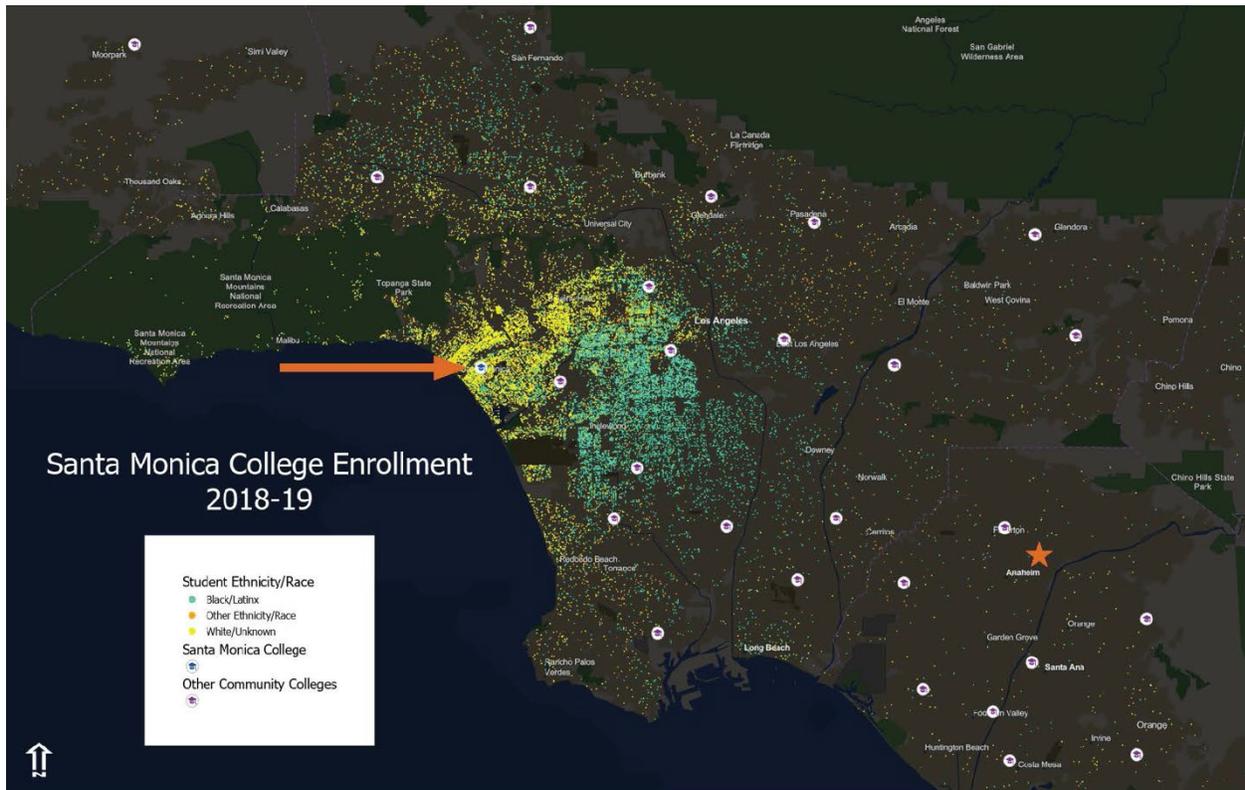
Note. Fila, S., Ladyzhenskaya, L., & Moore, L. (2020, February 6-7). *That's a Wrap! Amping Up a Multi-Channel Basic Needs Plan*. California Higher Education Basic Needs Alliance (CHEBNA). https://www.calstate.edu/impact-of-the-csu/student-success/basic-needs-initiative/Pages/2020-Conference.aspx.

Most participants alluded to or directly discussed how SMC moved forward with the establishment and/or maintenance of basic needs insecurity programs/services. While decision making was driven by both internal and external environmental conditions, discussion predominantly centered around internal conditions (e.g., leadership and committee work).

External environmental conditions effecting the basic needs insecurity programs/services decision making included local, state, and federal funding sources, and the availability of community partners/affiliates for a particular need. External environmental conditions, except for community partners/affiliates and the programming/services that resulted from the pandemic, were rarely discussed by participants.

Mercy, Anna, and Warren indicated that SMC is engaged in thoughtful, ongoing, and collegial conversations about different ways to support their students, including data analysis, and recurring program assessment and modification plans through a collective called the Basic Needs Committee. Mercy discussed how robust the group is and how the committee works closely with students to address and fund basic needs insecurity programs/services. For example, Mercy spoke about making adjustments to the food pantry operations once the committee recognized that students did not want items like milk. The pantry made adjustments to the pre-packaged items and then provided a list of optional items that students could select from (e.g., chicken, bread, diapers, toothpaste, etc.) to cut down on waste.

The Basic Needs Committee exemplifies a shared governance model through their incorporation of faculty, staff, students, administration, and the SMC Foundation into the decision making process. Anna mentioned that the Basic Needs Committee "…is really quite large and robust…" with membership spanning the college and an emphasis on looking at student needs holistically. Warren mentioned:

> We have this basic needs taskforce that used to be the basic needs committee. Where we have representatives from different parts of campus. Students, staff, faculty, folks from auxiliary, folks from the foundation, folks from student health, student life, some of our special programs. And it's this amazing work tank, where we talk about the issues. But

we also try to come up with solutions. And our vice president is also part of those

meetings. The beauty of that is that we're able to see different issues from different

constituents, especially students. And we're also able to come up with answers or

[creative] solutions, not all the time, because of the folks that are at the table.

Beyond campus-wide membership, Anna noted that some individuals involved are just

passionate about basic needs work and want to be involved. Additionally, while the levels of

organizational leadership among the participants varied, Ascanio noted that there was a seat at

the table for representatives from facilities and auxiliary services to the SMC President:

It's really a participatory governance thing. The basic needs committee itself has

administration, students, faculty, foundation members, all collaborating with each other.

And then even outside of the basic needs committee, it's a constant conversation that

comes up in almost every room because of the equity conversations that are happening on

campus.

Hally referred to the committee as the "central piece of everything that we do at SMC

because we have so many different people from different areas on campus who are able to come

together…". Similarly, Dali noted that "SMC is doing the best [it can] to support students with

their basic needs…" as a means of ensuring students feel like the institution cares about them.

Indeed, Moira declared that "It really does take a village," to do the work of addressing basic

needs insecurity on campus. Hally also noted that having students on the committee helps the

group obtain a first-hand account of what programs are or are not working and/or how the

programs could be tweaked to make them more accessible to students. Hally specified that the

committee meets monthly to discuss the best way to create programs and subsequently get word

out about the programs to support students' basic needs. Anna mentioned that the committee is

divided into subcommittees, which are chaired by members of the larger committee and focus on slightly different aspects of basic needs security. Anna noted that one subcommittee focuses on triaging "flags" submitted through the Gateway to Persistence and Success (GPS) system, another looks at future planning efforts and data collection, a third subcommittee focuses on special events like "Giving Thanksgiving", and a final subcommittee looks at communication.

Cathy pointed to other members of the SMC community who have "taken up the cause and have been amazing volunteering their hours to help the programs." Similarly, Moira told me that campus involvement is widespread; from President Jeffery, senior staff, and the SMC Foundation giving money, to student affairs staff who are on the ground with students, and many of SMC's faculty who are willing to refer students and/or walk them over to get support. Indeed, SMC Superintendent/President Dr. Kathryn E. Jeffery said in an online SMC News article that "This college has always strived to leave no stone unturned to create the most comprehensive student support system possible so that students can meet their personal transfer and career goals" (Santa Monica College, 2020j). Thus, SMC's ability to provide students access to comprehensive support services and a supportive collegial environment (Santa Monica College, 2020l) is indicative of a deeply embedded desire to ensure student success through a *culture of caring*. Likewise, the provision of these services is reflected in the institution's response to basic needs insecurity through various programs/services and partnerships with community partners/affiliates.

Conclusion

Santa Monica College's basic needs insecurity programs/services stem from a deeply embedded *culture of caring* prevalent among institutional faculty, staff, administrators, and students. Participant responses suggested that Santa Monica College is deeply committed to

helping/enhancing student success, providing a wide range of program offerings, and thinking strategically about the creation, maintenance, evaluation and amendment of programs and initiatives designed to address basic needs insecurity. In sum, SMC's clear understanding of their students and the specific resources they require to be successful elucidates *why* the institution elects to address basic needs insecurity. The activities that SMC has engaged in pre- and post-pandemic are indicative of an interest in student health and wellbeing, which reflects a *culture of caring*—making individuals feel welcome, treating them with dignity, showing them compassion, and normalizing the utilization of available resources. Indeed, the activities that the BNC has pursued as a result of the pandemic appears to have positively influenced the institution's ability to centralize and streamline response(s) related to students experiencing basic needs insecurity. Although the BNC was moving in this direction prior to the pandemic with the opening of the centralized food pantry (Bodega), the pandemic provided an unanticipated jump start toward centralization and innovative new ways to address food insecurity. *What* SMC has done in response is devised programs/services which leverage a variety of internal and external resources to address food insecurity, housing insecurity and/or homelessness. Although an exhaustive discussion of the available resources is beyond the scope of this project, the wide swath of programs/services discussed here are representative of SMC's commitment to the health and well-being of their student body (and underscores SMC's *culture of caring*). Finally, the Basic Needs Committee has been able to successfully (in most cases) create, implement, and sustain these programs/services through a collegial shared governance model and strategic decision making, which also works to reinforce a *culture of caring*. The passion, compassion and genuine care expressed by participants was palpable even at the height of the global pandemic after exhaustion has spread across all industries. SMC's dedication to providing basic needs

insecurity programs/services appeared to energize participants and keep them motivated and thinking about what to do next.

Chapter 5: Implications and Recommendations

This study evolved from exploring planned change to utilizing Tierney's (2008) framework to conduct an audit of SMC's organizational culture. The findings of this case study led to a better understanding of the *why*, *what*, and *how* behind Santa Monica College's efforts to alleviate student basic needs insecurity. Given that adverse effects associated with basic needs insecurity can diminish institutional efforts to ensure student success (Payne-Sturges et al., 2018; Silva et al., 2015), it is important to understand whether students benefit from such programs/services and how other institutions may apply similar practices. The study was guided by three research questions: (1) Why did institutional leadership decide to address basic needs insecurity? ; (2) What did the institution do to address basic needs insecurity? ; and (3) How has the institution implemented and sustained basic needs insecurity initiatives? The findings suggest that SMC works to reinforce a *culture of caring* by (1) understanding the population being served and their unique needs (*why*); (2) creating or devising programs/services tailored to their student population and leveraging internal and external resources to address basic needs insecurity (*what*); and (3) creating, implementing, and sustaining programs/services through a collegial shared governance model, which considers input from campus-wide constituents, especially students (*how*).

It is important that the reader recall that the summary, implications, and recommendations here are based on a snapshot of one segment of the institution. This snapshot was limited to the 12 SMC-based participants who were knowledgeable about the impact of basic needs insecurity on their student population. These individuals were largely from one

organizational area (e.g., student affairs versus academic affairs), which means that definitive conclusions cannot be gleaned from this case study alone. The following sections will briefly summarize key findings related to each research question, outline implications of the findings for each research question, and provide recommendations for professional practice moving forward. Given that the focus of the study was on understanding SMC's decision making processes regarding student basic needs insecurity, the data collected offered more insight into the final research question. The chapter will wrap up with final conclusions.

Summary of Research Question 1: Why did institutional leadership decide to address basic needs insecurity?

Community colleges fulfill a vital role in educating the populace as a means of ensuring economic stability (Kamer & Ishitani, 2020) by providing a low-cost, open access education model geared toward students with varying goals (e.g., professional development, transfer etc.). However, as market-driven entities, community colleges must also be attuned to the goals and needs of their student population and tailor programs/services accordingly or risk declining enrollments. SMC, as a community college and Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI), plays a vital role in providing an accessible education for roughly 30,000 students annually. Not only does SMC acknowledge that their students face numerous basic needs insecurity hurdles as they work to achieve their educational goals, they work to mitigate them by providing a wide array of wrap-around services designed to assist students holistically. Those wrap-around services aim to enhance student success through the reduction of outside stressors (e.g., food insecurity, transportation costs, etc.), which, in turn, allows students to focus on achieving their educational goals (Hallett et al., 2019).

Subsequently, students attend SMC because of benefits like transfer potential to the University of California system and the availability of those wrap-around services. Many of these programs/services draw students from regions where they are bypassing two or more community colleges to attend SMC. Whereas some services (e.g., campus-based residential housing) are outside of their purview to offer, SMC instead maintains an ongoing relationship with community partners/affiliates who may be able to aid students experiencing housing insecurity and/or homelessness. SMC's relationship with community partners/affiliates and government agencies allows the institution to provide students with resources they may be unaware of while simultaneously reinforcing a *culture of caring*. Indeed, these partnerships signal the institution's concern for student health, well-being, and overall success by reducing or alleviating life stressors that can inhibit student goal attainment. Coupled with other services like academic counseling and mental health and well-being programs, addressing student basic needs insecurity optimizes how SMC wraps support around students.

Implication(s) of Research Question 1

SMC is highly knowledgeable of who their students are and how their needs differ from students enrolling at other institutional types (e.g., four-year publics). SMC understands that a large proportion of their students have competing priorities (e.g., providing supplemental financial support to their families versus spending money on school-related expenses) which can hinder goal attainment (Goldrick-Rab, 2016). As a result, SMC has taken steps to tailor their responses to the needs of their unique student body and included students in the decision making process. Such actions align with Cliburn Allen and Alleman (2019), who argued that "taking into account the voices and stories of those they are trying to serve" allows stakeholders to fully understand how the campus environment shapes the student experience (p. 67), and Sumekh

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(2020), who argued that empowering students to become part of the effort to support students'

basic needs is more beneficial than simply giving students resources. Indeed, this is one of the

reasons why Swipe Out Hunger, Sumekh's nonprofit organization focused on student food

security, requires student participation. Where some institutions might be indifferent to the

student point of view, students at SMC have agency in how programs/services are created,

implemented, and evaluated for efficacy and efficiency.

SMC has found that retention rates have increased exponentially for students who are

enrolled in various basic needs security programs. Participants viewed programs/services as

successful if students were enrolled in them or were otherwise taking advantage of their

availability. This reinforces the need to tailor programming to the student population to ensure

that students make use of available programs/services and ensure that the institution is

maximizing use of their (often limited) financial resources to assist students. As Silva et al.

(2015) and Payne-Sturges et al. (2018) noted, students are better able to focus on their studies

when their basic needs have been met. Coupled with involvement in the decision making process

(Ilieva et al., 2018), students are more likely to remain engaged academically if they know that

their institution takes their concerns and input seriously (Broton & Goldrick-Rab, 2016;

Strayhorn, 2016, 2019). Therefore, tailoring programming and involving students in decision

making processes reinforce a *culture of caring*, which likely contributes to overall student

success and retention.

Summary of Research Question 2: How did the institution address basic needs insecurity?

SMC has addressed basic needs insecurity in a variety of ways, including the

establishment and maintenance of affinity or specialty programs internally, and through

partnerships/affiliations with community nonprofit organizations externally. Internal affinity or

specialty programming (e.g., Adelante, Black Collegians, DREAM, Guardian Scholars, Extended Opportunity Programs and Services (EOPS), and Veterans Success) offer benefits like financial aid, departmental food pantries and/or food vouchers, book vouchers, transportation passes and more. Internally, SMC also established the Basic Needs Committee (BNC), which brought together representatives from across campus, student government, and the SMC Foundation to oversee basic needs security programs/services. The work conducted by the Basic Needs Committee has been instrumental in establishing, updating, and maintaining new and existing basic needs security programs/services and establishing a working relationship with community partners/affiliates.

Establishing external community partners/affiliates like the West Side Food Bank and Vicente Foods for their food pantry, and Opportunity House, Safe Place for Youth (SPY), and Students4Students (formerly Bruin Shelter) for housing have also bolstered SMC's efforts to address basic needs insecurity. Additionally, SMC recently implemented the Gateway to Persistence and Success (GPS) system (a.k.a. Starfish), an internal e-triage system where concern flags can be raised by faculty and staff, or by students themselves; the system also signals a representative from the appropriate office to reach out to students for further assistance. Likewise, the SMC Foundation has also played a crucial role by raising $3M for basic needs security programs/services (e.g., the drive-through food pantry, Meal Project Bento and Meal Project Everytable) at the forefront of the pandemic in spring 2020.

From establishing communities through affinity and specialty programs to building relationships with community partners/affiliates and creating an alert system that connects students with available resources, SMC has created an integrated support system to address basic needs insecurity on campus. This support system benefits from student input and engagement,

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which allows for an insider view into whether programs/services are working as intended. Looping students into the decision making and assessment processes, again, serves to reinforce a *culture of caring* and also enhances student development (Miller & Miles, 2008).

Implication(s) of Research Question 2

SMC has demonstrated substantial ingenuity in their pursuit to alleviate student basic needs insecurity. The institution leveraged local, state, and federal resources to reinforce a *culture of caring*, which has likely helped increase retention by signaling the institution's desire to help where they are able. Institutional responses to basic needs insecurity do not have to be large or even pan out the way administrators intended (e.g., campus-based Safe Park project). It is more important that the institution work to identify and utilize resources available around them to the benefit of their students and include students in the decision making process. Ultimately, SMC communicates their dedication to student success by the actions they take and through the resources they gather and share with their students. SMC's approach to offering basic needs security is about meeting students where they are with basic needs then working to provide them with an education.

Summary of Research Question 3: What did the institution do to address basic needs insecurity?

One of SMC's most important responses to student basic needs insecurity is the establishment of the Basic Needs Committee. The Basic Needs Committee represents a unique and highly functional shared governance model. Campus-wide constituents including faculty, staff, students, and representation from the SMC Foundation with key leadership roles and decision making authority make up the committee. They are charged with oversight of existing basic needs programs/services, and the discussion, development, and implementation of new

programs/services. The committee is also divided into four sub-committees which oversee triaging flags raised through the Gateway to Persistence and Success (GPS) system, future planning efforts and data collection, special events, and communication. Programs/services designed to address basic needs insecurity are discussed, evaluated, and sustained on an ongoing basis within a collegial work environment.

While the committee supports California's goal of educating traditionally underrepresented students and their success attaining their educational goals, their ability to support students is also constrained by environmental pressures (Baldridge, 1971; Lewin, 1943, 1947). Most recently, the pandemic crippled SMC's ability to provide on-campus support services like the food pantries. However, the committee, with the help of funding raised by the SMC Foundation, devised innovative solutions to basic needs insecurity through the creation of Meal Project Bento, Meal Project Everytable, and a drive-through food pantry. In turn, these solutions allowed SMC to continue offering food security options to their students despite pandemic related campus closure. The *culture of caring* permeates the institution through each participant. Personnel appear to be very service oriented, which I did not necessarily expect to encounter. There is also a strong sense of cohesion among personnel in terms of the importance of addressing basic needs insecurity.

Implication(s) of Research Question 3

The shared governance model exhibited by the BNC does not appear to align with the available literature. For example, Cohen et al. (2013) argued that the interpretation of a collegial model, which described shared governance in terms of sharing authority and making decisions based on consensus, is a delusion and that "the notion that students have much voice in the college administration has little basis in reality" (p. 111). Further, only one piece of literature on

shared governance, specifically within community colleges, referred to the importance of sharing decision making with staff (Miller & Miles, 2008). Participants continuously reiterated the importance of campus-wide perspectives represented on the Basic Needs Committee as instrumental to the success of basic needs insecurity programs/services. This suggests that the BNC's shared governance model is unique in a way that is beneficial to their student population.

The planned change approach posits that complex environmental factors determine the success of a change effort. While leadership prioritization, financial investment, and organizational culture are influential to the outcome of any organizational change effort, it was unclear whether SMC pursued a planned change approach to address student basic needs insecurity based on participant interviews. As mentioned in the literature review, Lewin posited that a successful change project must progress through three steps: unfreezing, moving, and refreezing (Burnes, 2004c). First, the equilibrium established by cultural norms of individuals within an organization or "the way things are done" needs to be destabilized or 'unfrozen' "before old behavior can be discarded and new behavior successfully adopted" (Burnes, 2004c, p. 985). In essence, a disruption in how individuals think, and act should create a moral/ethical imperative for seeking alternative ways of doing things. Second, this moral/ethical imperative presents an opportunity for individuals to engage in evidence-based learning about, and potential adoption of, more acceptable ways of doing things (moving). Finally, with the adoption of more acceptable ways of doing things comes the issue of ensuring that behavior does not regress to its previous state. Thus, the final step in the three-step model is finding ways of reinforcing (refreezing) the adoption of new ways of doing things.

Instead, participants discussed the work conducted by the Basic Needs Committee, which focused on enhancing existing programs/services and/or how those programs/services pivoted

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during the pandemic. For example, prior to the formation of the Basic Needs Committee, isolated departments created small food pantries in response to an immediate student need (e.g., providing a snack to students who may not have had a meal recently). Another example is the free lunch voucher program (FLVR), which stems from student government advocacy and is fiscally supported by the Associated Students. As the pandemic forced Santa Monica College to move to fully online delivery, the campus' ability to provide these programs/services was halted. However, members of the Basic Needs Committee were able to raise money to create two new programs: Meal Project Bento and Meal Project Everytable, which allowed SMC to continue providing a food security service. The reader should recall that while there is no single model available which is representative of the Emergent change approach, one criticism of the Planned change approach is relevant to this response from SMC: Planned change is less responsive to crisis situations (Burnes, 2017). Both decentralized efforts (e.g., departmental food pantries and establishment of the FLVR program) are therefore more indicative of an emergent change approach because each response was prompted by an immediate need to support students' basic needs so they could in turn focus on their studies (Kanter et al., 1992; Kotter, 1995).

It is also important to acknowledge that SMC's contemporary response to student basic needs insecurity likely began in the 1960s and 1970s with the California legislature's decision to write policies which address educating underrepresented students through the state's community colleges. The most prominent example is the Extended Opportunity Programs and Services (EOPS), which was adopted into the California education code in 1976. However, support from the state can only be as effective as the financial resources shared with postsecondary institutions and administrative prioritization given to such efforts. That the state of California prioritized assisting traditionally underrepresented students is an important environmental component to

consider when evaluating SMC's *culture of caring*. While a longitudinal evaluation of programming/resources allocation was outside the scope of this project, the point is that investment from the state of California and the California Community Colleges administration likely affected the way SMC addresses student basic needs insecurity today. One need only read participant interview transcripts or listen to the recordings to grasp how much care is embedded within institutional personnel regarding their students' success. A *culture of caring* is difficult to foster and sustain without effective leadership and personal investment of those leaders in student success, especially at the height of the pandemic. Likewise, a *culture of caring* does not develop overnight or exist within a vacuum. Such a culture takes time to foster, develop, embed, and requires exceptional leadership. Indeed, participant discussions suggested that leadership, at all levels of the institution, had a fundamental understanding of who their students are, where they come from, and what kinds of support they need to be successful. Personnel are likewise provided the necessary assistance to create a support system designed to wrap around SMC's students. This means that individuals at all levels are paying attention to their student data and are working to review, evaluate, and reassess programming/services to ensure they're getting the most bang for their limited bucks. This careful attention to their students' needs is likely part of what makes SMC so desirable to students, and likely contributes to their ongoing success in being number one in transfer to the University of California (UC) system. The *culture of caring* that SMC has developed is unique because student support has moved beyond checking a state compliance box. Instead, SMC has fostered an organizational culture (Tierney, 1988) whereby faculty, staff, and students work together to ensure that success remains within reach through the provision of basic needs security programs/services.

This suggests that while SMC has fostered a unique *culture of caring*, the state legislature's decision to assist underrepresented students in the 1960s and 1970s potentially influenced SMC's contemporary decision making practices (Birnbaum, 1991). As research about student basic needs insecurity (e.g., food insecurity, housing insecurity and/or homelessness) has garnered more public attention, especially during the pandemic, SMC has been able to provide holistic, innovative solutions to basic needs insecurity. Indeed, a drastic drop in SMC's enrollment numbers from 31,000 students in 2019 to roughly 29,000 students in 2020 is illustrative of the havoc wrought by the pandemic on already resource-constrained students. However, differentiating whether such change is inherently planned or emergent is complex. On one hand, the California legislature's commitment to assisting underrepresented students in the 1960s and 1970s through programs like EOPS reads as a planned change effort. Roughly 53 years have elapsed since EOPS was written into the education code, which may have encouraged the development of SMC's current organizational culture. On the other hand, the formation of the Basic Needs Committee is relatively new and the work they have accomplished better aligns with an emergent change process. Also, creation of the Basic Needs Committee appears to stem from recognition that SMC needed to centralize the administration of basic needs programs/services to increase their efficacy in reaching and assisting their students (e.g., moving from a decentralized to centralized food pantry system). Although driven by a seemingly state-wide planned change effort, SMC also developed points of emergent change within this larger scheme. This suggests that while the state mandated that community colleges adopt practices to support their underserved students, how community colleges addressed this edict likely varied from institution to institution.

Whether a planned change approach played a role in SMC's contemporary organizational culture and decision making practices is difficult to discern at this juncture given the likelihood that many employees have retired since EOPS was codified. It would be beneficial for future research to conduct an historical document analysis of SMC's organizational structure and decision making practices to identify the types of programming aimed at student success before and after EOPS came into law.

While there are some aspects of this case study that are unique to SMC, there are practices which can be implemented at other institutions. Establishing a basic needs committee with key constituents from across campus, including students, faculty, staff, and administrators with sufficient decision making authority is a practical first step. The shared governance component of the committee hinges on ensuring that all appropriate campus constituencies have a seat at the table (Miller & Miles, 2008; Sumekh, 2020). Given that most postsecondary institutions operate within silos, the work that the committee accomplishes together is integral to the ongoing health and well-being of the students they are aiming to serve as well as overall campus culture. This committee should convene at regular intervals (e.g., weekly, biweekly, or monthly, depending on needs/resources) to discuss how current programs/services are or are not working. This committee should also develop a plan to discuss, evaluate, assess, and revise or sunset current programs/services at regular intervals so that the institution is maximizing the use of their resources while simultaneously ensuring that students are using them.

SMC's Organizational Culture

Utilizing Tierney's (2008) organizational culture framework, a cultural audit is beneficial for understanding how an institution like SMC has successfully implemented basic needs insecurity programs/services. SMC is situated within a unique *environment*. SMC's main campus

resides within an affluent community known for its high rate of transfer and for their extensive wrap-around services, which attract students from all over southern California. As a Hispanic serving institution focused on providing an affordable education to an under resourced student population (*mission*), SMC must engage in regular research-based planning and evaluation (*strategy*) to ensure they are meeting their students' needs. SMC pursues these endeavors by encouraging and reinforcing the importance of collegiality and shared governance (*leadership*) through entities like the Basic Needs Committee. While the data did not provide any direct insight into *socialization* practices, the data did raise questions about how SMC is able to recruit and retain service-oriented personnel who are passionate about ensuring their students succeed. Likewise, it would be interesting to couple the results of this case study with a pre-pandemic historical analysis of the institution. A final area to explore in greater depth is how impactful *information* sharing is on campus beyond student affairs. The data hinted at a desire to improve communication efforts to normalize and destigmatize basic needs insecurity. Expanding the current case study to explore how information sharing around basic needs insecurity has evolved since the pandemic would elucidate the efficacy of those marketing strategies. The SMC Foundation's efforts to shift the narrative away from a *pity party* to centering students' capacity for success (with a little assistance) is one of many reasons the organizational culture at SMC has been so effective. By treating basic needs insecurity as another standard service offered by the institution, SMC affords an additional layer of equity that underscores their *culture of caring*.

Recommendations for Practice

The following recommendations for practice stem from the major findings of the case study and align with each of the research questions: (1) Why did institutional leadership decide to address basic needs insecurity? ; (2) What did the institution do to address basic needs

insecurity? ; and (3) How has the institution implemented and sustained basic needs insecurity initiatives? The recommendations include *a desire to help/enhance student success*, *program types/initiatives*, and *shared governance and strategic decision making*.

A Desire to Help/Enhance Student Success

Community colleges, by necessity, are required to remain market-responsive and market-adaptive to continue providing an accessible education which is designed to bolster the adult workforce. Therefore, institutions should engage in an ongoing evaluation of their student population's basic needs to ensure their success. Institutions can survey their campus to establish a baseline for basic needs insecurity by employing the #RealCollegeSurvey[4], developed by The hope Center at Temple University. Institutions should also survey students enrolled in basic needs security programs/services at the beginning and end of each term to evaluate program/service efficacy. Students utilizing basic needs security programs/services should be informed, at the time of onboarding, that their feedback is an integral part of ensuring that the programs/services are meeting their needs. Survey data should be analyzed at regular intervals to help determine whether programs/services are suitable for their student population or whether they are even desirable. For example, offering public transit vouchers in a rural region that does not have a fully integrated public transit system could potentially be considered a waste of limited resources. Instead, those resources could be reallocated toward a food pantry and/or institution-sponsored farmers market, where students who live within a food dessert would garner the most benefit. Further, institutions should regularly collect and analyze student enrollment and demographic data to identify population shifts and adjust programs/services as needed (e.g., roughly every three to five years). Employing data informed decision making helps

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[4] https://hope4college.com/realcollege-survey/#intro

the institution maximize where funding is directed to help meet their mission and strategic initiatives.

Program Types/Initiatives

In alignment with the first recommendation, ensuring that programs/services offered maximize internal and/or external resources is essential. Although the data on external resources was limited, it was evident that SMC was able to facilitate partnerships with outside nonprofit organizations, which allowed them to fill a gap in their student services, specifically around housing insecurity / homelessness. Identifying similar opportunities to engage with the local community for resources like housing assistance is a relatively cost-neutral endeavor, which could lead to more community-based support. Further, creating mutually beneficial relationships with other nearby organizations is also recommended. For example, SMC employs graduate social work interns from nearby institutions to assist with case management. Although SMC would likely benefit more from the addition of more full-time case managers, this relationship allows SMC to keep personnel costs low while simultaneously providing an important service to their students and opportunities for necessary student development experience for the graduate social work interns. Therefore, organizational units within the institution should collaborate to develop and implement targeted basic needs insecurity programs/services that best fit their student population utilizing aforementioned survey data. Further, organizational units within the institution should partner with appropriate community partners/affiliates and/or nonprofit organizations to bolster program/service options, which the institution is unable to offer.

Shared Governance and Strategic Decision Making

Institutional leadership should make a concerted effort to encourage, reinforce, and reward shared governance and strategic decision making around basic needs insecurity (and

beyond). SMC's Basic Needs Committee represented a deliberate effort to enhance student success through the provision of basic needs resources. Shared governance and decision making allow personnel around campus to contribute a wide array of perspectives on how basic needs insecurity appears on campus and the best possible way(s) to address those issues, which assists in the effort to target programs/services appropriately. Additionally, the establishment of a common goal (e.g., enhancing student success by decreasing students' level of basic needs insecurity) will likely hasten, rather than hamper, institutional efforts (Kotter, 2005). Coupling this common goal with the creation of an advisory committee or task force to inform administration of best practices regarding student basic needs insecurity is also encouraged. Members should include campus constituents who work directly with students in different areas (e.g., admissions, financial aid, student life, student housing, auxiliary services, facilities, libraries etc.).

However, successful shared governance and strategic decision making through the work of a similar committee is dependent on appropriate support and modeling at upper administrative levels. Administration should leverage best practices to inform decision making around development of revised institutional policies and practices which incorporate normalizing assisting students experiencing basic needs insecurity (e.g., curriculum development, hiring practices, and ongoing professional development for campus administrators, faculty and staff on the current barriers to success students are facing). Additionally, opportunities to interact with the students who are benefiting from the programs both reinforces the need to offer such services and the decision making that went into offering those services in the first place.

Overarching Culture of Caring

Grand gestures are unnecessary to enhance student success. By and large, students want to know that someone is concerned about their general well-being and that there are supports in place to help them feel more in control of their goals. The basic needs programs/services that SMC offers are meant to serve as a lifeline if or when students need to take advantage of them. They are not designed to be long-term fixes because the goal is to ensure that students can stand on their own and be successful once they leave the institution. Institutions who opt to offer such services on their own campuses should recognize that basic needs services are an extension of other services already available (e.g., academic counseling, mental health counseling, and career counseling). None of these services are designed to be long-term solutions once students leave the institution. Rather, they are designed to provide students with the resources they need at a specific point in time to stand on their own and move forward. Developing a *culture of caring* on campus does not mean that every person at the institution must feel personally responsible for the outcomes of every student they interact with. Rather, developing a *culture of caring* means that institutions need to adapt to a new student reality, and this reality is full of students who require different support services. Institution-wide investment in centering students' basic needs security is necessary for normalizing and destigmatizing basic needs insecurity, and reinforces a *culture of caring*. Institutions should work to normalize basic needs insecurity as part of the campus culture. This requires long-term commitment from administration and well-placed resources (e.g., personnel and/or budget dollars) to develop and incorporate new practices. Students, especially those experiencing basic needs insecurity, should be included in conversations to identify appropriate programs/services and/or potential problems/tradeoffs with pursuing some programming but not others.

Recommendations for Future Research

The following future research recommendations are based on a combination of limitations of the current study and gaps in the literature. Recommendations include *understanding environmental contexts and pressures*, *building on the current case study*, and *building on the change literature*.

Understanding Environmental Contexts and Pressures

A qualitative, exploratory multi-site case study evaluating basic needs insecurity responses at other institutions within the California Community College system would be beneficial to shed light on whether a *culture of caring* is unique to SMC or prevalent throughout the system. As the largest community college system in the United States, understanding how a *culture of caring* becomes embedded within an institution could prove beneficial to creating a similar culture at other institutions. A parallel component of such a study should also seek to understand whether state-level governance influenced the development a *culture of caring*. For example, the state of California authorized the creation of the Community College Extended Opportunity Programs and Services (EOPS) through Senate Bill 164 and incorporated into the California Education Code (Article 8, Section 69640) as a means of the state accepting responsibility for ensuring that anyone could take advantage of a community college education (California Legislative Information, 2022). Further, Assembly Bill 1725 changed how shared governance functioned within the community college system (Collins, 2002). It is important to understand the extent to which such legislation impacted campus culture (e.g., through faculty, staff, or administrator hiring practices). Likewise, an additional component to such an evaluation would be to understand the extent to which the pandemic affected institutional responses to the pandemic. The pandemic highlighted the scope of basic needs insecurity students across the

country are facing, making it difficult for institutions to discount moving forward (The hope Center, 2021). The goal moving forward should be on identifying how institutions can adapt to this important environmental context.

Building on the Current Case Study

Several limitations of this study would benefit from further exploration. First, returning to SMC and broadening the scope of participants (e.g., faculty and upper-level administrators) would be useful to confirm whether the *culture of caring* and shared governance and decision making are isolated to one segment of the institution or embedded throughout. For example, if a *culture of caring* is prevalent among student affairs rather than academic affairs, it may reaffirm existing literature on the characteristics found among student affairs professionals in community colleges (Collins, 2002; Hirt, 2006; Janosik, 2009; Tull, 2009; Tull et al., 2015). Alternatively, finding that a *culture of caring* coupled with shared governance and decision making are embedded throughout the institution would serve as an example of successful collaboration between student affairs and academic affairs organizational units, which is atypical in the literature (Banta & Kuh, 1998; Bourassa & Kruger, 2001; Cho & Rishi, 2016; Elkins Nesheim et al., 2007; Engstrom & Tinto, 2000; Fried, 1995; O'Halloran, 2019; Philpott & Strange, 2003; Schroeder, 1999, 2000; Whitt et al., 2008).

Aligned with the first suggestion, I recommend attempting to obtain perspectives on basic needs insecurity programs/services with students who are involved in their administration through student governance and/or taking advantage of the programming themselves. Given the sensitive nature of this line of inquiry, identifying students who are willing to discuss their experiences may be challenging. SMC does have some difficulty identifying students who are experiencing basic needs insecurity because they largely rely on student self-reporting. However,

obtaining data on the student perspective through semi-structured interviews or focus groups would add an additional layer of understanding regarding whether the students are aware of their existence, find the programs/services beneficial, or have recommendations for solutions that better align with their needs.

Given that basic needs insecurity likely extends from the student's K-12 experience (Pavlakis, 2014), it would be useful for the state to consider creating a mechanism whereby these important details are automatically forwarded to the postsecondary institution where students apply for admission. The creation of such a mechanism would enhance the institution's ability to identify students with a history of basic needs insecurity to ensure that they receive additional outreach and assistance identifying campus-based programming that may be able to help cover costs of attendance. While the common application for the community college system does ask whether students are experiencing some form of basic needs insecurity, relying on student self-reporting is problematic given the stigma associated with basic needs insecurity (Goldrick-Rab, 2016; Phillips et al., 2018). Such a mechanism would likely enhance the state's ability to produce an educated adult workforce (Amey et al., 2008) by ensuring that their students are set up for success from the moment they apply for admission. Further, if the California legislature is already willing to pay $500 per month to students experiencing basic needs insecurity (Jaschik, 2022), why wouldn't they invest in a mechanism designed to reach those students before their circumstances become dire?

Building on the Change Literature

There is a dearth of scholarly research employing the planned change framework in a higher education setting. While the original goal of this study was to investigate the utility of the planned change framework at a community college, the data could not support the presence of

planned change. However, if the flexibility to conduct a longitudinal study and/or an historical analysis been available, the data may have better supported the framework. For example, exploring how the external environment, like the state-level implementation of programs (e.g., Extended Opportunity Programs and Services), may have affected both organizational culture and organizational change. Similarly, there is little research exploring the utility of combining the planned and emergent change approaches, which could potentially account for both top-down and bottom-up change surrounding the adoption and implementation of basic needs security programs/services. Combining theories is not a new approach to studying change. In their investigation of different change theories, van de Ven and Poole (1995) noted that the complexity of observed change and development processes in organizations could not be explained by a single theory. Bess and Dee (2012) suggested that higher education leaders "seek complementary approaches that are well suited to guiding change in the context of paradoxical trends toward both greater centralization (planned change) and more decentralization (emergent change)" (p. 812). This position has also been echoed in Beer and Nohria (2000), Burnes (2004a), and Burnes (2017) with respect to combining the Planned and Emergent approaches. I recommend attempting to combine all four components of Lewin's Planned approach to change given Burnes' position that Lewin intended Field Theory, Group Dynamics, Action Research and the Three-Step Model be employed together to provide a holistic view of change (at the individual, group, and organizational levels) (Burnes, 2004b, 2004c, 2009, 2017, 2020; Burnes & By, 2012). Further, the addition of two other components may provide a comprehensive understanding of how SMC addressed basic needs insecurity: an Emergent or Bottom-Up component and an Evaluation/Modification component (see Figure 3).

Combining the Planned and Emergent approaches to change may provide a cyclical framework for understanding how student success can be enhanced through organizational change processes. The cycle begins with acknowledgement of an issue that the organization needs to address, then progresses through the identification of organizational norms and how those norms are influenced and/or constrained by organizational behavior. Once an understanding of norms and behavior are established, the organization moves through a cost-benefit analysis of available solutions. The selected solution then moves through a process of both top-down and bottom-up negotiation and approval to ensure buy-in via alignment with group norms and behavior. The final stages of the process include implementation and subsequent evaluation to ensure ongoing adaptability and success.

The combined framework may be ideal for layering over a case study because it is potentially adaptive to institutional contexts (e.g., organizational norms and behavior, and both internal and external environmental influences) and provides a foundation for understanding how change is applied in complex, real-world contexts (e.g., addressing basic needs insecurity). For example, the cycle begins with acknowledgement of an issue that the organization needs to address. Ideally, institutional leaders move through a process of identifying *organizational norms* (Field Theory) to understand how *organizational behavior* is influenced or constrained by organizational norms (Group Dynamics). This understanding then leads to a process whereby solutions to the student food insecurity issue are proposed and evaluated. To ensure support for the solution, administrators garner support from various grassroots constituents and beneficiaries (e.g., faculty, staff, and students experiencing food insecurity) (Emergent or Bottom-Up component). An appropriate solution is subsequently identified based on suitability to group norms and behavior (Action Research) combined with beneficiary support (Emergent or Bottom-

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Up component). Once a suitable solution has been identified, supporters move through an

implementation process (Three-Step Model), which goes through a regular evaluation and

modification (if applicable) process to ensure ongoing adaptability and success of the solution

(Evaluation/Modification component).

Figure 3

Conceptual Framework of the Combined Planned and Emergent Approaches to Change
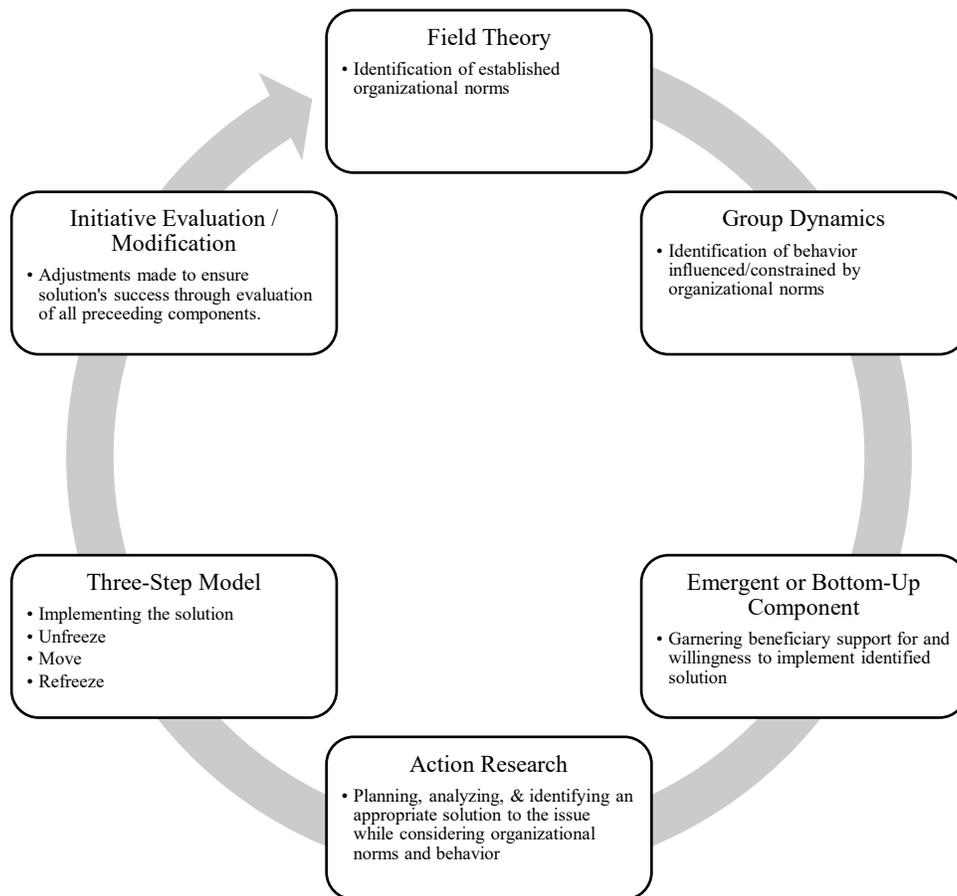
Note. Adapted from *The Origins of Lewin's Three-Step Model of Change*, by B. Burnes, 2020, p.

49.

Conclusion

This study aimed to understand how Santa Monica College provided holistic, creative solutions to address basic needs insecurity for their student population. A review of the change literature suggested that the planned change approach may be useful for understanding how postsecondary institutions (e.g., community colleges) move through a complex decision making process to engage in programs/services designed to address student success challenges (e.g., basic needs insecurity) (Beer & Nohria, 2000; Bess & Dee, 2012; Burnes, 2004, 2017). This research contributed insight to both academic and student affairs administrators who are interested in collaboratively addressing basic needs insecurity on their own campuses. More broadly, this study suggests the benefits of evaluating the progress of organizational change efforts from identification of an issue through implementation and evaluation of a solution provides a mechanism for understanding why institutions pursue certain activities (e.g., establishing basic needs insecurity programs/services and/or establishing partnerships with community nonprofit organizations) to address a variety of institutional challenges (e.g., improving student success and retention).

A qualitative research design was selected because the goal was to understand "…the meaning people have constructed; that is, how people make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world," which could not be accomplished through a quantitative design (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 15). Organizational decision making is an inherently complex process, which is difficult to quantify for a purely numerical data-driven study, especially within the context of a higher education institution that employs numerous people with unique viewpoints. The study was guided by three research questions: (1) Why did institutional leadership decide to address basic needs insecurity? ; (2) What did the institution do

to address basic needs insecurity? ; and (3) How has the institution implemented and sustained basic needs insecurity initiatives? Given these questions, a qualitative case study was an appropriate investigation method because it represents an "in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 37), and an opportunity to "learn more about a smaller, more tightly defined area" (Holley & Harris, 2019, p. 114).

The adverse effects associated with basic needs insecurity have been shown to diminish institutional efforts to ensure student success therefore institutions should proactively evaluate their own campuses to determine whether their students can benefit from the establishment of basic needs insecurity programs/services. Given that community colleges serve as a means of social mobility (Labaree, 1997) for traditionally underrepresented students and that these institutions enroll the greatest number of students than any other postsecondary institution type (Cohen et al., 2013), the negative effects of basic needs insecurity on their ability to complete a credential, among other educational goals, is extremely troubling. If community colleges are to uphold their social contract to provide an accessible education for all (Amey, 2017), then there is a widespread need to implement holistic student services designed to wrap-around their students.

As one participant suggested, it does not matter how big or small the effort, getting started on implementing a program/service is half the battle. Similarly, leveraging the work of a collaborative committee allows the institution to focus on an important task, which can and should be enhanced through data collection and analysis. Pulling together various campus constituents allows for discourse on programs/services that may or may not be addressing student needs. In addition, marketing/outreach are vital to ensuring that word gets out about programs/services that could help students who may not otherwise know such services exist.

Findings from the study reinforce the need for a shared governance model and elucidate the importance of understanding and engaging with a shared goal (e.g., enhancing student success by addressing basic needs insecurity). Support and commitment from leadership (e.g., the California Community College system, Chancellor, President, SMC administrators) to allocate appropriate resources toward and reinforce the necessity of offering basic needs insecurity program/services is likely an essential component of SMC's success. SMC is working to improve their basic needs insecurity responses through active engagement with campus constituents and the surrounding community. They are actively engaging with community partners/affiliates, as well as their colleagues at other institutions to keep abreast of what other institutions are doing to improve their responses and how those practices might be applicable at SMC. Collegial collaboration appears to be a key to their ongoing success and is a useful model to follow.

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Appendix A

Site Selection Table

Institution	Location	Type 1	Type 2	Year Founded
UC Los Angeles (UCLA)	California	4-year	Public	2009
University of Southern California	California	4-year	Private	2012
UC Santa Barbara	California	4-year	Public	2013
UC San Diego	California	4-year	Public	2013
Bowling Green State University	Ohio	4-year	Public	2014
Pepperdine University	California	4-year	Private	2014
UC Davis	California	4-year	Public	2014
University of Pennsylvania	Pennsylvania	4-year	Private	2014
University of Nevada – Reno	Nevada	4-year	Public	2015
CSU Long Beach	California	4-year	Public	2015
UC Riverside	California	4-year	Public	2015
University of Tennessee – Knoxville	Tennessee	4-year	Public	2016
College of Charleston	South Carolina	4-year	Public	2016
CSU Fullerton	California	4-year	Public	2016
UC Berkeley	California	4-year	Public	2016
University of Cincinnati	Ohio	4-year	Public	2016
University of New Hampshire	New Hampshire	4-year	Public	2016
Santa Monica College	California	4-year CC	Public	2016
Mercy College	New York	4-year	Private	2017
Morehouse College	Georgia	4-year	Private	2017
Northwestern University	Illinois	4-year	Private	2017
Spelman College	Georgia	4-year	Private	2017
UC Santa Cruz	California	4-year	Public	2017
Colorado State University	Colorado	4-year	Public	2017
Emory University	Georgia	4-year	Private	2017
Fresno State University	California	4-year	Public	2017
Otis College of Art and Design	California	4-year	Private	2017
Texas State University	Texas	4-year	Public	2017
UC Irvine	California	4-year	Public	2017
UC Merced	California	4-year	Public	2017

Institution	Location	Type 1	Type 2	Year Founded
University of Minnesota	Minnesota	4-year	Public	2017
West Virginia University	West Virginia	4-year	Public	2017
Elon University	North Carolina	4-year	Private	2017
Rutgers University Newark	New Jersey	4-year	Public	2017
University of Pittsburgh	Pennsylvania	4-year	Public	2017
Washington University in St. Louis	Missouri	4-year	Private	2017
Carleton College	Minnesota	4-year	Private	2017
CSU Maritime	California	4-year	Public	2018
Denver University	Colorado	4-year	Private	2018
Fitchburg State University	Massachusetts	4-year	Public	2018
Humboldt State University	California	4-year	Public	2018
University of Denver	Colorado	4-year	Private	2018
University of Missouri – Kansas City	Missouri	4-year	Public	2018
University of South Carolina	South Carolina	4-year	Public	2018
Boise State University	Idaho	4-year	Public	2018
Cal Poly Pomona	California	4-year	Public	2018
CSU Channel Islands	California	4-year	Public	2018
CSU Monterey Bay	California	4-year	Public	2018
Florida State University	Florida	4-year	Public	2018
Georgetown University	Washington	4-year	Private	2018
Ithaca College	New York	4-year	Private	2018
North Carolina State University	North Carolina	4-year	Public	2018
Ohio University	Ohio	4-year	Public	2018
Sacramento State University	California	4-year	Public	2018
UNC Charlotte	North Carolina	4-year	Public	2018
University of Delaware	Delaware	4-year	Public	2018
University of Kentucky	Kentucky	4-year	Public	2018
University of Southern Mississippi	Mississippi	4-year	Public	2018
University of Vermont	Vermont	4-year	Public	2018
Willamette University	Oregon	4-year	Private	2018
Cal Poly San Luis Obispo	California	4-year	Public	2018
College of St. Scholastica	Minnesota	4-year	Private	2018
CSU East Bay	California	4-year	Public	2018
CSU Los Angeles	California	4-year	Public	2018
Texas A&M University	Texas	4-year	Public	2018
University of Iowa	Iowa	4-year	Public	2018

Institution	Location	Type 1	Type 2	Year Founded
University of Maryland – Baltimore County	Maryland	4-year	Public	2018
University of Memphis	Tennessee	4-year	Public	2018
Eastern Washington University	Washington	4-year	Public	2018
California Lutheran University	California	4-year	Private	2019
Calvin University	Michigan	4-year	Private	2019
Chapman University	California	4-year	Private	2019
Creighton University	Nebraska	4-year	Private	2019
CSU San Bernadino	California	4-year	Public	2019
Dakota State University	South Dakota	4-year	Public	2019
Lamar University	Texas	4-year	Public	2019
Linn-Benton Community College	Oregon	2-year	Public	2019
Mississippi State University	Mississippi	4-year	Public	2019
Northwest Nazarene University	Idaho	4-year	Private	2019
Rutgers University – New Brunswick	New Jersey	4-year	Public	2019
San Francisco State University	California	4-year	Public	2019
Seattle Pacific University	Washington	4-year	Private	2019
Seattle University	Washington	4-year	Private	2019
Southern Illinois University	Illinois	4-year	Public	2019
Temple University	Pennsylvania	4-year	Public	2019
The College of New Jersey	New Jersey	4-year	Public	2019
University of Alaska – Fairbanks	Alaska	4-year	Public	2019
University of Idaho	Idaho	4-year	Public	2019
University of Mississippi	Mississippi	4-year	Public	2019
Western New Mexico University	New Mexico	4-year	Public	2019
Westmont College	California	4-year	Private	2019
Augustana University	South Dakota	4-year	Private	2019
Georgia College & State University	Georgia	4-year	Public	2019
Montclair State University	New Jersey	4-year	Public	2019
New Jersey Institute of Technology	New Jersey	4-year	Public	2019
Warner Pacific University	Oregon	4-year	Private	2019
Columbia University	New York	4-year	Private	2019
Cornell University	New York	4-year	Private	2019
San José State University	California	4-year	Public	2019
SUNY Delhi	New York	4-year	Public	2019
University of Arkansas	Arkansas	4-year	Public	2019
University of Connecticut	Connecticut	4-year	Public	2019
University of Mary Hardin-Baylor	Texas	4-year	Private	2019
University of Rhode Island	Rhode Island	4-year	Public	2019
Western Washington University	Washington	4-year	Public	2019

Institution	Location	Type 1	Type 2	Year Founded
William & Mary	Virginia	4-year	Public	2019
Baldwin Wallace University	Ohio	4-year	Private	2020
Central Lakes College	Minnesota	2-year	Public	2020
Clarion University	Pennsylvania	4-year	Public	2020
Denison University	Ohio	4-year	Private	2020
Kent State University	Ohio	4-year	Public	2020
Marshall University	West Virginia	4-year	Public	2020
Mercyhurst University	Pennsylvania	4-year	Private	2020
Minnesota State University – Mankato	Minnesota	4-year	Public	2020
New Jersey City University	New Jersey	4-year	Public	2020
North Dakota State University	North Dakota	4-year	Public	2020
Rice University	Texas	4-year	Private	2020
University of Lethbridge	Alberta, Canada		Public	2020
University of North Alabama	Alabama	4-year	Public	2020
CSU Bakersfield	California	4-year	Public	N/A
University of Colorado – Colorado Springs	Colorado	4-year	Public	N/A

Appendix B

Recruitment Letter

Email Subject Line: Invitation to interview about basic needs security initiatives at Santa Monica College (SMC)

Dear (POTENTIAL INFORMANT NAME HERE):

I am a doctoral student in Higher Education at Southern Methodist University (SMU) in Dallas, Texas, searching for potential research participants. My research project is looking at the role that various campus constituents (e.g., faculty, staff, students, and administrators) play in the adoption of basic needs security initiatives. The goal of the study is to better understand how Santa Monica College works to help alleviate basic needs insecurity. This research project has been approved by the SMU Institutional Review Board.

I would like to schedule an interview with you to understand more about your role in providing or supporting basic needs security initiatives at Santa Monica College. The interview would be held via Zoom and would last approximately 45 to 60 minutes. The interview will be recorded so that the audio file may be transcribed for data analysis purposes. I will assign you an alias and will not disclose your name, academic rank, department, college/school, and any other identifying information.

Please let me know if you are interested in participating in an interview about your role in providing basic needs security initiatives at Santa Monica College. You must be at least 18 years old to participate. If you are interested in participating in this research project, please let me know some potential dates and times for the interview. I will follow up to confirm the interview and will send a link for the interview via Zoom. Additionally, I ask that you please follow this link [**insert URL**] to fill out an Informed Consent document in advance of the interview.

Sincerely,

Brooke Guelker
SMU Doctoral Student, Higher Education
bguelker@smu.edu

Informed Consent

      PROJECT TITLE: Addressing Basic Needs Security Initiatives at a Community College

      PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Brooke Guelker

      <u>**Overview**</u>
- **I am conducting a research study to learn more about how a community college has identified, implemented, and maintained holistic, creative solutions to address student basic needs insecurity.**
- **Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you agree to take part and then change your mind, you can withdraw for any reason. There are no penalties if you withdraw, decline to participate, or skip any parts of the study.**
- **If you agree to participate, you will be asked to complete an interview regarding basic needs security initiatives on campus.**
- **Your participation should take about 45 – 60 minutes.**
- **There are no anticipated risks associated with this research project.**
- **It is important for the higher education community (e.g., academic affairs and student affairs administrators) to understand and identify innovative solutions to address basic needs insecurity. The findings identified in this study may provide a model of assistance that other higher education institutions can adopt on their own campuses in order to better serve basic needs insecure students.**

      <u>**Introduction**</u>
      Before you say that you will be in this research study you need to read this form. It is important for you to understand all the information in this form because it will tell you what the study is about and how it will be done. It will tell you about some problems that might happen during the study, as well as the good things that might happen during the study. When you read a paper like this to learn about a research study, it is called "informed consent." When you give your consent for something, it is the same thing as giving your permission. If you do not understand something in this form, please talk with one of the staff to answer your questions. Do not sign this consent form unless all your questions have been answered and you feel comfortable with the information you have read. You will be given a copy of the form to keep.

      <u>**Purpose**</u>
      The purpose of this research study is to learn more about basic needs security initiatives. You are being asked to take part in this study because of your involvement with basic needs security initiatives at Santa Monica College. Ten (10) to fifteen (15) participants will be part of this study.

      <u>**Your Rights**</u>
      Your participation in this study is voluntary. You do not have to take part in this study and it is okay to refuse to sign this form. If you agree to take part and then change your mind,

you can withdraw for any reason. Deciding not to be in the study, choosing not to complete a part of the study, or leaving the study early will not result in any penalty or loss of benefits that you are entitled to receive from Southern Methodist University and/or Santa Monica College. If you decide to withdraw before completion of the study, all of your information will be destroyed. If you change your mind and later want to withdraw your permission after completion of the study, you may do so by notifying Brooke Guelker via email at bguelker@smu.edu. If you decide to do this, all of your information will be destroyed.

Procedures
If you agree to participate, you will be asked to participate in an electronic interview with the researcher, Brooke Guelker, via Zoom at a mutually agreed upon time. Interview questions will be guided by three research questions: (1) Why did institutional leadership decide to address basic needs insecurity, (2) How did the institution address basic needs insecurity, and (3) How has the institution implemented and sustained basic needs insecurity initiatives?

Duration
45 to 60 minutes.

Risks
There are no anticipated risks associated with this research project. Participant identities will be withheld in an effort to ensure that they are not exposed to any potential risks associated with their feelings or experiences regarding basic needs security initiatives on campus. Participation in the study is completely voluntary. If the participant agrees to take part and then changes their mind, they can withdraw for any reason. There are no penalties if the participant withdraws, declines to participate, or skips any part of the study.

Benefits
It is important for the higher education community (e.g., academic affairs and student affairs administrators) to understand and identify innovative solutions to address basic needs insecurity. The findings identified in this study may provide a model of assistance that other higher education institutions can adopt on their own campuses in order to better serve basic needs insecure students.

Costs and Compensation
There is no cost to you for taking part in this study.

Confidentiality
The information collected about you during this study will be kept confidential to the fullest extent of the law. However, information about you from this study may be provided to governmental officials if necessary in the interest of public health and safety, but only to the extent necessary to satisfy the public purpose. Otherwise, only the researchers who are part of this study will see the information about you from this study. The results of this study may be published in a scientific book or journal or presented to other people. If this is done, an alias will be used so no one will know who you are. Digital information will be password protected to keep it safe from access by people who should not see it.

The information collected about you during this study will not be used for any future research studies. The information will be destroyed upon completion of the project.

Whom Do I Call If I have Questions or Problems?

If you have concerns or questions about the study or have a research-related injury, contact Brooke Guelker at bguelker@smu.edu.

If you have questions about your rights as a participant or feel you have been placed at risk, you may contact the SMU Institutional Review Board (IRB) Chair at researchcompliance@smu.edu or 214-768-2033.

Confirmation of Consent by Research Subject

You are making a decision about being in this research study. When you sign this form, you are giving your permission to be in the study. By signing this form, you have not given up any of your legal rights or released anyone from liability for negligence. You confirm that you are at least 18 years of age.

Brooke Guelker has explained to me the purpose of the research project, the study procedures that will take place, and the possible risks and discomforts that may happen. I have read (or have had read to me) this consent form. I have been given a chance to ask questions about the research project and the procedures involved. I believe that I have enough information to make my decision. I have also been told my other options. **I agree to give my consent to take part as a subject in this research project**.

Q1 Please draw your signature below to indicate your consent to take part in this research project.

Request for Consent to Record Interview

Brooke Guelker plans to record this interview via Zoom for transcription and analysis purposes only. Zoom automatically records an audio and video version of the interview. The audio-only version of the interview recording will be retained for transcription and analysis purposes, and the video recording will be immediately deleted in order to maintain your anonymity.

◯ I give my permission to be audio recorded / video recorded. (1)

◯ I do NOT give my permission to be audio recorded / video recorded. (2)

Q2 Please draw your signature below to consent to your audio/video recording selection above.

Q3 Please enter your name and email address below.

○ First Name (4) _____

○ Last Name (5) _____

○ Email Address (6) _____

End of Block: Informed Consent

<center>**Appendix D**</center>

Interview Protocol

Informed Consent

PROJECT TITLE: Addressing Basic Needs Security Initiatives at a Community College
PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Brooke Guelker

Overview
- I am conducting a research study to learn more about how a community college has identified, implemented, and maintained holistic, creative solutions to address student basic needs insecurity.
- Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you agree to take part and then change your mind, you can withdraw for any reason. There are no penalties if you withdraw, decline to participate, or skip any parts of the study.
- If you agree to participate, you will be asked to complete an interview regarding basic needs security initiatives on campus.
- Your participation should take about 45 – 60 minutes.
- There are no anticipated risks associated with this research project.
- It is important for the higher education community (e.g., academic affairs and student affairs administrators) to understand and identify innovative solutions to address basic needs insecurity. The findings identified in this study may provide a model of assistance that other higher education institutions can adopt on their own campuses in order to better serve basic needs insecure students.

Introductory Questions

- Describe your experience (professional/educational) in higher education.
    - What is your current role/title (faculty/staff/student/administrator) at the institution?
    - How long have you been in your current role?

- Describe your (professional/personal) experience working with basic needs insecurity.

Research Question-specific Interview Questions

- How would you define basic needs insecurity?

- How does SMC define basic needs insecurity?
    - Probe: Where did the initiative to address basic needs insecurity start (e.g., students, administration)?

- What is SMC's strategy for addressing student basic needs insecurity?
    - Probe: Tell me about any messaging used to shed light on or spread the word about basic needs insecurity at SMC.

<center>135</center>

- - Skip follow-up probes below if participant is unable to answer the question above.
    - Probe: Tell me where this messaging originated from (e.g., students/administration)?
    - Probe: How often do you recall seeing this kind of messaging?
    - Probe: Tell me about the impact this messaging had on you.
    - Probe: How important is this messaging to you?
  - Probe: Walk me through an example of what happens in x situation?
  - Probe: What me through an example of what happens in y situation?
  - Probe: How widespread would you say basic needs insecurity is at SMC?
    - Probe: For which student population(s)?
  - Probe: Who has been involved in addressing basic needs insecurity on campus (e.g., students, faculty, staff, administration, community members, etc.)?
    - How have they been involved?
  - Probe: What about off campus (if applicable)?
    - How have they been involved?

- Describe SMC's process for identifying students experiencing basic needs insecurity.
  - Probe: Tell me about who is involved in the process.
  - Probe: Describe your role in the process.
  - Probe: Tell me what happens when basic needs insecure students are identified.
  - Probe: What does SMC hope to accomplish by addressing basic needs insecurity (e.g., what is their "grand vision")?
  - Probe: Has SMC's process for addressing basic needs insecurity always been this way?
    - Skip follow-up probes below if participant is unable to answer the question above.
    - Probe: Tell me about what has changed over time.
    - Probe: Tell me about what has stayed the same.

- Describe what you think would happen if SMC decided not to address basic needs insecurity.
  - Probe: Why is it important that SMC address basic needs insecurity?

- Tell me what you consider to be the most important resources needed to address basic needs insecurity at SMC.
  - Prompt (only if needed): financial resources, time, equipment, software, staff, etc.
  - Probe: Describe the available resources employed to address basic needs insecurity.
    - Probe: Internal resources? External resources? How effective are they?
  - Probe: Tell me about resources that are missing (e.g., what would improve SMC's response to basic needs insecurity)?
  - Probe: Why do you think these resources are important/necessary?

- What does a successful basic needs insecurity initiative look like for SMC?

- How does SMC compare to other institutions and their responses to basic needs insecurity?

- o Probe: (e.g., community colleges, other institutions in the state/system, nationally)?

- What is the biggest lesson learned when addressing basic needs insecurity?
  - o Probe: What advice or recommendations would you offer to other institutions who are thinking about engaging in similar basic needs security efforts?

- Is there anything else I did not ask that you feel is important for me to know?

Thank you for your time today.