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The Role of Assessment and Accountability in Higher Education Doctoral Programs: A Presidential Perspective

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THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION DOCTORAL PROGRAMS: A PRESIDENTIAL PERSPECTIVE*

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Sumario en español

Este estudio procuró ganar una comprensión del papel que educación superior programas doctorales juegan en líderes reveladores que pueden dirigir los asuntos de evaluación de estudiante y responsabilidad institucional. Revisó este asunto de la perspectiva de presidentes de universidad de instituciones en Estados Unidos. Sólo unos pocos estudios han dirigido el tema de programas de preparación de liderazgo de educación superior fuera de Estados Unidos (Altbach, Bozeman, Janashia, & Rumbley, 2006; Uzoigwe, 1982; Wang, 2010). Las

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conclusiones deben ser sin embargo de valor a éstos en la comunidad internacional como este tema gana la importancia a escala mundial.

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1 Introduction

The accountability movement in higher education is gaining momentum in the United States (<http://www.insidehighered.com>) and around the world (Teichler, 2012). In recent years, there has been growing pressure on higher education institutions to demonstrate their value through various accountability measures, with a strong focus upon the assessment of student progress and success (Mazzeo, 2001). In the U.S., this pressure has come from state and federal government (Ewell, 2002; Kochan, & Locke, 2010), accrediting agencies (Lubinescu, Ratcliff & Gaffney, 2001), parents (Huba & Freed, 2001), and the general public (Baker, 2004). Additionally, the changing environment within the teaching and learning process is impacting the manner in which students will be assessed and the purposes of this assessment (Hainline, Gaines, Feather, Padilla, & Terry, 2010; Huba & Freed, 2000). Thus, there is a growing recognition that higher education leaders will need to be prepared to address this and other complex issues that will inevitably affect higher education institutions (Altbach, Bozeman, Janashia, & Rumbley, 2006; Freeman & Kochan, 2012). This makes the role of the president in this process more vital and important as administrators must be the ones to provide funding and other types of support (Hainline et al., 2010).

This study sought to gain an understanding of the role that higher education doctoral programs play in developing leaders that are able to address the issues of student assessment and institutional accountability. It examined this issue from the perspective of university presidents of institutions in the United States.

2 Purpose and Research Question

This research is part of a larger study that investigated the preparation of university presidents in higher education programs in the United States. The purpose of this part of the study was to examine university presidents' perceptions of the degree to which the doctoral program they attended as a graduate student adequately prepared them to deal with issues related to assessment and accountability as president of their institution. This study addressed this issue by investigating the question: "To what extent did your doctoral program prepare you to deal with issues of accountability and assessment?"

3 Significance

Research studies on leadership preparation programs in higher education are very sparse. Only a few of these have examined this issue outside the United States (Altbach, Bozeman, Janashia, & Rumbley, 2006; Uzoigwe, 1982; Wang, 2010). However, the topic of assessment and accountability in higher education and the preparation of administrators to deal with these issues are of international importance. Thus, this study, although limited to the U.S, should provide helpful information to administrators, curriculum developers, and faculty in higher education administration programs throughout the world. It should also offer insights into higher education students' needs. In addition, it offers ideas regarding assessment and accountability that should be of value to higher education associations and others who are charged with preparing and developing individuals for executive leadership.

4 Literature Review

4.1 Assessing Student Learning Outcomes

The development of new teaching methods in which institutions are being challenged to move from teaching to learning has expanded on a world-wide basis. This has resulted in an increased emphasis upon active

learning and student engagement in the learning process (Mulye, Westberg, & Hay, 2009). The rise of new technologies to enhance the teaching/learning process has enhanced institutional capacities to vary instruction and engage students in the learning process (Powell, Jacob, & Chapman, 2011). The focus on learning has also resulted in an increased emphasis on using student outcomes to measure not only student learning, but faculty teaching and institutional success (Hainline et al., 2010; Teichler, 2012).

It is important for those who lead higher education institutions to value student and program assessment and to take a leadership role in ensuring that their universities provide program faculties with opportunities to develop comprehensive and effective means of assessing student-learning outcomes (Huba & Freed, 2001). Poda (2007) stresses that although good student assessment metrics are not easy for educators to develop, they are essential in assuring high quality teaching and learning in higher education graduate programs. She also notes that standards measured need to be objective, reliable and fair.

Some of the most popular assessment tools used in assessing higher education graduate programs are written and oral tests, open book examinations, group assessment, self, peer, and co-assessment, assessment by projects, investigations, and realistic problem-solving tasks (Poda, 2007). Other strategies for enhancing assessment techniques include using rubrics to provide feedback, engaging students in portfolio development, and using student feedback on processes to improve their learning (Huba & Freed, 2001). In recent years, there has been a shift to measure such things as critical thinking skills rather than rote memorization of facts and figures (Brookhart, 2010).

Assessment is influenced not only by faculty, but also by outside entities such as departmental standards, Boards of Trustees, and external mandates from state and national legislatures and accrediting agencies. Professional or accreditation bodies dictate professional requirements for particular learning outcomes (Olds, 2008). This requires that presidents understand assessment processes from a broad perspective and build relationships with those involved at the policy and implementation levels.

Poda (2007) suggests that higher education graduate programs conduct assessments of student learning for two reasons. First, she posits that it “motivates, guides, and reinforces student learning, thus promoting learning” (p. 165). She believes that students tend to adjust their learning style to assessment requirements and based on achievement of mastery of the stated learning outcomes. The second reason she posits is that assessment of student learning helps to validate that the doctoral program maintains strong academic standards, which then helps to verify student achievement.

Most accrediting bodies have become more rigorous in requiring institutions to assess student learning as a means of measuring campus and program success. In recent years, there has been a move in these bodies to place increased emphasis on guaranteeing quality through examining the assessment of students as part of the quality issue (Lubinescu et al., 2001; Teichler, 2012).

4.2 Teaching, Learning and the Curriculum

Curriculum is generally considered to be the essential content knowledge that is included in the educational program (Bakah, Voogt, & Pieters, 2012). The curriculum should include strategies to prepare students to become critical thinkers and reflective practitioners (Wiessner, Aalsburg, & González, 2007). Additionally, higher education educators should incorporate andragogical approaches which focus on the adult learner and facilitate the development of student learning skills and abilities (Huba & Freed, 2001; Stevens-Long, Schapiro, & McClintock, 2012; Wright, 2007). Curriculum planners must focus on what must be taught and in what order (Beebe, Mottet, & Roach, 2003).

Program planners should encourage faculty to learn how to conclude the class in such a way that adult learners leave remembering the key points addressed in that course. Beebe, Mottet, and Roach (2003) suggest two ways this can be accomplished: (1) summarize what has been discussed, and (2) restate the key points that were covered. Instructors should provide a logical conclusion to what has been learned. Poda (2007) suggests that “higher education doctoral programs promote learning by coaching students in continuously asking themselves questions including what they learn, what more they need to know, and how they can approach specific problems they encounter in the future” (p. 111). Finally, instructors should give the lesson closure by pointing the student to the next phase of the learning.

Many institutions of higher education are adding centers for teaching and learning to enhance faculty skills and abilities in this area. It appears that these will become much more important in the years ahead as teaching becomes more and more focused upon learning (Hainline, et al., 2010). Such centers require resources and presidents will be responsible for making decisions about their presence on their campus. Thus, it will be essential that they possess a deep appreciation for and an understanding of the relationships between teaching, assessment, and student learning.

Student assessment is gaining in importance and universities will need to make major investments in developing comprehensive programs that will measure student learning. Thus, it is important that those who lead these institutions have some understanding of the concepts involved, the types of programs needed and the manner in which the data gathered can be used to improve and enhance teaching and learning in the institution. Yet, there appears to be no research done on the extent to which presidents of these institutions have such knowledge or the degree to which their doctoral programs helped them to gain this understanding. This study was focused on this issue. Uncovering this information will assist university preparation programs in curriculum design as they seek to prepare higher education administrators in the years ahead.

5 Methods

The research used a mixed-methods approach involving both quantitative and qualitative data collection. Phase-one used quantitative methods to identify the sample from the population which was university presidents, who had earned a doctorate with a specialization in higher education administration and to examine the degree to which their programs were perceived as preparing them for the presidency based on previous research. This information was used to develop interview questions for the study. Phase two of the study involved the use of qualitative methods to gather data needed to address the research question posed.

5.1 Phase One—Quantitative Analysis and Population and Sample Selection

The initial research phase involved analyzing quantitative data from a 50-question survey on the presidency, provided by the American Council of Education's (ACE) study published as *The American College President: 2007 Edition* (ACE, 2007). The study gathered data from presidents to identify the degree to which these presidents perceived that they were prepared for their role prior to assuming it. In the ACE study, the population included presidents with terminal degrees in a variety of fields, both from within and outside of education. There were 2,148 presidents who participated in this study. Of these, 891 identified themselves as having earned a terminal degree in education or higher education. The study did not differentiate between those who had earned doctorates in education with specializations in higher education and those who simply earned doctoral degrees in education. Therefore, there was no way to distinguish between the responses of those who were graduates of higher education programs and those who were not.

The ACE study included the question, "In which of the following areas did you feel insufficiently prepared for your first presidency?" The question included 17 variables: (1) Academic issues (e.g., curriculum changes), (2) Accountability/assessment of student learning, (3) Athletics, (4) Budget/financial management, (5) Capital improvement projects, (6) Community relations, (7) Crisis management, (8) Enrollment management, (9) Entrepreneurial ventures, (10) Faculty issues, (11) Fund raising, (12) Governing board relations, (13) Government relations, (14) Media/public relations, (15) Personnel issues (excluding faculty), (16) Risk management/legal issues, and (17) Strategic planning. These competencies have been identified, developed, and refined over 20 years through interviews and feedback from college and university presidents (ACE, 2007; J. King, personal communication, September 4, 2010). The presidents were able to check all areas that applied.

Access to the data source was requested from the American Council of Education and consent was received to use the data to examine the perceptions of presidents with education degrees. A chi-square analysis was conducted to determine if there were differences in the perceptions of presidents with education degrees and those presidents who had earned their degrees in different fields.

A one-sample t-test was used to determine the mean difference between the sample (presidents with a

doctorate in education or higher education) and the known value of the population mean (presidents with a doctorate other than education or higher education). The number of items measuring the dependent variable was 17. In this analysis, presidents with doctorates in education or higher education felt more prepared than presidents with doctoral backgrounds in other disciplines in the areas of accountability/assessment of student learning.

The findings are depicted in Table 1. Cronbach’s alpha was used to assess the internal consistency of each dependent variable for the independent variable, categorized as College Presidents with the major field of study in education or higher education. The reliability results for the 17 dependent variables were .82. All the variables met the predetermined Cronbach’s alpha (.50) criterion for internal consistency.

Findings indicated that presidents with a terminal degree in education/higher education felt statistically significantly more prepared for enrollment management duties (Question 35H) versus presidents who held a terminal degree outside of education ($X^2_{(1, N = 891)} = 14.704, p < .001$). However, these presidents believed they statistically significantly less prepared for fundraising (ACPS Question 35K) than presidents who held a terminal degree outside of education ($X^2_{(1, N = 891)} = 9.274, p = .002$). These findings are displayed in Table 1.

Table 1
Chi-square Analysis of Presidential Preparedness

Question	df	X^2	<i>p</i>
35H. Prepared for Enrollment Management	1	14.704	< .001
35K. Prepared for Fundraising	1	9.274	0.002

While not statistically significant, presidents with a terminal degree in education/higher education felt more prepared to assess student-learning duties (Question 35B) versus presidents who held a terminal degree outside of education (no chi-square results). Therefore this study focused on this question to expand our understanding of how presidents gained knowledge in the area of assessment. This information was used to develop the interview script. They were also used in developing initial “a priori” questions as part of the process used in the case study conducted to address the research question posed. Questions such “To what extent did your doctoral program prepare you to deal with issues of accountability and assessment?” were asked to gain greater insight into this phenomenon.

Table 2
Means and Standard Deviations for the College or University Presidents (N = 891)

Dependent Variables	College Presidents	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Academic Issues	0.08	0.28
Accountability/Assessment of Student Learning	0.09	0.29
Athletics	0.11	0.32
Budget/Financial Management	0.14	0.35
Capital Improvement Projects	0.16	0.37
Community Relations	0.06	0.24
Crisis Management	0.12	0.33
Enrollment Management	0.08	0.27
Entrepreneurial Ventures	0.16	0.36
Faculty Issues	0.09	0.29
Fund Raising	0.25	0.44
Governing Board Relations	0.13	0.34
Government Relations	0.10	0.30
Media/Public Relations	0.08	0.27
Personnel Issues (excluding faculty)	0.07	0.25
Risk Management/Legal Issues	0.18	0.39
Strategic Planning	0.10	0.30

5.2 Phase Two—Qualitative Process

The second phase of the study involved qualitative data collection. The researcher incorporated the Life History Case Studies (LHCS) approach to collect the data. LHCS is a qualitative methodology specifically designed to assist researchers in obtaining in-depth and comprehensive meanings in people's lives and helps them to gather background information about the study participants (Campbell, 1999). This method allowed an exploration of the participants' perceptions of their graduate training in higher education administration and its role in preparing them for their current position. This approach was also used to explore what knowledge and competencies they perceived as having learned while in their doctoral program.

The population was derived from the 1,647 college and university presidents who are members of the American Council of Education, as identified on their organizational website (American Council of Education, 2010, para. 1). Of this group, 150 presidents who had earned a degree with a specialization in higher education administration and were leading institutions using the term "university" in their nomenclature.

After being solicited via email or phone to participate in this study, thirteen of the 150 presidents agreed to participate. These presidents included three females and ten males. Three African American

presidents who were serving as leaders of Historically Black Universities participated in the study. The ten other presidents were Caucasian, and led Predominantly White Universities. Five presidents led private religious institutions and eight remaining served public universities. The presidents led institutions whose student enrollment ranged from less than 2,000 to more than 50,000 students. Pseudonyms are used in this manuscript instead of the presidents' names to keep their responses anonymous.

The study incorporated a process that included reviewing of the presidents' curriculum vitas and biographical sketches, a process advocated by Gasman and Anderson-Thompson (2003). Although these documents were used as part of the analysis when appropriate, the primary data source of this study was interviews. Prior to beginning the interview process, permission was gained from the University Institutional Review Board to conduct the research and to audio and video record the interviews. Two guided interviews of 30–60 minutes were conducted with each president and university presidents were asked key questions about their doctoral training. This process provided rich data, which assisted in interpreting the responses and developing the information into a meaningful narrative.

5.3 Coding and Data Analysis Process

Multiple data sources were used to confirm the study's results (Yin, 2003). Field notes written during participant interviews, ideas developed during the research process, audiotaping and videotaping the interviews served as the sources for analysis. Both what the presidents said (i.e., their words and language) and what was unsaid (i.e., body language and long pauses) were considered when logging notes.

A start list of "a priori" codes was derived from related literature on higher education programs and presidential leadership (American Council for Education, 2008; Hammons & Miller, 2006; Herdlein, 2004). Developing an "a priori" code list is consistent and reflective of the recommendations of researchers such as Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) and Bogdan and Biklen (2003). Themes not derived from the start list, that were identified in the data, were coded as emerging codes. The "coding incident to incident" approach advocated by Charmaz (2006) was used throughout the analysis process. This enabled the opportunity to compare similar incidents experienced by various participants. Similar emergent codes were combined with one another to limit the amount of redundant codes.

5.4 Concerns for Internal/External Validity, Reliability and Generalizability of Results

In order to heighten content validity, three senior academic administrators and faculty reviewed pilot questions (Ross & Shannon, 2008). Revisions were made based on this expert panel's feedback. Pilot field interviews were then conducted with six academic administrators. After concluding the interviews with the presidential participants, follow-up email interviews were conducted for purposes of member checking and data validation. Wolfe (2010) defines member checking as, "a term used to determine the trustworthiness of the data analysis" (p. 69). Member checking allowed the presidents the opportunity to review the information from the previous interview to ensure that it accurately reflected the presidents' feelings and responses (Creswell, 1998; Wolfe, 2010). The second interview enabled the researcher to conduct additional questioning related to the responses from the initial interview and clarify any issues that were unclear.

6 Findings

6.1 The Role of Assessment in the Presidents' Doctoral Program

As previously noted, the ACE (2007) study indicated that presidents who had earned a doctoral degree with a specialization in education felt more prepared to deal with assessment and accountability of student learning than presidents who earned doctorates in other disciplines. All of the presidents shared their belief that the issue of accountability and assessment of student learning was important. Several mentioned that external constituencies such as lawmakers and regional accreditation agencies are holding presidents responsible for student outcomes. A typical comment was

"SACS [Southern Association of Colleges and Schools] which accredits our institution has gone toward the assessment model, so it's brought us up over the last ten to fifteen years into a wonderful world of assessment that we build our accreditation on."

Although 11 of presidents in the study indicated their programs had prepared them in the area of student assessment, two participants expressed concerns about this area.

Speaking about the strength of this area, President Elijah Alexander said,

"I think my program did a very good job of preparing (me) in the area of assessment."

Dr. William James response concurred with President Alexander when he said:

"In regard to assessment issues, I do feel that I had sufficient preparation for that issue in regard to my doctorate program. It's something that I'm knowledgeable about. It's something that is very important."

Most of the presidents coupled their understanding of student assessment issues with their doctoral training and statistics and assessment. President Levi Carter's comments best represent this connection when he shared:

"Some of the things [assessment and accountability of student learning] came out of a few of the courses that I took in educational research...as well as a few of the methodology courses I took."

President Ryan Wyatt from Micah-Henry University was one the two presidents that felt that in his program not enough time was spent on these issues. He shared:

"We did not spend a lot of time on outcomes and the issues related to programmatic accountability that are so important in higher education today."

The other president Gavin Benjamin simply said "I don't believe it was, No I don't think it [assessment and accountability of student learning] was addressed."

Although all presidents did not feel that their program prepared them as well as it should in the area of assessment of student learning, all believed that the issue of accountability and assessment of student learning was important. Several mentioned that external constituencies such as lawmakers and regional accreditation agencies are holding presidents responsible for student outcomes.

6.2 Importance of Establishing Assessment as Learning Goal

While the presidents believed that higher education doctoral programs should address the twin issues of assessment and accountability, several felt that their preparation could have been stronger if this had been more prominent in the program. President Emila Lily extended that concept further by suggesting that it was important to establish those areas as a central learning goal. This is in alignment with the recommendations of Poda (2007) and Huba and Freed (2001). President Lily expressed how doctoral programs could use the dissertation process to help students develop the skill of assessment. She shares:

"The ability to plan, implement, assess, and apply that back to your plan, ok. And, I'm not meaning that in terms of strategic planning, but what I am talking, thinking about is you need to be able to clearly demonstrate and be able to articulate that you've been able to develop a plan, you've implemented the plan, assess the plan, and thought about how you might do it differently and bring closure to something. The dissertation will be that project or an internship project that is part of it and then what I would encourage (doctoral students) to think and reflect on how you (doctoral students) did that throughout your doctoral, and completing the doctorate is one of those ways. I guess I challenging you to think about, and I can't describe it as a set skill, but it is really a skill and ability at wrapping

up the knowledge that you have, ok. Taking the time to reflect on what it is that you really have accomplished, somebody setting the goal, how you implemented the goal or how you achieved the goal, and being able to talk about how you did that. Why do I say that? Well, I think it demonstrates leadership."

This statement is profound in that it underscores the notion that assessment can be viewed as a form of leadership. This suggests that it is important that those aspiring to serve in senior leadership in higher education embrace and expect the challenge of accountability. President Lily also alludes to the idea that doctoral students that aspire to the presidency should see the dissertation as not only as a final project to complete before concluding their doctorate. These doctoral students could view their dissertation process along with internship projects as a way of refining their assessment skills.

6.3 Assessment of Student Learning

In the second interview, presidents were asked to share various assessment techniques they would use to assess student learning within higher education doctoral programs. Six of the 13 participants had served as program faculty in higher education doctoral programs. Therefore they were able to provide informed comments regarding curricular enhancements. Each president suggested different areas to emphasize regarding assessment, such as how to best assess student mastery in the area of time management. Presidents were asked the areas that students should be assessed upon based on their previous responses to the question, "Please provide examples of skills or competencies you would advise students to develop while in their higher education programs." President Ian Flynn chose the issue of time management as an area that students should master prior to completing their programs. He shared

"I think there are a number of ways to assess time management. The most important is the timeliness of their response to classroom preparation and participation."

President William James emphasized students that aspire to serve as a university president need to have skills in developing a vision and seeing it through. He believed this skill could be enhanced within a higher education doctoral program. Below he describes the way he would suggest that higher education faculty assess the growth of this skill in their students.

"I think the best way to assess the ability of students to determine if they are capable in vision setting would be in a capstone course with a simulation exercise providing extensive data and then asking the student to set the vision for such an organization."

The assessment technique of simulations suggested to gauge the mastery of various skills was not the only approach suggested. Presidents such as Evelyn Aurora believed that higher education faculty could utilize "new media" to help them assess whether students understood concepts being taught.

"I think I would use the new media such as blogging, etc. Or, I would use a computer-generated question with links that allowed students to give an example. In other words, it would not be a pen and paper test. It would be an assessment using one or more means of the new media."

President Jessica Elliott suggested somewhat more traditional assessment techniques including examinations, student-generated test questions and peer review.

Another President, Joshua Dillan, believed that students needed to be thoughtful about their career trajectory and that faculty could help in this process by assessing the quality of their career plan. Below he provides an example of the process he used when serving as a director of a higher education program.

What we did was to have these graduate students prepare their CV and also a mock letter in response to an ad in the Chronicle of Higher Education. Then, in teams, other students would respond to the letter and CV as if they were serving on a search committee. The student would then have the opportunity to revise their material but also develop a written career plan to begin to fill in some of the most significant gaps in their resume over time.

President Emelia Lily responded to the question by giving several examples of ways to assess knowledge and skill development in these programs.

To assess doctoral student learning, I would use a few different assessment methods: I would use case study presentations and discussions to explore the various aspects of leadership, decision-making, administration, and the complexity of issues; I would use a final paper with a presentation to assess the comprehensive nature of the learning based on the course learning outcomes. I would also use various classroom discussions and group projects to assess learning during each class session. I have used the one-minute papers to assess learning and understanding of topics at the end of each class meeting and found them to be very helpful.

7 Discussion

The presidents stressed the importance that assessment and accountability play in an effective higher education program. The majority of presidents shared that their doctoral programs prepared them well in the area of assessment and accountability. These findings seem to support the results of the ACE (2008) study, which indicated that presidents with doctoral degrees in education or higher education felt better prepared for issues of assessment and accountability in comparison to those with doctoral degrees from other disciplines. These results should be encouraging to faculty who serve in higher education programs and encourage them to continue to incorporate activities within the curriculum to ensure students develop skills in this area. It is also sends a signal to prospective students and currently enrolled students in these programs that developing skills in assessment and accountability is important. This is especially important for students that aspire to serve in a college or university presidency. Because the presidents that participated in this study are chief executive officers of their academic institutions and serve as the final individuals that hire individuals for senior leadership positions, their recommendations should be taken seriously by those aspiring to senior leadership.

Presidents in this study also suggested that higher education use a plethora of methodologies to gauge whether students understand and can apply the knowledge they acquire in the classroom. Although presidents recommended differing topics that higher education graduate program faculty could teach such as William James' suggestion about how to teach the skills of developing a vision, they stressed that new technologies be used.

The presidents viewed another part of accountability as expecting faculty to have a comprehensive and effective means to assess student learning. This study found that presidents believed that students must be involved in their own learning and must reflect upon what they learn. President Emily Lily in particular stressed the idea of giving students projects, such as the dissertation that would cause them to self-reflect and assess.

Only two presidents out of the 13 Presidents indicated that their program did not thoroughly address the areas of assessment and accountability. This is a positive outcome, but suggests that higher education preparation program will need to make a concerted effort to ensure that these themes are interwoven throughout the programs.

Most presidents generally stressed the belief that higher education programs should assure that their graduates understand the concepts of assessment and accountability. This is consistent with the literature, which focuses on the importance of assessment in leadership programs (Kochan & Locke, 2009; Taylor & Storey, 2011).

8 Areas for Further Study

This study examined U.S. university presidents' perceptions of the extent to which their higher education programs prepared them for dealing with assessment and accountability issues. Additional research into these issues would expand our understanding. A quantitative study using the findings for this research might assist in determining the degree to which presidents believed they were prepared to deal with assessment and

accountability issues and the ways in which they acquired this knowledge. Additional qualitative studies of presidents in other countries or in other types of institutions would also help to confirm and/or expand the findings.

9 Conclusion

The results of this study should help administrators, curriculum developers, and faculty associated with higher education administrations programs and educational leadership institutes and associations better understand higher education graduate program students' needs and enhance their programs. This information could also serve as a framework for enriching the knowledge of college instructors and curriculum developers who are engaging in program design, assessment, and revision. It also serves as a springboard for future research on this important topic.

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