

# Lessons Learned from Former College Presidents of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America: A Phenomenological Study

Katherine A. Tunheim

*Gustavus Adolphus College, St. Peter, Minnesota, USA*

Gary N. McLean

*McLean Global Consulting, Inc., St. Paul, Minnesota, USA*

This phenomenological study examined the lived experiences of 10 Lutheran (ELCA) college presidents who had transitioned from the presidency. The purpose of this research was to gain a deeper understanding of the experiences of former college presidents who were associated with Evangelical Lutheran Churches in America (ELCA) colleges. The results of this research include significant and meaningful lessons learned by these former presidents during the process of exiting from the presidency that may be helpful for current and future college presidents. Among other findings, it was surprising to discover how poorly presidents had felt prepared for their positions and how critically important it was for presidential selection committees to assess fit of the president with the culture of the institution. Major implications for practice included the need to prepare better for taking on the position, including meeting with the outgoing president, working closely with the board chair, and collaborating with faculty.

Being a Lutheran college president is a noble calling.

Dr. Paul Dovre, President Emeritus, Concordia College,  
Moorhead, MN (June 20, 2002)

The role of president of an institution of higher education is both difficult and rewarding. The 2012 ACE *Study of the American College President* (Broad & Ferguson, 2012) reported, “Leading an institution of higher education in the 21st century is no easy task. Our nation looks to them to provide the educated workforce we need to compete globally” (p. 7). Starting in 2014, approximately six thousand vacant administrative positions are anticipated annually in higher education (Leubsdorf, 2006). In addition, more than half of the college and university presidents will be retiring within the next decade. As a result, there is an urgent need to train, recruit, and hire qualified leaders to guide institutions of higher education effectively into the future (American Council of Education [ACE], 2012).

Rhodes (1998) suggested that the academic presidency is one of the most influential, important, and powerful of all positions “because the future leaders of the world sit in our classrooms” (p. 1). As such, there is both a critical need and an unusual opportunity for effective presidential leadership. Future political leaders, academics, entrepreneurs, scientists, business executives, authors, and inventors are now the best and brightest postsecondary students. What happens during these students’ academic experience matters. The way in which administration leads faculty members is important. College presidents influence the experiences of both faculty and students on our campuses.

The importance of the presidential role was summarized in the Report of the Association of the Governing Board Task Force on the State of the Presidency in American Higher Education: “No leader comes to personify an institution the way a president does. A president must provide leadership in maintaining the institution’s academic integrity and reputation” (Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges, 2006, p. vi). The presidents of these institutions play a critical role in ensuring organizational success (Broad & Ferguson, 2012). In short, extraordinary challenges face higher education nationally, and leaders with exceptional capabilities are needed to help institutions meet these challenges (Rubin, 2004).

Previous literature has addressed some of the challenges of college presidents in large universities (Basinger, 2002; Boggs & Smith, 1997; Bornstein, 2005; Cotton, 2002; Evans & Honeyman, 1998; Rhodes, 1998; Selingo, 2005). Research has also concentrated on presidents of community colleges (Evans & Honeyman, 1998; Gregg, 2004; McFarlin, 1999; Oglesby & Windham, 1996). The ACE Presidential Study, a comprehensive report on public and private college presidents, has been published seven times between 1986 and 2012 (ACE, 2012). However, little research has explored the experiences of presidents from Christian colleges and universities, and even less has assessed the experiences shared by these presidents after their exit from that leadership role. According to Corrigan (2002), 58% of all college presidents reported that they did not feel prepared for the presidency.

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) is a mainline Protestant denomination headquartered in Chicago, Illinois. As of 2012, the denomination had 3,950,924 baptized members (ELCA, 2012); it is the seventh-largest religious body and the largest Lutheran denomination in the United States. The two next-largest Lutheran denominations are the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod (LC-MS), with approximately 2.28 million members, and the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS), with approximately 380,000 members (ELCA, 2012).

There are 40 Lutheran colleges and universities in North America, of which 10 are Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, four are Wisconsin-Synod or Independent Lutheran, and 26 are ELCA colleges and universities (William Hamm, personal communication, January 28, 2014). The ELCA branch is recognized as the most liberal of the Lutheran systems, with women serving in pastoral and college presidential roles (ELCA, 2014). According to Selbyg (2007), the average length of service of an ELCA college president was only 3.86 years.

This study explored the experience of Lutheran college presidents (specifically, former presidents of ELCA colleges and universities) based on their reflections following their exit from the presidency. The findings shed light on lessons learned while in the role from the perspective of those who have transitioned out of the presidency. Paul Dovre, President Emeritus, Concordia College, Moorhead, Minnesota, stated in 2006, “We must get more serious and

much more intentional about preparing the next generation of presidential leaders if our institutions are going to be sustainable” (personal communication, June 14, 2006). The selection of presidents exiting the position was made for two primary reasons. First, their tenure in the position had ended, so they were able to reflect on the full cycle of presidential activities. Second, former presidents were able to be more forthright in their observations, given that they were no longer in a role that could be terminated if stakeholders were unhappy with their observations.

Former ELCA college presidents comprise the sample explored in this study. Four former Lutheran college presidents have written books (Carlson, 1977; Dovre, 2005; Frame, 2006; Rand, 1996); however, those books did not specifically reflect on the presidential experiences of these authors or on leaving the presidency. Although there are only 26 Lutheran college presidents of the Evangelical Lutheran Churches in America (ELCA), the group serves as a subset of the 900 religiously affiliated college presidents in the country. According to data released in 2005—the most recent year available—these 900 colleges enrolled more than two million students, employed upwards of 600,000 faculty and staff, and had operating budgets of more than \$35 billion (Andringa & Splete, 2005). The president of each of the 26 Lutheran colleges has a complex leadership position that wields significant influence in terms of people and dollars managed (Tunheim & McLean, 2006). Better understanding the reflections of these individuals on their presidencies after leaving that role might help future Christian college presidents function more effectively.

## PURPOSE, NEED, AND JUSTIFICATION FOR THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to gain a deeper understanding of the experiences of former college presidents as reflected upon after they had exited a presidency. As specified above, past research on university and college presidents has focused mainly on those who lead large universities or small community colleges. This research contributes to the literature in Christian higher education by concentrating on the experiences of former ELCA college presidents. The findings offer insights that can benefit both scholars and practitioners, as well as current and future Lutheran and other Christian college presidents.

## PHENOMENOLOGICAL RESEARCH DESIGN

Phenomenology is a qualitative research methodology that asks the question: What is this experience like? This particular methodology allows the researcher to study a phenomenon in order to learn about individuals’ experiences with it. According to van Manen (1990), phenomenology is “the systematic attempt to uncover and describe the structures, the internal meaning structures, of lived experience” (p. 10). An underlying assumption of phenomenological research is that humans seek meaning from their experiences and from the experiences of others (Gibson & Hanes, 2003). Phenomenological research explores the essence or the meaning of lived experiences of those who live in it. Unlike positivistic research, the purpose of phenomenology is not to generalize from a sample to a larger population; rather, it is to gain a deep understanding of the meanings people apply to their experiences relating to a specified phenomenon.

## RESEARCH METHODS

According to van Manen (1990), hermeneutic phenomenology, a specialized phenomenological approach, consists of six research tenets. This process is not linear; instead, it consists of “dynamic interplay” (p. 30) between and among these tenets. The research tenets include:

1. turning to a phenomenon that seriously interests us and commits us to the world;
2. investigating experience as we live it rather than as we conceptualize it;
3. reflecting on the essential themes that characterize the phenomenon;
4. describing the phenomenon through the art of writing and rewriting;
5. maintaining a strong and oriented pedagogical relation to the phenomenon;
6. balancing the research context by considering the parts and whole. (pp. 30–31)

These six research tenets serve as the basis for this research. An important assumption of this methodology is that, unlike natural science research, phenomenology is not a science of empirical facts for generalization. Although the findings of this study are not generalizable to other populations, they might be applicable to the experience of other Christian presidents. The participants in this study were 10 former presidents of ELCA colleges and universities who had exited from their positions within in the previous five years. These 10 Caucasian males were aged 44 to 78; all were married, with an average length of presidential tenure at 7.8 years. All but three had held presidencies at institutions located in the Midwest. Eight of the 10 participants were interviewed face-to-face. The final 2 participants were interviewed by telephone. The participants gave permission to record the interviews, which lasted approximately 90 minutes; these interviews, which were subsequently transcribed verbatim, were conducted primarily in the former presidents’ homes or offices. The study was conducted under the guidelines and approval of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the University of Minnesota.

Each interview began with the core research question, “What is the experience like of leaving the presidency of an ELCA college?” For the purposes of this study, a structured interview protocol was not utilized. Rather, the core research question opened the interview, with follow-up questions, such as, “Share your experience more in leaving your institution as an ELCA college president. Tell me more about that. What else did you experience? How did you feel during the process of leaving? What did you learn through this experience?” These follow-up questions were used only when respondents ran out of things to say on their own without probing.

### Data Analysis

The interview data were subjected to hermeneutic phenomenological reflection to allow themes to emerge. The first author read the interview texts a total of four times. The first two reviews were focused on understanding the data. Giorgi (1997) suggested that this critical assessment allows the researcher to understand how the parts are constituted. The texts were reviewed for the third time, highlighting important lines. This step allows the reader to look for the material that is at the center of the experience (Tesch, 1987). During this step, “moments [that] fly up like sparks from the description” (Barritt, Beekman, Bleeker, & Mulderij, 1984, p. 6) were identified. During the fourth reading, the highlighted lines were documented from the texts and later categorized by

theme and participant. Two Excel spreadsheets were then created: the first included a summary of the themes by each former president and the second included the themes without an identifying president. These documents served as a summary of the transcribed data.

Finally, after the second author reviewed the themes and offered revisions, the theme and subtheme list was sent back to the participants. The first author scheduled a one-on-one follow-up interview with 9 of the 10 participants. One participant was in Africa for an extended period of time and was unable to participate in this validation process. The former presidents reviewed the themes, discussing how each did or did not resonate with their own experience. This feedback was reviewed and resulted in the final list of themes and subthemes.

## FINDINGS

An analysis of the interview transcripts resulted in the identification of five main themes: (a) the role is complex and demanding; (b) the institution; (c) the individual; (d) shorter-term presidencies; and (e) search firms (Tunheim & McLean, 2013). Drawing from each of these five themes, this article focuses primarily on the related lessons learned from the perspective of these former presidents. Due to space limitations, these lessons are presented succinctly, with one or two participant quotes included as illustrative of the self-reported data.

### Role Is Complex and Demanding

As supported by previous research (Bornstein, 2002; Selingo, 2005), the 10 former presidents in this study agreed that the role of a college president is complex and demanding. The presidential role is associated with high expectations, as stated by this former president:

If you go to an inauguration, and you listen to the board chair describe this new president, you realize the expectations the institution has of you. You just recognize the stakes that the whole constituency has in you helping the institution to succeed. There are times it just rattles you to the core.

Another former president described how much one has to learn when new in the job: “It’s a very steep learning curve. You have a whole new culture to learn, a new tradition, a new history, a new set of players, new personalities.” Clearly, the role of a college president is a difficult leadership challenge that requires multiple skills and talents to be successful.

### *Vocational Calling*

The Lutheran church was born out of the University of Wittenburg in Germany. Martin Luther, the theologian who inspired the founding of Lutheran colleges, wrote a great deal about vocation. Different from the Catholic Church at the time in 1522, Luther’s view was that everyone has a calling from God—not exclusively religious leaders. The Lutheran college former presidents in this study reinforced the idea of vocational calling in the interviews. Half of the participants articulated that they viewed being a college president as a calling in life. One participant reflected: “In some respect, now that I’m not in the role, I can see that it was a calling. It was Spirit-led. It didn’t always feel that way at the time, but I see it now.”

Another former president described how he balanced his own feelings of incompetence with the call to be the leader of the institution:

I think that, for us Lutherans, it's the understanding of our work as a calling that helps. The counterbalance to the feelings of inadequacy is that I have a call to be the president of this school. If this school is going to have a president, it has to be me. There may be smarter people on my campus. But if there's going to be a president here, I have to be it because I have the call to be it.

The majority of these Lutheran presidents felt as though being a president was their vocation. It was their calling in life.

### *Preparation*

Nine of the 10 former presidents spoke at length about the importance of preparation for the presidential role. One participant described the overwhelming feelings he had as a beginning president:

I was a brand-new president. I went to the first conference. It was sponsored by the American Council on Education. I was persuaded after the first day that I was absolutely the dumbest new president there, and by far the least prepared to be the president of a college!

Many new college presidents might experience feelings of being overwhelmed. The participants offered a long and varied list of knowledge areas or skills that would be helpful preparation for the role: telling the mission or story of the institution, strategic planning, fundraising, enrollment, financial aid, academic leadership, personnel skills, and having a doctorate

A former president from a financially-strapped institution discussed the difficulty in preparing for the job: "I am convinced today that there is absolutely nothing that prepares you for this experience of being a president. Nothing." The majority of former presidents, however, did feel that a future presidential candidate could do some things in order to be prepared for success in the role. These presidents discussed the areas in which they would have liked to have been better prepared or at least shared what they thought would be important for aspiring presidents to know prior to taking the role.

### *Separating Oneself from the Role*

Some of the presidents in this study struggled with keeping themselves separate from the role. After some time, it was as if the line blurred between the institution and their personal selves. One president discussed how public his position was and how that affected him personally:

I suddenly was very well known. You're on the television news. You're in the newspaper. You're now a public figure. I didn't know who was recognizing me when I go to the store or when I drive to a local city to do whatever. I had this constant feeling that someone was watching me. I was the college. Everything I did represented my college. It was kind of a strange feeling.

## The Institution

The participants had a lot to say about the lessons they learned relative to the institution rather than their role, alone. Three subthemes emerged from the data: culture, mission, and fit; team development; and relationship with the board chair.

### *Culture, Mission, and Fit*

The participants advised new or current college presidents to embrace carefully the culture of the institution. In some cases, leaders have been hired to come in and change things, per the board's direction. One former president expressed the views of several in emphasizing the importance of learning the culture first:

I think the president has to embrace the culture that exists when you get there. Culture in an academic institution does not change unless there's a long period where there is a crisis. A real crisis. If you walk into a situation like I did where things were going pretty well, and you start saying, "This is all wrong, we need to change," what you have is 200 faculty looking back at you saying, "What's wrong with what we're doing here?"

In addition to embracing the culture, presidents need to be able to articulate the mission of the institution. One participant offered this example:

I think the president has to be the chief storyteller of the mission of the college. Part of the president's job is to make everybody the storyteller about your place. Someone has to mind the saga. It's important for the president to understand the saga and be a storyteller.

The former presidents also referred to institutional fit, suggesting that, if the president doesn't fit with the place, the match between the two will never work out. One participant discussed the match between the president and the institution:

I really think that, when a college makes its final cut to the top three people, almost any one of them possesses qualities to be a president. The question is whether they fit. And so you can be very qualified and judged not to be the fittest.

Clearly, fit matters and needs to be considered by the board and the top candidates before a presidential selection is determined.

### *Team Development*

Seven of the 10 former presidents commented on the importance of crafting and developing a successful team of vice presidents. A few of the former presidents spoke about the importance of assembling a strong team from the beginning: "Always try to hire the best people available. If they're not available, don't hire them. It took us a complete year to find the right vice president of development. Get the best people possible." In summary, team development did not occur naturally. It was an intentional, formative activity that took work and skill.

### *Relationship with the Board Chair*

Four former presidents noted the importance of the relationship between the president and the leader of the board, the board chair. One participant highlighted the criticality of the chair:

What was really affirmed for me was that the relationship between the president and the board chair is the most critical relationship in the university. That relationship sets a tone for the full board, and I think the board does set a tone for the institution because the executive team is so involved with the board. That stuff filters down.

### *The Individual*

The participants learned things about themselves while in the job as they reflected on these experiences after exiting the presidency. Three subthemes emerged: self-awareness and a healthy ego; mentors; and presidential spouse.

#### *Self-awareness and a Healthy Ego*

Half of the participants mentioned the importance of having self-awareness and a healthy ego to do the job well. They also described what happens when a president's ego gets out of line. One president commented: "The best presidents quickly figure out, 'It's not about me! It's not about being president. It's about the mission of the college and the students. We are here for them.'" Other participants echoed this sentiment with comments such as, "This was never about me. It couldn't be," and "When it is about me is when I get into trouble. My focus is on the wrong thing."

#### *Mentors*

Four participants spoke about the importance of mentors. Three mentioned needing or having a mentor while they were in the position. One participant noted how helpful it was to be mentored by a peer. Another participant indicated that a wise mentor would have made a difference during the difficult days: "If I were to do this again, I would absolutely have a mentor. . . an older, more experienced president to talk to through some of the difficult times."

#### *Presidential Spouse*

Nine of the 10 participants mentioned the importance of a partnership with their spouses. It became clear that when a president tells a board of regents yes, the spouse's life will be forever changed, too. One participant described this dimension of his presidency, "You get the whole package." Another participant shared a particularly meaningful comment about the essential support role that the spouse offers to the president: "For the president, whether male or female, you quickly realize that your spouse is the only one you can talk to. And that's something you learn the hard way."



### Shorter-Term Presidencies

Four of the 10 former presidents walked into situations where the institutions were struggling financially. In light of the average tenure for ELCA college presidents being only 3.86 years (Selbyg, 2007), it seems important to note the array of issues these former presidents faced. One participant spoke of his shock and surprise about the dismal finances of his institution:

Before I started working at the college, I went down there once a week and worked with the team. One day, I was having lunch with the controller who was the VP of Finance. This was in early May. Our fiscal year went through the end of June. During the conversation, he casually said, “We have \$25,000 in the bank.” I said, “Okay. Well, what does that mean?” He replied, “Well, payroll is the 10th of the month.” He then told me that payroll cost \$650,000. I had been elected one month before. I said, “So, what’s going to be done about that?” He said, very matter-of-factly, “I don’t know.” This is the kind of stuff new presidents walking into financially strapped places face.

This participant reflected upon this hidden surprise and added his conclusion about his shorter-term role at the college. His role was clearly different from what he had expected when hired:

After a short period of time, the reality set in fairly quickly that, however long I stayed in the presidency, it was going to just be an interim. There was no fun in my job after that. I knew my job was to get the place turned around. I had to be an agent of change.

For the four presidents who began their presidencies in financially strapped institutions, surprises showed up unexpectedly from the start. Some of them realized that their terms were not going to be long; rather, their role was to be a turn-around agent and to hand the leadership baton to the next president.

### Search Firms

Four of the 10 participants mentioned the use of search firms when selecting a new president. All four of the responses criticized the search firms’ behavior during the selection process of a college president. One former president reported: “In most searches, I do think the pool the search firm gathers could use some work. Boards don’t always know if it’s a good pool or not.” Volunteer boards may not be specifically equipped to make this important decision for the college. If a search firm does its job well, they will sift through the candidates and select those who appear to best fit the needs of the institution. If the top panel is not of high caliber, then the search firm and board should agree to discontinue the search and make a plan to move forward in a different direction.

## LIMITATIONS

The purpose of this research was, as noted earlier, to understand participants’ experiences related to the phenomenon of being an ELCA president as reflected on after leaving the presidency. According to Polkinghorne (1989), “The objective of the phenomenological researcher is to help those who read the research findings come away with a better understanding of what it is like for someone to experience the phenomenon” (p. 41). While phenomenology does not lead to generalizable findings, college presidents from the ELCA and those from other religiously

affiliated colleges may still find value in reflecting on these and their own experiences in the presidency.

### IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

This study offers a number of recommendations for consideration, given that phenomenological findings cannot be generalized. First, current presidents and boards could be more intentional about Lutheran college presidential preparation and succession. High-potential staff and faculty could be encouraged to attend programs such as the American Council on Education or Thrivent Fellows Leadership Development programs. In addition, boards could develop these high-potential candidates in the areas of finance, fundraising, and the personal side of being a president. Working collaboratively, the 26 ELCA institutions could develop strategies for building the pipeline inside each.

Second, presidential finalists should consider doing a thorough job of learning about the finances at the institution before they accept the position. Eighty percent of new presidents are surprised about something when they get the job (Moore & Burrows, 2001), with much of the unexpected being associated with institutional finances (Sanaghan, Goldstein, & Gaval, 2008). Emphasizing due diligence in the area of finance might help reduce the number of surprises that, in turn, could help new presidents persist and be more successful.

The third recommendation is for board development to be a top priority for presidents and board chairs. Presidents might encourage their board chairs to go to conferences and seminars sponsored by the Association of Governing Boards and learn from other successful board experiences. Getting a board engaged with “their noses in and fingers out” (R. L. Torgerson, personal communication, June 24, 2006) is often regarded to be a key to success.

Fourth, it might be useful to mine wisdom and expertise from former Lutheran college presidents. Perhaps collaboration across the ELCA might facilitate former presidents serving as an advisory or consulting group to current presidents. Their expertise is rich and could be utilized more than it currently is.

A commitment by the board to conduct annual presidential evaluations might help the newer president learn what is going well and what is not going well, allowing them to make adjustments. Most boards wait until the third year, and sometimes these formal evaluations do not happen until the fifth year of a presidency (Andringa & Splete, 2005; Bornstein, 2005).

Finally, encouraging more former Lutheran and other college presidents to write about their presidential experiences might help current, incoming, and aspiring presidents. Passing on the institutional and presidential stories could provide leadership lessons that should not be lost.

### IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This study suggests that presidential fit with the institution is an important area for more research. Further research is also needed regarding the skill sets required for presidents who take on leadership roles at financially strapped institutions. Additional understanding of presidential spouses is needed, especially as more women become presidents. Women and minority presidents need more research attention, as well, given that the demographics of those holding presidential

roles are slowly changing. Finally, more research needs to be conducted on the job satisfaction of ELCA, other Lutheran, and other college presidents. It would be an interesting and informative study to survey this group as a whole. The use of engagement surveys for faculty and staff could also be helpful to lead change in these colleges. We also suggest conducting this same study with other groups of college presidents; for example, it would be interesting to see if the same themes emerged among Jesuit or Methodist or other denominational college presidents. Repeating this study in other small, liberal arts colleges could affirm themes or identify new experiences when reflected on after leaving the presidency.

## CONCLUSION

Even though the job of college president is an incredibly challenging and complex one, college presidents still report that serving in the role is a worthy experience (Bornstein, 2005). Selingo (2005) summarized, "Serving as a university president is a thrill a minute" (p. A25). Selingo also comments, "If they had to do it all over again, 94 percent of them would still become a college president" (p. 2). In fact, most presidents have reported that it is the best job they have ever had (Andringa, 2005).

Garnering wisdom from former Christian college presidents can be informative to candidates interested in the role. It can also help new presidents avoid similar mistakes that former presidents have already experienced. Extending the length of presidential tenure can aid fundraising, enrollment, and academic success in institutions, given the right leader. The key, then, to having a successful presidency is to provide the support mechanisms to improve the possibility of success and experience a graceful exit.

## REFERENCES

- American Council on Education. (2012). *The American college president: 2012 edition*. Retrieved from [http://www.aacu.org/aacu\\_news12/January24/facts\\_figures.cfm](http://www.aacu.org/aacu_news12/January24/facts_figures.cfm)
- Andringa, R. C., & Splete, A. P. (2005). *Presidential transitions in private colleges: Six integrated phases essential for success*. Washington, DC: Council for Christian Colleges & Universities, The Council of Independent Colleges.
- Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges. (2006). *The leadership imperative*. The Report of the AGB Task Force on the State of the Presidency in American Higher Education. Washington, DC: Association of Governing Boards.
- Barritt, L., Beekman, T., Bleeker, H., & Mulderij, K. (1984). Analyzing phenomenological descriptions. *Phenomenology & Pedagogy*, 2(1), 1–17.
- Basinger, J. (2002). How some presidents go on for decades while others are out after a few years [Electronic version]. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 49, A28.
- Boggs, G. R., & Smith, C. J. (1997, Summer). When boards change: Presidential response. *New Directions for Community Colleges*, 98, 43–54.
- Bornstein, R. (2002, October 1). Redefining presidential leadership in the 21st century. *The presidency*. Retrieved from <http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1P3-233851851.html>
- Bornstein, R. (2005). The nature and nurture of presidents. *The Chronicle Review*, B10–B11. Retrieved from EBSCO MegaFILE.
- Broad, M. C., & Ferguson, R. (2012). *The American college president*. Washington, DC: American Council of Education.
- Carlson, E. M. (1977). *Future of church-related higher education*. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Press.
- Corrigan, M. E. (2002). *The American college president*. Washington, DC: American Council on Education.

- Cotton, R. D. (2002). Mr. President, you're fired. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. Retrieved from <http://chronicle.com/article/Mr-President-You-re-Fired/46118>
- Dovre, P. J. (2002). *The future of religious colleges*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans.
- Dovre, P. (2005, June). ELCA report presented at the Thrivent Fellows Conference, St. Peter, MN.
- Evangelical Lutheran Church of America. (2014). Quick facts. *ELCA.org*. Retrieved from <http://www.ELCA/QuickFacts>.
- Evans, G., Jr., & Honeyman, D. (1998). Climate and job satisfaction among community college presidents. *Visions: The Journal of Applied Research for the Florida Association of Community Colleges*, 2(1), 47–48.
- Frame, W. V. (2006). *Dialogue of faith and reason: The speeches and papers of William V. Frame*. Minneapolis, MN: Lutheran University Press.
- Gibson, S. K., & Hanes, L. A. (2003). The contribution of phenomenology to HRD research. *Human Resource Development Review*, 2(2), 181–204.
- Giorgi, A. (1997). The theory, practice, and evaluation of the phenomenological method as a qualitative research procedure. *Journal of Phenomenological Psychology*, 29(2), 235–260.
- Gregg, K. A. (2004). *Men and women in community college leadership: A qualitative study* (Unpublished Doctoral dissertation). University of Texas at Austin. Retrieved from <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/etd/d/2004/greggka04/greggka04.pdf>
- Luebsdorf, B. (2006). Boomers' retirement may create talent squeeze. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 53(2), A51. Retrieved from <http://chronicle.com/article/Boomers-Retirement-May/5562>
- McFarlin, C. H. (1999). Background factors common among outstanding community college presidents. *Community College Review*, 27(3), 19.
- Moore, J. W., & Burrows, J. M. (2001). *Presidential succession and transition: Beginning, ending, and beginning again*. New York, NY: American Association of State Colleges and Universities.
- Oglesby, V. D., & Windham, R. (1996). Career-path characteristics of community college presidents. *College Student Journal*, 30(3), 316–320.
- Polkinghorne, D. E. (1989). Phenomenological research methods. In R. S. Valle & S. Halling (Eds.), *Existential-phenomenological perspectives in psychology* (pp. 41–60). New York, NY: Plenum.
- Rand, S. A. (1996). *In pleasant places: A memoir by Sydney A. Rand*. Northfield, MN: St. Olaf College.
- Rhodes, F. (1998). The art of the presidency. *The Presidency*, 1(1), 12–18.
- Rubin, B. D. (2004). *Pursuing excellence in higher education: Eight fundamental challenges*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Sanaghan, P. H., Goldstein, L., & Gaval, K. D. (2008). *Presidential transitions: It's not just the position, it's the transition*. Westport, CT: Praeger.
- Selby, A. (2007, February). *Years of tenure for ELCA presidents*. ELCA Report presented at the Lutheran Educational Conference of North America, Sarasota, FL.
- Selingo, J. (2005). What presidents think. *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 52(11), A25–A27.
- Tesch, R. (1987). Emerging themes: The researcher's experience. *Phenomenology and Pedagogy*, 5, 230–241.
- Tunheim, K. A., & McLean, G. N. (2006, February). *Competency model for the role of president of religion-affiliated colleges*. Paper presented at the meeting of the Academy of Human Resource Development, Columbus, OH.
- Tunheim, K., & McLean, G. N. (2013). What is the experience like of leaving a college presidency of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America: A phenomenological study. *Journal of Academic Administration in Higher Education*, 9(2), 27–38.
- van Manen, M. (1990). *Researching lived experience: Human science for an action sensitive pedagogy*. London, ON, Canada: Althouse Press.