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The Deaccreditation of Compton Community College:
An Interpretation Through the Kubler-Ross Grief Construct

DISSERTATION

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE
DEGREE

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION
IN EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

BY

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated

to my wife

Ms. Nina Elizabeth Scott Curry

To my son

Mr. Kamilo Ali Curry

To my mom

Ms. Carolyn Elaine Curry

To my brothers

Kenneth Carl Curry Jr.
Kevin Christopher Curry

and to my extended family and friends.

Table of Contents

	Page
LIST OF TABLES	v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	viii
CURRICULUM VITAE	ix
ABSTRACT	x
CHAPTER I–COMPTON COMMUNITY COLLEGE	1
Background of the Problem	1
Interpretation Through the Kubler-Ross Grief Construct	5
Statement of the Problem	13
Research Questions	13
Significance	13
The Study	14
CHAPTER II–REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE	17
Mission and Function of Community Colleges	17
Community Colleges in California	18
Application of the Kubler-Ross Grief Construct on Compton Community College	20
Theoretical Framework: Kubler-Ross Grief Construct	25
Critique of Kubler-Ross Grief Construct	27
Relevant Research that Utilized the Kubler-Ross Grief Construct	29
Workforce Closure	29
Organizational Change	34
CHAPTER III–METHODOLOGY	45

Site	45
Participants	46
Data Collection	47
Interviews	48
Focus Group	49
Data Analysis Plan	50
CHAPTER IV–FINDINGS	52
Study Participants Demographic Composition	53
Online Survey Results	59
One-on-One Interviews Results	81
Focus-Group Results	106
CHAPTER V–DISCUSSION	115
Summary of Findings	115
Limitations of the Study	123
Recommendations	124
Future Directions of the Study	127
REFERENCES	129
APPENDICES	132
Appendix A: Online Survey Questions	132
Appendix B: One-on-One Interview Questions	138
Appendix C: Focus Group Interview Questions	140
Appendix D: Institutional Review Board Approved Study Information Sheet	141

LIST OF TABLES

		Page
Table 1	Grief Construct Applied to the Deaccreditation of Compton Community College	5
Table 2	Researcher's Hypotheses on How the Deaccreditation of Compton Community College District Affected the Employment Groups	10
Table 3	2005-2006 Study Participants Employment Group	53
Table 4	2010-2011 Study Participants Employment Group	53
Table 5	Years of Employment with Compton Community College District (CCCD)	54
Table 6	Gender of Study Participants	55
Table 7	Ethnicity of Survey Participants	56
Table 8	Study Participants Attended Classes at Compton Community College (CCC)	57
Table 9	Study Participants Who Family Member Attended Compton Community College (CCC)	58
Table 10	Study Participants Who Live In the Compton Community College District (CCCD) Service Area	59
Table 11	Study Participants Understanding of the Accrediting Commission Decision	60
Table 12	Study Participants' Beliefs When They Learned About the Deaccreditation Decision	61
Table 13	Reasons the Study Participants Believed Compton Community College (CCC) Was Deaccredited	62
Table 14	Study Participants' Beliefs About Compton Community College (CCC) Appeal to the Accrediting Commission	63
Table 15	Study Participants' Beliefs About the Compton Community College (CCC) Deaccreditation After the Appeal Was Denied	64

Table 16	Study Participants Who Felt Angry About the Accrediting Commission Decision	65
Table 17	Targets of Study Participants Anger Because of the Deaccreditation Decision of Compton Community College (CCC)	66
Table 18	Blamed Someone Because of the Deaccreditation Decision	67
Table 19	Targets of Study Participants Blame Following the Compton Community College (CCC) Deaccreditation Decision	68
Table 20	Study Participants Who Sought Assistance or Guidance During the Deaccreditation of Compton Community College (CCC)	70
Table 21	Study Participants Who Were Familiar With Assembly Bill 318	71
Table 22	Study Participants Who Supported Assembly Bill 318	72
Table 23	Study Participants' Thoughts and Feelings When They Received Their Layoff Notice Dated March 26, 2006	73
Table 24	Study Participants Who Lost Hope That Compton Community College Would Remain Open After They Received Their Layoff Notice	74
Table 25	Study Participants Who Sought Guidance About Their Future Employment After Receiving Their Layoff Notice	75
Table 26	Study Participants Sought Guidance From After Receiving Their Layoff Notice	76
Table 27	Study Participants' Thoughts and Feeling When They Learned About the Agreement With Santa Monica College	77
Table 28	Study Participants' Thoughts and Feelings When They Learned Assembly Bill 318 Was Signed By the Governor of the State of California	78

Table 29	Study Participants' Thoughts and Feelings When They Learned About the Agreement With El Camino College	79
Table 30	Study Participants Who Did or Did Not Accept the Possible Closure of Compton Community College During the 2005-2006 Year	80
Table 31	Study Participants Who Did or Did Not Accept the Deaccreditation of Compton Community College in 2010	81
Table 32	Summary of Findings on How the Deaccreditation of Compton Community College District Affected the Employment Groups	118

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

The Deaccreditation of Compton Community College:
An Interpretation Through the Kubler-Ross Grief Construct

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This dissertation builds upon Hoffman and Wallace's (2008) research on the psychological consequences of the deaccreditation process of Compton Community College, which in turn draws upon Elizabeth Kubler-Ross' Death and Dying (1969) grief construct. Kubler-Ross (1969) examines death and dying through five stages: *denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance*. The Kubler-Ross (1969) death and dying model was used to examine the perspective of employees at Compton Community College prior to the deaccreditation of the institution. This dissertation builds upon Hoffman and Wallace's (2008) study by examining the grieving process of an organization from the perspective of the campus employment groups, i.e. faculty, staff, and administrators. This study tested the Kubler-Ross grief construct model as a way of interpreting events relating to the beliefs, feelings, emotions, and perceptions of Compton Community College employees during the deaccreditation process. Participants selected for this study were Compton Community College employees who were employed at the College from January, 2005 through August, 2006.

This study was conducted in three phases. In phase one, the researcher requested that employees complete an online survey. The survey explored the participants beliefs, feelings, emotions, and perceptions towards the events that occurred during the deaccreditation process of Compton Community College. In phase two, the researcher conducted interviews with four employees from each employment group. During these interviews, which were semi-structured, the researcher utilized open-ended questions to explore the beliefs, feelings, emotions, and perceptions of employees during the deaccreditation process of Compton Community College. Finally, in phase three, the researcher conducted focus groups with four employees from each employment group. During the focus group interviews the researcher reexamined the model being used for this study with the participants. In the focus group interviews the researcher explored whether the model accurately reflected the beliefs, feelings, emotions, and perceptions of the employees of Compton Community College during the deaccreditation process.

CHAPTER I–COMPTON COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Background to the Problem

Compton Community College was established in 1927 as a campus of Compton Union High School District. In 1950, local voters approved a bond separating the College from the local high school district, and a new campus was constructed at its current location (El Camino College Compton Center, 2009). During the spring of 2004 and through the summer of 2006, several events led to the deaccreditation of Compton Community College. First, in the spring of 2004, the Chancellor of the California Community Colleges, as authorized under California Assembly Bill 61, appointed a Special Trustee and suspended the authority of the Board of Trustees of the Compton Community College District. The Special Trustee has sole authority over Compton Community College District's assets, contracts, expenditures, facilities, funds, personnel, and property (California Education Code, 2010). According to California Assembly Bill 61, Compton Community College District was placed under a Special Trustee due to fiscal instability (California Education Code, 2010).

The Special Trustee was imposed because Compton Community College's ending balance for the previous fiscal year 2002-2003 was projected as a negative \$275,000. Information in the spring of 2004 indicated that Compton Community College would run out of general fund dollars on April 1, 2004, two months before the end of the fiscal year (Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, 2005). At the time of this study Compton Community College District is the only community college district under state receivership and administered by a state appointed Special Trustee.

In the spring of 2004, the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges conducted a visit to

Compton Community College. In their report the Commission recommended that during the next comprehensive visit by the Commission a thorough review of Compton Community College educational programs and services be completed (Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, 2005). During this visit the Commission noted that Compton Community College was out of compliance with the Commission standards and on January 31, 2005 placed this institution on Show Cause (Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, 2005). In a letter to the Compton Community College President on June 17, 2005, the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges took action to terminate the accreditation of Compton Community College.

Finally in the summer of 2006, after appealing the decision of the Commission, Compton Community College was notified by the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges that the Commission was upholding their previous decision and the deaccreditation of the institution was to occur. The impact of deaccreditation meant Compton Community College would not have the ability to offer classes and grant degrees with units transferable to other colleges and universities.

In order to continue to offer accredited courses, the Governor of the State of California signed special legislation, Assembly Bill 318, which allowed Compton Community College District to enter into an agreement to provide educational services on the former Compton Community College site. On July 24, 2006 Compton Community College District began negotiations with El Camino Community College District over an agreement to provide educational and student support services to the residents of the District at the site of the former Compton Community College (El Camino College Compton Center, 2009). This agreement was approved by the Compton Community

College District and El Camino Community College District, during August of 2006, and was revised in June, 2008. Through this agreement the El Camino College Compton Community Educational Center was established.

The administration of the El Camino College Compton Community Educational Center is currently led by the Superintendent/President of El Camino College, and the Vice President of the El Camino College Compton Center, who oversees the day-to-day operations of the Compton Community Educational Center (El Camino Community College District & Compton Community College District , 2010), formerly known as Compton Community College. Compton Community College District exists under the authority of the state appointed Special Trustee. The administration of Compton Community College District is led by the Chief Executive Officer who reports to the state appointed Special Trustee (El Camino Community College District & Compton Community College District, 2010).

The 2006 statement below from California Community College Chancellor Marshall Drummond, excerpted from "Compton Community College Keeping the Doors Open to Rebuild and Preserve Educational Excellence for Future Generations," characterizes the deaccreditation of the college as follows:

For the largely Latino and African American student body, Compton Community College is home in their hearts. The faculty and staff are dedicated and passionate about their college, their profession, and their students. The quality of education at Compton has never been challenged or questioned. Compton students receive excellent instruction from caring, involved teachers and supportive services by staff who nurture and guide them toward fulfillment of their personal and educational goals-this is the hallmark of Compton Community College. The

problems that brought the college to near-closure and eventual disaccreditation were not of their making, but were the culmination of decades of errant, self-serving individuals, faulty decision-making, and, at times, outright neglect and corruption by a few district officials. (Drummond, 2006, p.1)

Prior to the deaccreditation of Compton Community College, the College served a large Latino and African American student body of 10,246 students in the 2005-2006 academic year (California Community College Data Mart, 2009). Of those students 47% and 48.9% were Latino and African American respectively (California Community College Data Mart, 2009).

As Chancellor Marshall Drummond described, the Compton Community College deaccreditation was not the making of the faculty and staff. However, many unanswered questions and unconfirmed hypotheses remain regarding the deaccreditation of Compton Community College. To address these unanswered questions and hypotheses, the researcher examines the deaccreditation of Compton Community College through Elizabeth Kubler-Ross' *On Death and Dying* (1969) grief construct. The Kubler-Ross grief construct examines death and dying through five stages: *denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance* for terminally ill patients. In this study, the researcher contends that the grief construct can be applied profitably to the deaccreditation of Compton Community College and, in particular, to understanding how the employees from each employment group responded to the deaccreditation of their institution. Table 1 illustrates the timeline for each stage of the grief construct and how each stage applies to the deaccreditation of Compton Community College.

Table 1. Grief Construct Applied to the Deaccreditation of Compton Community College

Kubler-Ross Grief Stages	Compton Community College Deaccreditation Events	Timeline
DENIAL	Accrediting Commission Notifications: show cause and deaccreditation	January 2005- November 2005
ANGER	Deaccreditation appeal is denied	November 2005- February 2006
BARGAINING	Bargaining with state legislators, community members, the California Community College Chancellors, and the Accrediting Commission to keep the doors of the institution open	November 2005- June 30, 2006
DEPRESSION	Lay-off notices received and employees prepare for possible closure	March 2006- August 2006
ACCEPTANCE	Personnel accept the closure of the institution	May 2006- August 21, 2006

Interpretation Through the Kubler-Ross Grief Construct

Several hypotheses proposed in this study are anchored to Kubler-Ross' grief construct. Together these hypotheses form an initial model of the beliefs, feelings, emotions, and perceptions of the employees of Compton Community College. In turn, the grief stages map onto specific events and time spans.

Denial. The *denial* stage of the deaccreditation of Compton Community College occurred from January 2005 through November 2005. On January 31, 2005 Compton Community College was placed on Show Cause by the Accrediting Commission. Compton Community College responded to the Show Cause report and was later visited by the Show Cause Visiting Team on April 14, 2005 through April 15, 2005. Compton Community College was notified on June 17, 2005 by the Accrediting Commission that the institution was to be deaccredited. In response, Compton Community College submitted an appeal to the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, anticipating that the June 2005 decision would be overturned by the Accrediting Commission through the appeal process

in November of 2005. Relevant to this stage, the researcher has several fine grained hypotheses that were studied. The researcher asserts the following hypotheses to explain why Compton Community College District employees were in *denial* that the deaccreditation of the institution would occur. First, and most important, the employees did not expect that the deaccreditation would actually happen to Compton Community College since no other community college in California had previously been deaccredited. Second, the College employees expected the California Community College Chancellors Office, through the state appointed Special Trustee, to respond to the deficiencies reported in the June 17, 2005 letter from the Accrediting Commission and assert that Compton Community College should remain open and accredited. Finally, the faculty felt the deaccreditation would not occur because the original report from the Accrediting Commission placed the college on Show Cause due to fiscal mismanagement.

Anger. On November 18, 2005, Compton Community College received a letter from the Accrediting Commission reaffirming the deaccreditation of the institution. The researcher hypothesizes that the *anger* stage of the Kubler-Ross grief construct began on this date, among Compton Community College District personnel, and continued among some employees through February of 2006. The researcher explored several hypotheses about the nature of *anger* during this stage. First, the employees felt *anger* towards the Accrediting Commission, the Chancellor of the California Community Colleges, the local governing board of Compton Community College District, local and state-wide politicians, and the Special Trustee for not preventing the deaccreditation of their institution. Second, during the *anger* stage, each employment group began to blame others for the deaccreditation of the institution. For example, the faculty blamed the

administrators for their lack of oversight of the campus. The administrators and the staff blamed the faculty for poor teaching habits. The faculty blamed administrators for not providing sufficient funds to support the academic quality of the institution. The faculty and administrators, in turn, blamed the classified staff for lack of professionalism and lack of customer service to students. The faculty, staff, and administrators blamed the former administrators for mismanagement of the college. Finally the faculty and administrators blamed the maintenance and operation department, which are members of the staff group, for lack of cleanliness of the campus.

In addition to the *anger* among the employment groups, community members felt *anger* about the deaccreditation of the institution. They organized fellow community members, local politicians, faculty, staff, and administrators to form the “Save Compton Community College” organization which was an affiliate of the Concerned Citizens of Compton organization. This organization met every Thursday evening from November, 2005, through June, 2006, to discuss the deaccreditation of Compton Community College.

Bargaining. The formation of the Save Compton Community College organization is when the researcher asserts the *bargaining* stage of the Kubler-Ross grief construct began for the employees: starting in November, 2005, and concluding in April, 2006. In association with the *bargaining* stage the researcher has several hypotheses that were studied. First, the researcher asserts the employees were seeking assistance from their union leadership, local and state-wide politicians, community members, and state-wide organizations, they were affiliated with, to help save their institution from being deaccredited. Second, the employees were expecting some individual or special legislation to save the institution from deaccreditation. The faculty worked closely with

the Special Trustee on the special legislation: Assembly Bill 318. Third, they expected, through their local and state-wide politicians, to exert political pressure on the Accrediting Commission to overturn the previous decisions.

Depression. The *depression* stage of the Kubler-Ross grief construct began in March, 2006, and concluded in August, 2006. This stage, which the researcher asserts overlaps with the *bargaining* stage, began with the layoff notices each faculty, staff, and administrator received from the interim President/Superintendent of Compton Community College on March 26, 2006. A subsequent hearing with the administrative law judge on April 3, 2006 approved the layoffs of the Compton Community College District employees effective June 30, 2006. Many employees appeared to be in *depression* about the possible loss of their employment after the spring semester of 2006 and the uncertainty of classes being offered in the summer of 2006.

During this stage, the researcher asserts that all employment groups began to seek guidance regarding their employment status. The administrators were in regular discussions with the President/Superintendent regarding their employment for the summer of 2006 and upcoming academic year. The faculty were in discussions with the their faculty leaders, the faculty division chair assigned to their academic division, the administrator responsible for their academic division, the college President/Superintendent, and the Special Trustee regarding their employment status for the summer of 2006 and for the upcoming academic year. Staff were in discussion with their labor leaders, their immediate supervisor, the administrator responsible for their department/program, the college President/Superintendent, and the Special Trustee regarding their employment status for the summer of 2006 and for the upcoming academic year.

Finally, during this stage, the faculty, staff, and administrators were in *depression* trying to find answers to why the College was deaccredited and knowing that June 30, 2006 would be their last day of employment with the district. In the *depression* stage the employment groups gave up hope that the institution would survive.

Acceptance. The *acceptance* phase of the Kubler-Ross grief construct began in May 2006 through August 21, 2006. The researcher's hypothesis is that the *depression* and the *acceptance* stages of the grief construct overlapped. During the *acceptance* stage the researcher asserts the California Community College Chancellor's Office, through the Special Trustee, was working with legislators on the passage of the special legislation, Assembly Bill 318, which would keep the doors open for this institution. The Special Trustee approved an instructional services agreement with Santa Monica College on June 5, 2006 for summer 2006. The employment groups were pleased with this agreement because they would have employment for the summer of 2006.

The employment groups were satisfied that Assembly Bill 318 was signed by the Governor of the State of California on June 30, 2006 because it allowed for educational services to be provided on the Compton Community College site by an accredited college. Compton Community College District employment groups accepted the death of the institution because their employment status would remain while providing services for El Camino College. The death of Compton Community College occurred when the Special Trustee approved the closure of the institution and the agreement with El Camino Community College on August 21, 2006. The agreement with El Camino College was effective August 22, 2006. Table 2 summarizes the researcher's hypotheses on how each personnel group was affected during each stage of the grief construct.

Table 2. Researcher’s Hypotheses on How the Deaccreditation of Compton Community College District Affected the Employment Groups

Grief Stages	Deaccreditation Event	Administrators Beliefs/ Emotions	Faculty Beliefs/Emotions	Staff Beliefs/Emotions
DENIAL	Accrediting Commission notifications: Show cause and deaccreditation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did not believe the deaccreditation would happen • Hoped the deaccreditation would be overturned through the appeals process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did not believe the deaccreditation would happen • Hoped the deaccreditation would be overturned through the appeals process • Felt the deaccreditation had nothing to do with classroom instruction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did not believe the deaccreditation would happen • Hoped the deaccreditation would be overturned through the appeals process
ANGER	Deaccreditation appeal is denied	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Felt anger toward: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Accrediting Commission ○ The Chancellor of the California Community Colleges ○ The Compton Community College District Board of Trustees members ○ Local and statewide political leaders ○ The Special Trustee • Blamed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Faculty ○ Staff ○ Administrators ○ Former administrators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Felt anger toward: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Accrediting Commission ○ The Chancellor of the California Community Colleges ○ The Compton Community College District Board of Trustees members ○ Local and statewide political leaders ○ The Special Trustee • Blamed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Faculty ○ Staff ○ Administrators ○ Former administrators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Felt anger toward: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Accrediting Commission ○ The Chancellor of the California Community Colleges ○ The Compton Community College District Board of Trustees members ○ Local and statewide political leaders ○ The Special Trustee • Blamed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Faculty ○ Staff ○ Administrators ○ Former administrators

BARGAINING	Keeping the doors open	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sought guidance from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ State-wide administrator organizations ○ Other administrators in the state ○ Local and statewide labor leaders ○ Community members ○ Local and statewide politicians • Supported the special legislation to save the institution • Requested local and statewide politicians to place pressure on the accrediting commission to overturn their decision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sought guidance from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ State-wide faculty organizations ○ Local and statewide labor leaders ○ Community members ○ Local and statewide politicians • Work closely with the Special Trustee to gather support for the special legislation to save the institution • Supported the special legislation to save the institution • Requested local and statewide politicians to place pressure on the accrediting commission to overturn their decision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sought guidance from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ State-wide staff organizations ○ Local and statewide labor leaders ○ Community members ○ Local and statewide politicians • Supported the special legislation to save the institution • Requested local and statewide politicians to place pressure on the accrediting commission to overturn their decision
DEPRESSION	Possible closure of the institution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Received layoff notices • Sought guidance from the President/ Superintendent and the Special Trustee regarding their future employment with the college • Concerned about how the institution was going to provide accredited 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Received layoff notices • Sought guidance from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Faculty leadership (Academic Senate and labor leaders) ○ The division chair of their department ○ The administrator who was responsible for their academic division 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Received layoff notices • Sought guidance from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Labor leaders ○ Immediate supervisor ○ The administrator, who was responsible for their area. ○ The President/ Superintendent ○ The Special Trustee

		<p>courses during the summer and fall of 2006</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of hope that the institution would be remain. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The President/ Superintendent ○ The Special Trustee • Concerned if they would have employment for the summer and fall of 2006 • Loss of hope that the institution would be remain. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerned if they would have employment for the summer and fall of 2006. • Loss of hope that the institution would be remain.
ACCEPTANCE	Closure of the institution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Satisfied with the passage of Assembly Bill 318 • Were pleased the partnership with Santa Monica College, for the summer of 2006, because they would have employment • Accepted the deaccreditation of Compton Community College, and the agreement with El Camino College, because they were allowed to maintain their employment status while providing services for El Camino College 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Satisfied with the passage of Assembly Bill 318 • Were pleased the partnership with Santa Monica College, for the summer of 2006, because they would have employment • Accepted the deaccreditation of Compton Community College, and the agreement with El Camino College, because they were allowed to maintain their employment status while teaching El Camino College courses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Satisfied with the passage of Assembly Bill 318 • Were pleased the partnership with Santa Monica College, for the summer of 2006, because they would have employment • Accepted the deaccreditation of Compton Community College, and the agreement with El Camino College, because they were allowed to maintain their employment status while providing services for El Camino College

Statement of the Problem

The full range of issues, behavior, and questions surrounding the deaccreditation of Compton Community College remains unclear. There are currently over 100 community colleges in the State of California, but at the time of this study, Compton Community College is the only one under the authority of a Special Trustee. In addition, Compton Community College District is the only community college district in the state of California that has received a 30 million dollar line of credit from the California state legislature to continue its operations under the auspices of special legislation, Assembly Bill 318 (California Education Code, 2010).

Research Questions

The following three questions are explored in this research study:

1. Do the beliefs, feelings, emotions, and perceptions of the Compton Community College District employees conform to the stages of the Kubler-Ross grief construct?
2. What variations exist in the grief process among the different employee groups of Compton Community College District?
3. Were the stages of the grief construct functional or dysfunctional in helping the personnel negotiate change in the institution?

Significance of the Study

This dissertation seeks to stimulate an honest and thought provoking discussion regarding the deaccreditation of Compton Community College. This dissertation has implications for scholars, policy makers, and higher education faculty, staff, and administrators. The significant beliefs, feelings, emotions, and perceptions of Compton

Community College employees in this research study might assist other higher education institutions in finding ways to manage their organization through the deaccreditation or potential deaccreditation process of their institution. This research study will help model likely changes and perhaps clarify anticipated actions, beliefs, feelings, emotions, and perceptions of employees who are coping with the deaccreditation of their institution.

This research study establishes a new way of understanding the deaccreditation process and the impact of deaccreditation on higher education employees. In addition, this study will contribute to the dialogue on deaccreditation of institutions of higher education. From this study community colleges can learn from the deaccreditation experience of Compton Community College and, through the research findings from this study, provide assistance to institutions prior to their deaccreditation thereby helping them to avoid or minimize real or perceived loss.

The Study

Description. This study examined the deaccreditation of Compton Community College through the Kubler-Ross (1969) grief construct by examining the five stages of death and dying from the perspective of Compton Community College District employees (i.e. faculty, staff, and administrators). For this study we were able to examine the perspective of employees who were employed at Compton Community College prior to the deaccreditation of the institution. Relationships established throughout the researcher's current employment with Compton Community College District provided avenues for identifying and requesting permission to notify employees of this study. This study was conducted in three phases:

Survey. During the first phase of the study, electronic emails were sent to all current Compton Community College District employees who were employed at Compton Community College from January, 2005, through September, 2006. The researcher requested their participation in the study and their completion of an online survey about the deaccreditation of Compton Community College. Each member of the employment group was asked to complete the online survey for this phase of the study. Through the survey, the researcher was able to identify the employment group of participants by asking them what position they held from January, 2005, through September, 2006. In addition, the researcher asked several questions of the employees about their beliefs, feelings, emotions, and perceptions towards the events that occurred during the deaccreditation process of Compton Community College. The online survey questions are included as Appendix A. From the completed online surveys the researcher randomly select employees for participation in the second and third phase of this study.

Interviews. The second phase of the study consistent of one-on-one semi-structured interviews with four employees from each of the employment groups. The semi-structured interview questions allowed additional discussion between the participants and the researcher. During the one-on-one interviews the researcher utilized open-ended questions to understand more fully the beliefs, feelings, emotions, and perceptions of employees during the deaccreditation process of Compton Community College. The one-on-one interview questions are included as Appendix B. The one-on-one interview sessions was conducted in rooms on the Compton Community College District site.

Focus groups. The final phase of data collection included focus groups from each employment group. Each focus group included four participants. The participants for the focus groups were randomly selected from the survey participants by the researcher. The focus group participants were asked a series of open-ended and semi-structured questions to understand if the model being proposed in this study reflects the beliefs, feelings, emotions, and perceptions of employees during the deaccreditation process of Compton Community College. The final version of the focus groups questions is included as Appendix C. The focus group sessions was conducted in rooms on the Compton Community College District site.

CHAPTER II–REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

In examining the deaccreditation of Compton Community College through the Kubler-Ross grief construct, the researcher begins this review of the literature with the evolution of community colleges in the United States and particularly in California. Then the researcher explores relevant literature that examines the Kubler-Ross grief construct for this study.

Missions and Functions of Community Colleges

The Morrill Act passed in 1862 establishing land grant colleges to provide practical and skill-based higher education in the United States (Lonozo, 1994). By the turn of the twentieth century the first junior colleges were established. At this time, the purpose and mission of community colleges was to provide a low cost and accessible alternative for students for their first two years of college/university education (Lonozo, 1994). As defined in the book *American Community College*, the mission of community colleges was to provide transfer, career, general, remedial, and community education (Cohen & Brawer, 1989). Over generations, community college education in the United States evolved from providing liberal arts and transfer education (Lonozo, 1994) to offering a wide variety of programs including; technical and general education, community service (Knoell, 1982), and finally comprehensive education focusing on a broad student clientele. By providing comprehensive education community colleges were able to provide services to all types of students. As Knoell (1982) explained:

No longer was it possible to say that a certain type of student was the norm... The evolution into the comprehensive community college was characterized by a vast increase in the heterogeneity of the student body with respect to age, ethnicity,

readiness or ability to do college-level work, previous educational attainment, interest and goals and objectives being pursued. (Knoell, 1982, p.7)

Currently, community colleges provide many types of educational services to students: career education, general education, remedial education, and community education. As the evolution of community college education began in the United States it has had a major impact on the state of California.

Community Colleges in California

The first community college in California was established by Charles L. McLane in 1910 in the City of Fresno. In 1921, the California Legislatures used funds from the Federal Oil and Mineral Act, through the California Junior College Act, to create a junior college fund (Fresno City College, 2009). These funds were used to support the operations of a locally governed community college district which were independent of the public high schools system (Fresno City College, 2009). The California Junior College Act of 1921 served as a model for other states as they moved towards community colleges becoming fiscally sound and policy-driven organizations (Vaughan, 2006). The most significant policy that affected higher education in California, and most importantly community colleges, was the State of California Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 88, approved in 1959 by the California State Legislature, which resulted in the creation of a Master Plan for Higher Education in the State of California.

The Master Plan made community colleges, for the first time, an official segment of higher education in California and has been studied throughout the country (Carnegie Foundation, 1970). The California Master Plan for higher education included recommendations for the development, expansion, and integration of the facilities,

curriculum, and standards of higher education in community colleges, state colleges, the University of California, and other institutions of higher education to meet the state's needs (Carnegie Foundation, 1967). Although the California Master Plan did not provide specific recommendations for community colleges in California with respect to admissions policies, the California Education Code requires community colleges to accept any high school graduate and any other person over eighteen years of age (California Education Code, 2010). In addition, the California Master Plan noted that California Community Colleges were to be governed by local boards. In 1967, following the development of the California Master Plan, the legislature created the Board of Governors and the California Community College Chancellor's Office to provide statewide leadership to California's community colleges.

The Board currently has 17 members, appointed by the Governor, with the advisement and consent of the California State Senate. Twelve members are appointed to six-year terms and two student members, two faculty members, and one classified member are appointed to two-year terms (California Education Code, 2010). In California, local governing boards govern each community college district; the local governing board members are elected by the residents within the particular governing board district. Prior to the deaccreditation of Compton Community College, the college was governed by Compton Community College District Board of Trustees. Currently, residents of Compton Community College District elect members to the Board of Trustees, however the under California Assembly Bill 61, their authority was suspended.

Application of the Kubler-Ross Grief Construct on Compton Community College

Hoffman and Wallace's (2008) research on the psychological consequences of the deaccreditation process, of Compton Community College, draws upon Elizabeth Kubler-Ross' Death and dying (1969) grief construct. One of the authors, Hoffman, was a member of the Compton Community College full-time faculty prior to and during the year of the deaccreditation. At the time of this study, Hoffman remains a part-time faculty member at this institution. The Hoffman and Wallace (2008) research was conducted from a personal perspective of a faculty member regarding the deaccreditation of Compton Community College. The beliefs and emotions expressed by the faculty in Hoffman and Wallace (2008) provide insight into personal perspectives of Compton Community College faculty during the deaccreditation process.

Denial. Hoffman and Wallace (2008) found that, prior to the deaccreditation of Compton Community College, faculty were in *denial* for many years about the capability of the administration of the institution. According to Hoffman and Wallace (2008), the faculty believed the financial irregularities found would be corrected, by the administration, but those irregularities were not corrected. The faculty believed the campus was neglected and the facilities were lacking. Hoffman and Wallace (2008) research characterized the facilities at Compton Community College as the following:

There were things that most faculty at other schools cannot relate to, such as unattended and filthy bathrooms, grounds littered with trash, etc. Students were actually going home during breaks to use the bathrooms. And what little lighting we had during the evening hours made students (and faculty) feel extremely vulnerable. (Hoffman & Wallace, 2008, p. 609)

The faculty at Compton Community College was in *denial* for many years about the capabilities of the administration and the poor state of facilities.

Furthermore, according to Hoffman and Wallace (2008), the faculty was in *denial* that the deaccreditation of their institution would actually occur. Hoffman and Wallace's (2008) research characterized faculty beliefs and emotions during the *denial* follows:

We as a faculty tried to deny the possibility that our school would actually be closed down. Still . . . the images remained of driving to school one morning to find the perimeter gates padlocked. We frankly did not want to believe the inevitable. There were just too many people saying to us: "It's a bluff . . . the state could never shut down a school . . . Don't worry about it!" So we didn't worry about it until it was too late. Nobody wants to believe that a school could actually close down; there are just too many potentially positive qualities about a school to allow anything like that to happen. (Hoffman & Wallace, 2008, p. 609)

According to Hoffman and Wallace (2008) the faculty remained in *denial* about deaccreditation of their institution "until the certified letters arrived" (Hoffman & Wallace, 2008, p. 609). The certified letters referred to by Hoffman and Wallace (2008) were the layoff notices the faculty received from Compton Community College by certified mail. Hoffman and Wallace contend the faculty was in *denial* prior to the deaccreditation and through March, 2006.

Anger. Hoffman and Wallace (2008) discuss in the *anger* stage how the *denial* stage changed into faculty "resentment and anger" (Hoffman & Wallace, 2008, p.610). The faculty had anger towards the Accrediting Commission for the deaccreditation of

their institution. The faculty would rather have seen the institution placed on probation.

Hoffman and Wallace (2008) note the faculty anger towards the accrediting commission:

The faculty (and the community) became incensed that the state accreditation team would want to place our school in jeopardy by not placing our school on probation, but terminating the accreditation. We felt as though we were under the microscope and that we were being picked on unfairly. (Hoffman & Wallace, 2008, p. 610)

As the faculty began to become more aware of the accreditation problems of Compton Community College, their beliefs and emotions intensified with the *anger* they were experiencing. “People felt that the school was again being targeted because of race, ethnicity, or low income status” (Hoffman & Wallace, 2008, p.610). Hoffman and Wallace (2008) characterized their *anger* as:

We thought how can the state just come in here and arbitrarily take away our accreditation? It will never happen . . . the community won’t allow it!” Other questions were directed to anybody that would listen and included, “Why us? Why is the state picking on Compton College when there are many, many other schools with more serious administrative or curriculum discrepancies? (Hoffman & Wallace, 2008, p. 610)

Furthermore, Hoffman and Wallace (2008) suggest the *anger* overshadowed or prevented the faculty from examining deeper issues among themselves. According to Hoffman and Wallace (2008), the *anger* prevented the faculty from finding effective solutions to their problem which was the accreditation status of their institution.

During the *anger* stage, according to Hoffman and Wallace (2008), the faculty had feelings of helplessness. They felt the school was “dying a slow, lingering, and painful death” (Hoffman & Wallace, 2008, p.611). The faculty had anger and was feeling helplessness because they could not change what was happening to their institution.

Negotiation. The *negotiation* stage, Hoffman and Wallace (2008) describe how the faculty recognized the problems of the institution. Hoffman and Wallace (2008) explain:

We at the college now tried to negotiate with the state. We could create new student learning outcomes (SLOs), revise our courses, improve the quality of teaching, and so on. We were ready to jump through any hoop the state was about to put before us. But the reality was that it was too little, too late. (Hoffman & Wallace, 2008, p. 609)

In Hoffman and Wallace (2008), there is no timeline of when the events in the *negotiation* stage occurred. According to Hoffman and Wallace (2008) some faculty members, during this stage, were willing to try anything to re-establish the accreditation of the institution. Some of the faculty members began to look for new employment and some applied for positions with other institutions. In addition, some faculty members simply ignored the problems of the institution and continued to maintain that there was no problem and “things would be fine.” (Hoffman & Wallace, 2008, p. 611)

Depression. In this stage, according to Hoffman and Wallace (2008), Compton Community College faculty began to give up hope and was depressed about the deaccreditation of their institution. The authors state: “After weeks, months, and, in some cases, years of trying to change or improve a health condition or failing school, people

just give up” (Hoffman & Wallace, 2008, p.612). The faculty felt they did everything possible to maintain the accreditation of their institution. According to Hoffman and Wallace (2008), the faculty unsuccessfully appealed to the community and to the local politicians for help. However, the faculty knew the deaccreditation was forthcoming. Some faculty members transferred to other institutions and some accepted the college was not going to improve. The quote below from Hoffman and Wallace (2008) characterized the faculty beliefs and emotions during the final stage:

We soon began to feel as though the school closure was our collective destiny. Unfortunately, in Kubler-Ross’ fourth stage of depression many people are simply unable to move on to acceptance. This was the case with many faculty. As a result, they transferred to other schools and simply resigned themselves to our school never improving. (Hoffman & Wallace, 2008, p.612)

The faculty at Compton Community College was depressed about the status of their institution and simple lost hope the college would maintain its accreditation.

Acceptance. In the acceptance stage the faculty began to work closely with El Camino College to make positive changes for the future (Hoffman & Wallace, 2008):

I do believe that the faculty at ECC-Compton Center has now accepted the fact that things as they once were can never exist again. This is definitely a good thing for all of us. We have accepted our fate and our destiny and are working to create a better institution. The faculty, I believe, will create a stronger institution for our community. (Hoffman & Wallace, 2008, p.612)

In the end, the faculty accepted the death of Compton Community College. However, Hoffman and Wallace (2008) fail to explain why the faculty ultimately accepted the deaccreditation of their institution.

The Hoffman and Wallace (2008) research conforms to the Kubler-Ross grief construct. However, the researcher for this study contends all employment group's beliefs, feelings, emotions, and perceptions needed to be examined to fully understand how they conform to the grief construct. The researcher has some concerns with the findings of Hoffman. First, the researcher found little evidence of how the research for this study was conducted. During some points the authors uses the term "I" when discussing the beliefs and emotions of the faculty. This may suggest the conclusions from the Hoffman and Wallace research are largely self-reported. Second, the researcher found no list of events to support when the faculty was experiencing each stage of the grief construct. Third, Hoffman and Wallace (2008) do not provide evidence on how the faculty accepted the deaccreditation of their institution.

Theoretical Framework: Kubler-Ross Grief Construct

Hoffman and Wallace (2008) provide insight into what occurred during the deaccreditation of Compton Community College by using the Kubler-Ross (1969) grief construct. The Hoffman and Wallace (2008) study showed how the faculty reacted to the deaccreditation. For the purposes of this study we too used the theoretical framework of the Kubler-Ross (1969) grief construct.

Kubler-Ross (1969) identifies the five stages of death and dying as *denial*, *anger*, *bargaining*, *depression*, and *acceptance*. Kubler-Ross describes the grief stages as experienced by terminally ill patients: The first stage is *denial*, during which Kubler-Ross

states patients feel, “No, not me, it cannot be true” (Kubler-Ross, 1969, p. 34). This stage is characterized by Kubler-Ross (1969) as a reaction and serves as an initial reminder of one’s mortality. Hoffman and Wallace (2008) describe this stage as, “How could this happen to us?” because the faculty was in *denial* that the deaccreditation of Compton Community College could really occur.

The second stage is *anger*, which Kubler-Ross describes as “displaced in all directions and projected onto the environment” (Kubler-Ross, 1969, p. 34). Hoffman and Wallace (2008) describe this stage as “Why are they picking on us?” According to Hoffman and Wallace (2008), the faculty and the community were trying to understand why the Accrediting Commission was placing Compton Community College on probation and recommending deaccreditation of the institution.

The third stage of the grief construct is the *bargaining* stage. Kubler-Ross (1969) describes this stage as when a dying person is seeking to postpone his or her death. Differing from Kubler-Ross, Hoffman and Wallace (2008) describe the third stage as *negotiation*. During this stage, Hoffman and Wallace (2008) explored among the faculty the question “Can anyone help us?” The authors suggested that the faculty were asking for help, and trying to do anything to avoid the deaccreditation of Compton Community College.

The fourth stage is *depression*, which Kubler-Ross subdivides into two types: reactive depression and preparatory depression. Reactive depression is associated with the guilt from the past; preparatory depression is the thought of future loss that cannot be avoided (Kubler-Ross, 1969). Hoffman and Wallace (2008) described the *depression*

stage among the faculty as “poor us.” During this stage the faculty gave up hope that Compton Community College would avoid deaccreditation.

The fifth and final stage is *acceptance*, which Kubler-Ross characterized as a lack of emotion. Given sufficient time for preparation, the dying can approach death neither depressed nor angry (Kubler-Ross, 1969). Hoffman and Wallace (2008) described this stage as “See us now!” as the faculty began to accept the deaccreditation of the institution and move forward toward positive change.

What remains unknown from the research findings of Hoffman and Wallace (2008) is the perspective variations among the campus personnel groups, which include the faculty, staff, and administrators who were employed at Compton Community College during the deaccreditation process. The researcher contends the deaccreditation process occurred during January 31, 2005 through August 2006, after the college received notice from the Accrediting Commission that their accreditation was being terminated. For this study, the researcher examined the grief construct through with each personnel group.

Critique of the Kubler-Ross Grief Construct

Since the publication of the Elizabeth Kubler-Ross’ *On Death and Dying* (1969) several researchers have studied this model and some have provided their own critical analysis. The Kubler-Ross model has been utilized in studies and across several academic disciplines. In the article “Coping with Dying: Lessons that we should and should not learn from the work of Elizabeth Kubler-Ross,” Corr (1993) suggests that the five stages of death and dying are limited. Corr (1993) suggests that there is no definitive proof that humans cope with death in five stages or that psychological processes of dying are

interlinked as stages in a process. However, Kelly (1988), through the analyzing of Arthur Koestler's book *Darkness at Noon*, suggests that the Kubler-Ross grief construct can be applied to more than just death from illness. Kelly (1988) applied the Kubler-Ross grief construct while performing a psychological analysis of the final days of the central character in *Darkness at Noon*. The central character in the *Darkness at Noon* is an incarcerated prisoner condemned to die. Kelly (1988) asserts that the parallels between Kubler-Ross and the central character from *Darkness at Noon* are similar and the death of the central character follows the Kubler-Ross grief construct.

Corr (1993) suggests that individuals do not die in a particular way or order. The researcher agrees. For example, the deaccreditation of Compton Community College occurred differently than the deaccreditation for most institutions of higher education. Compton Community College was placed on Show Cause by the Accrediting Commission by passing the probation and warning steps in the deaccreditation process. According to the letter Compton Community College received from the Accrediting Commission dated January 31, 2005, the college was placed on Show Cause following the Commission review of the Special Visit team report on July 21, 2004 (Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, 2005). As Hoffman and Wallace (2008) mentioned, the faculty felt that the Accrediting Commission should have placed the College on probation. For this study, the researcher believes some of the grief construct stages of the deaccreditation of Compton Community College overlap, which suggests the grieving process for Compton Community College personnel occurred differently from terminally ill patients and incarcerated prisoners condemned to die.

The Corr (1993) article also suggested lessons learned from Kubler-Ross grief construct such as: (1) people who are dying have unfinished business left that needs to be addressed; (2) we must listen to people who are coping with death, and; (3) we must learn from those who are dying and coping in order to know ourselves. Corr (1993) suggests that this model is inadequate because coping and dying should empower individuals and provide individuals with the opportunity to take charge of the change process.

Relevant Research that Utilized the Kubler-Ross Grief Construct

Even though there is no conclusive proof that humans cope with death in five stages, there have been studies that have utilized the Kubler-Ross grief construct model on individuals and organizations. For example, Finley and Lee (1981) utilized the grief construct while examining the impact termination has on executives. Blau (2006) and Blau (2007) utilized the grief construct while examining victim response to worksite/function closure. Perlman & Takacs, (1990), Schoolfield & Ordunda (1994) Daugird & Spencer, (1996), and Kearny & Hyle, (2003) utilized the grief construct while examining organizational change. Peca (1994) examined the individual change process in school restructuring through the grief construct. Witcher (1987) utilized this model to explore the experiences of parents of disabled children. Finally, Hoffman and Wallace (2008) utilized this model to examine the experiences of Compton Community College District faculty as they dealt with the deaccreditation of their institution.

Workforce Closure Literature that Utilized the Grief Construct. In the Finley and Lee (1981) article “The Terminated Executive: It’s Like Dying,” the authors discuss the stressful impact termination has on executives. Finley and Lee (1981) proposed an outplacement counseling model based on the psychological behavior stages corporate

executive experience with being terminated from their positions. According to Finley and Lee (1981), executives experience seven stages in response to being terminated from their position. The stages proposed by Finley and Lee (1981) are similar to the Kubler-Ross grief construct. Finley and Lee (1981) state that these stages are “sequential and may vary in their intensity and duration” (Finley & Lee, 1981). After being terminated, the first level of responses includes the first four stages, which Finley and Lee (1981) describe as the Primary-Immediate Response Stage. In the first level the executive experiences *shock*. During the *shock* stage executives are in a panic, which leads to the executive feeling confused, which in turn may lead to their inability to think clearly at work (Finley & Lee, 1981). The second stage is *denial or debrief*, similar to the Kubler-Ross *denial* stage, where executives are in *denial* that termination could really happen to them. The third stage is *relief*, which Finley and Lee (1981) describes as a sense of *relief* when it does occur. Since many executives who are going to be terminated know beforehand, for up to six months prior to being informed of their termination, they have relief when it finally happens. The fourth stage is *anger*, as Finley and Lee (1981) describes, the executive’s *anger* is both “inward and outward directed”, since the executives are angry about being: “rejected, abused, and unfairly treated” (Finley & Lee, 1981). Finley and Lee states that the *anger* is fueled by the executives feeling frustrated and guilty for not resolving their employment status with their employer prior to their termination (Finley & Lee, 1981).

Finley and Lee (1981) describes the second level as the Secondary-Immediate Response Stages. The first stage is *bargaining*, which is described as a stage when the executives are attempting to reverse the termination process. According to Finley and Lee

(1981) the *bargaining* of executives is motivated by their feelings of disbelief that they are going to be terminated. Furthermore, during the *bargaining* stages, the executives are feeling guilty for allowing the possible termination to occur and they are angry for not having the ability to save themselves from receiving a termination notice (Finley & Lee, 1981). The next stage is *depression*, which Finley and Lee (1981) describe as the unfamiliar experience of executives being in a position where they are not able to make decisions. This experience can also be described as being in a position where the decision is out your hands. During the *depression* stage, executives have difficulty sleeping; they begin to have anxiety and begin to withdraw from others at the workplace (Finley & Lee, 1981). According to Finley and Lee (1981), it would be unhealthy for executives to take a vacation or time off during the *depression* stage because the time off would only add to their *depression*. While on vacation the employees would continue to think about what is happening at the workplace. The *shock* and *depression* tends to grow as the executive experiences time away from the workplace. The final stage is *acceptance* and, according Finley and Lee (1981), during this stage the executive obtains a sense of peace and is no longer feeling depression or anger about their termination from the workplace.

Furthermore, Finley and Lee (1981) provide three decision points to assist with the job loss experience for executives describing a “successful model for rebuilding the executive’s ego and their self-image. In addition to providing the decision points Finley and Lee (1981), provide counseling strategies that are associated with each of the decision points. The first decision is placing the termination event into perspective for the executives. During this decision point, the employees’ state of mind is in the *shock*, *denial* and *disbelief*, *relief*, and *anger* stages. To assist executives in placing their

termination events into perspective Finley and Lee (1981) recommend the following counseling strategies: assist them in identifying their feelings, establish trust, establish credibility, help them prioritize their needs, and help them deal with their termination with their family members and friends. The second decision point is for the executive to seek and receive support and assistance. During the second decision point the executive's state of mind is in *bargaining* and *depression*. The type of support and assistance the executive receives depends on the executive. However, Finley and Lee (1981) stress how important it is for the caregiver (i.e. the outplacement counselor) to recognize and deal with their own grieving process because this will influence the method of counseling services they use with the terminated employee. Finley and Lee (1981) recommend the following counseling strategies: assess their family patterns, assess their "sociometric" stability, assess their significant others as professional resources, and finally provide them with self-help literature.

The final decision point provided by Finley and Lee (1981) is the Resumption of Productive Strategies where the executives' state of mind is in *acceptance*. In this decision point the terminated executives begin to rebuild their "worlds through positive physical and mental activities" (Finley & Lee, 1981). To assist executives in this decision point, Finley and Lee (1981) recommend the following counseling strategies: assist the terminated executives with developing a plan, help them redefine their job seeking skills, help them develop a resume, provide them with job announcements, encourage them to exercise and or stay fit, and assist them with their interviewing skills.

Finally, the Finley and Lee (1981) proposed outplacement counseling model was developed for outplacement counselors who assist terminated executives. However, the

authors recommend that this model be used on any employee who has been terminated because being terminated from an employment position is a “hurting process” (Finley & Lee, 1981). With regards to this proposed study it will be interesting to explore, during the deaccreditation process of Compton Community College, if employees received assistance from others and what type of assistance they received while dealing with the possible termination of their employment.

Components of the Finley and Lee (1981) study were utilized in the Blau (2006) article “A process model for understanding victim responses to worksite/function closure.” The central components of this model were the *denial, anger, bargaining, depression, exploration and acceptance* stages. Blau (2006) discusses how *denial* is the first emotion experienced during the shock to employees when they hear about the possible worksite/function closure. The second emotion experienced by employees is *anger* which, according to Blau (2006), is associated with a sense of betrayal. Employees who experience this emotion are usually upset at their employers. Blau (2006) shows how the employees feel with the following statement: “the employee held up their end of the job,” i.e. showing up to work, working hard, but the employer did not” (Blau, 2006). The *bargaining* emotion can be viewed as an attempt to reverse the termination progress for employees. Similar to Hoffman and Wallace (2008), employees who are affected by worksite/function closures are trying to do whatever it takes to keep their employment. According to Blau (2006), during the *depression* emotion stage employees feel sadness and withdrawal due to loss of control. In the *exploration* emotion, employees have a sense of hope for the future. Employees feel that some type of good will come from this opportunity. After exploration emotion then comes *acceptance*, which Blau (2006)

explains as a stage when employees are moving from destructive to constructive grieving. Several factors are associated with this model: the personal factors affecting the grieving process; situational factors that affect the grieving process; victim's responses during the closure process; perceived job alternatives; immediate victim response after closure, and boundary conditions of the proposed closure. Both the Finley and Lee (1981) and Blau (2006) studies provide insight into how the employees of Compton Community College District might have been feeling during the deaccreditation process of Compton Community College.

Organization Change Literature that Utilized the Grief Construct. Perlman and Takacs' (1990) article "10 Stages of Change" utilized the grief construct and added five additional stages while examining the personal and emotional issues that are associated with the change process. The purpose of the article was to provide assistance and help to executives, managers, and supervisors by providing them with tools to make decisions about how they deal with change within their own organizations. The Perlman and Takacs (1990) article is an expanded version of the Kubler-Ross's grief construct and begins with the *equilibrium* stage. Perlman and Takacs (1990), describes the *equilibrium* stage as the stage where many employees, in particular those in management positions, have set and/or have met their personal and professional goals within the organization. Perlman and Takacs (1990) describe these employees as individuals who are "consciously and unconsciously vested" in the status quo. These employees are a part of the status quo, because both their personal and professional goals within the organization are in alignment with the goals of the organization, so the employees are more comfortable and content (Perlman & Takacs, 1990). According to Perlman & Takacs

(1990), employees who identify themselves with an organization “are emotionally and intellectually in a state of *equilibrium*” (Perlman & Takacs, 1990, p.33). However, when an employee’s *equilibrium* is altered or they begin to feel pressured by the external events on the status quo these employees have a hard time handling change (Perlman & Takacs, 1990). Perlman and Takacs (1990) describe several external events, such as reorganizations due to mergers, acquisitions, corporate takeovers, new management, and new technologies that can place pressure on an employee’s status quo. Once the status quo has been altered by the external events the employees emotions are associated with grieving. As Perlman and Takacs (1990), explained:

Employees who are heavily vested in the status quo, who benefited from it, enjoyed it, created it, nurtured it, have a very hard time letting go of it. Loss of the status quo presents not only logical, intellectual problems, but also the emotional problems associated with grief. People grieve for the old organization, the old people, the old ways. (Perlman & Takacs, 1990, p. 33)

For some organizations, change is a part of the process of letting go of the status quo. If employees do not let go of their old ways then their progress toward change will be blocked (Perlman & Takacs, 1990). Perlman & Takacs (1990) recommend that organizations inform employees about the changes within the organization, especially those that will impact the status quo.

The second stage of change from Perlman and Takacs (1990) is the *denial* stage. In Perlman and Takacs (1990) during the *denial* stage the authors discuss how employees who have more power within the organization have a tougher time handling change. For those employees change is difficult to handle because they wish to maintain a hold on

their familiar patterns within the organization. These employees utilize their power within the organization to keep the organization as they see it, this provides them with, as Perlman and Takacs (1990) describes, as a sense of certainty, security, and power. While trying to keep the organization as they see it, employee pressures are building and a lot of their personal energy is being used to keep the organization as they see it (Perlman & Takacs 1990). Perlman & Takacs (1990) recommend “during the denial phase managers must acknowledge the legitimacy of employees’ feelings and make themselves available to discuss the change”(Perlman & Takacs, 1990, p.35). Furthermore, Perlman & Takacs (1990) recommend during this stage that managers and employees learn about the change they are accepting and to build on the change together. The organization should establish hotlines and the managers should have regular scheduled meetings to hear from the employees. During this stage when employees begin to deny their current reality, Perlman & Takacs (1990) recommend that managers do not isolate, judge, or agree with these employees rather the managers should acknowledge the employees statements but then reinforce the reality that change is occurring (Perlman & Takacs, 1990). Finally, during this stage Perlman & Takacs (1990) recommend stress management training seminars for everyone involved in the change process.

The second phase of change from Perlman and Takacs (1990) is the *anger* phase. Perlman and Takacs (1990) describe employees during this phase realizing their current reality does not meet their expectations and they do not have enough energy to maintain the status quo, so employees begin to blame others for being in their situation or as Perlman and Takacs (1990) describes their current “predicament.” The employees in this stage are feeling *anger*, rage envy, and resentment. Perlman and Takacs (1990), explain

that during this phase employees feel the managers know what is making them angry and the managers should do something to help (Perlman & Takacs, 1990). Not only are the employees angry and blaming others their anger becomes more visible. As Perlman & Takacs (1990) explain:

Anger becomes more and more visible as employees blame others and demand that someone else “make things all right again”. They do not even think about doing something to help themselves. (Perlman and Takacs, 1990, p.35)

During this phase Perlman and Takacs (1990), recommend that organizations spend time sorting through the problems, identify if employees beliefs or values have been violated, and identify what is making the employees and managers angry. Organizations should recognize and accept employee’s feelings during this phase but the change process must continue (Perlman & Takacs, 1990). Perlman and Takacs, (1990) suggest during this phase organizations should confront and listen to employees anger by asking: (1) what they are angry about? (2) why they are angry? (3) what do they think should be done to solve the problems?

Furthermore, during this phase, Perlman and Takacs (1990) discuss the impact change has on the managers since most of the employees *anger* is directed towards them. Perlman and Takacs (1990) recommend that organizations or the administration should provide special forums so managers would have an opportunity to voice their frustration and anger. Perlman and Takacs (1990) suggest that “managers need reinforcement and support in order to handle their own employees” (Perlman & Takacs. 1990, p. 35).

During this phase, Perlman and Takacs (1990) state that problem-solving skills are very important for managers to have as they work with employees to resolve their *anger*.

The fourth stage of change from Perlman and Takacs (1990) is *bargaining*. Perlman and Takacs (1990) describe employees during this phase as trying to enter into an agreement with others to avoid the inevitable. Employees will give up sometimes in this stage for something else in return. This type of behavior was described by Hoffman and Wallace (2008) as *negotiation*. During this stage Perlman and Takacs (1990), suggest that *anger* is used by employees to stop or limit the change. Perlman and Takacs (1990), suggest that the conversation with employees during this stage focus around the term “if only.” According to Perlman and Takacs (1990), this phase might appear to be rational, logical, and professional, because the employees, or as Perlman Takacs (1990) describes them as “bargainers,” may use data, graphs, and charts to support their negotiations. However, Perlman and Takacs (1990) believe that the above tactics/ quasi-negotiations are a mask for their true feelings. To assist organizations, or the administration, Perlman and Takacs (1990) recommend providing managers with conflict management and win-win negotiation skills. These skills could be provided by recommending literature, workshops, and team building sessions for managers within the organization or the administration.

The fifth stage of change from Perlman and Takacs (1990) is *chaos*. *Chaos* is defined in the Webster dictionary as “an extreme confusion or disorder” (Webster New World, 1998). The employees in this stage are full of questions and have their own sense of insecurity has it relates to their position within the organization (Perlman & Takacs, 1990). The *chaos* process is a stage that will pass over time. During this stage employees simply do not know the direction of the organization. According to Perlman and Takacs (1990), there are no “mechanical, technical fixes available to repair matters in this stage”

(Perlman & Takacs, 1990, p. 35). However, Perlman and Takacs (1990), recommend that administrators be available to listen to employees.

The sixth stage of change from Perlman and Takacs (1990) is *depression*. Similar to the Kubler-Ross grief construct, Perlman and Takacs (1990) discuss two types of depression (i.e. reactive and preparatory). Reactive depression is the fear of loss. Preparatory depression is a tool to prepare for the impending loss. Perlman and Takacs (1990) recommend that administrators do not wait until the last minute to change organizations just to avoid the human problems associated with change during the reactive depression stage Perlman and Takacs (1990), stress the importance of administrators during reactive depression telling their employees as much as possible and as soon as possible about the organization. Perlman and Takacs (1990) recommend during preparatory depression administrators listen to their employees and insist that they still complete their job related tasks.

The seventh stage of change from Perlman and Takacs (1990) is *resignation*. During this stage employees finally accept the reality of the change and are no longer resistant to change. However, employees will still need assistance from administrators during this stage. Perlman and Takacs (1990) recommend that administrators do not incite individuals to action. In addition, the authors recommend administrators do not provide counterproductive or critical and cynical comments about employee's lack of enthusiasm because this could lead to employees moving away from acceptance and back to some form of resistance (Perlman & Takacs, 1990).

The eighth stage of the change from Perlman and Takacs (1990) is *openness*. In this stage, once change is accepted personally by the employees and their values are

rearranged, then the employees can move forward in a new direction (Perlman & Takacs, 1990). According to Perlman and Takacs (1990) through *openness*, employees are more receptive to change and are interested in learning about the change. Perlman and Takacs (1990) recommend, during this stage, that administrators explain to employees the procedures, policies, and regulations that are associated with the change. In addition, the administrators should continue to explain the change as much as possible. According to Perlman and Takacs (1990), “repetition may seem unnecessary, but it will produce good results” (Perlman & Takacs, 1990, p.37).

The ninth stage of change from Perlman and Takacs (1990) is *readiness*. During this stage employees are ready and interested in exploring new events. Perlman and Takacs (1990) describe this stage as the “emotional letting go” and the process of letting go among employees is noticeable. Perlman and Takacs (1990) recommend that management becomes more directive with employees and assigns them with specific tasks. In addition, administrators should monitor employee’s tasks and their results. The monitoring of tasks and results should be utilized as a tool to help employees better understand and provide them with immediate feedback. It is very important that administrators in this stage do not utilize monitoring as a way of checking for mistakes among employees. The final stage of the change from Perlman and Takacs (1990) is *re-emergence*. During this stage, change is fully operational and employees have finally let go of their old way of operating (Perlman & Takacs, 1990). Employees in this stage begin to reinvest themselves in the organization.

The Perlman & Takacs article provide assistance and tools to executives, managers, and supervisors regarding how to deal with change within their organization.

The Schoolfield and Ordunda (1994) article “Understanding Staff Nurse Responses to Change: Utilization of a Grief-Change Framework to Facilitate Innovation,” expands on Perlman and Takacs (1990) by examining the change that occurred by opening a 51 bed oncology unit in a large Midwestern hospital. In *denial* stage many nurses verbalized that it was impossible to do all these “new” jobs that was associated with the new hospital. In addition during the *denial* stage the staff was denying their role was changing and they were not interested in seeing new procedures implemented. The Clinical Nursing Specialist, during this stage, provided the staff with the opportunity to verbalize their feeling. In the *anger* stage the staff was angry and resentful because they felt the proposed change would mean additional work and that it was unrealistic. In addition, during the *anger* stage, the staff felt that the additional work was being forced on them by outside consultants or from their supervisors without their input (Schoolfield & Ordunda, 1994). The Clinical Nursing Specialist, during this stage, would legitimize the staff feelings, and remind them that they were accountable for certain job-related activities. Similar to Perlman and Takacs (1990), during the *bargaining* stage, they utilized the “if only” with their supervisors to avoid the change that was occurring. The Clinical Nursing Specialist, during this stage, reminded the staff of the rationale for the change.

In the *chaos* stage, the staff finally realized that the innovations that had been established at the new hospital were not going away. In the oncology unit, Schoolfield & Ordunda (1994) described the confusion among the employees that was further protested by the resignation of the unit manager. During this stage the staff voiced their feelings of being powerless, they felt a sense of insecurity, and had a sense of loss direction (Schoolfield & Ordunda, 1994). The Clinical Nursing Specialist encouraged the staff to

be constructive and actively solve problems by utilizing the new skills and knowledge they obtained. According to Schoolfield & Ordunda (1994), as staff witnessed the positive changes and their results they then became re-energized about their work. In the *depression* stage, the staff employees began to as Schoolfield & Ordunda (1994) described “mourn for the past.” However, in this article, the authors noted that the *resignation* stage was difficult to distinguish from the *depression* stage (Schoolfield & Ordunda, 1994). The *depression* and *resignation* stages were also observed in this study, but only observed among a few employees. In addition, the *depression* and *resignation* stages were not observed in a group setting. The Clinical Nursing Specialist in the *depression* and *resignation* stages continued to remind staff that the change to the patient-focused care would hold them accountable for the changes within their working environment (Schoolfield & Ordunda, 1994).

During the *openness* and *readiness* stages, the staff began to internalize the change that was occurring and the change became a part of their daily role within the organization (Schoolfield & Ordunda, 1994). In addition, during these stages, the staff began to request additional information regarding the procedures. The Clinical Nursing Specialist accommodated their request (Schoolfield & Ordunda, 1994), even though the same information was provided during the beginning stages of the change process. Interest among the staff increased during these two stages and it was evident when staff involvement on committees increased to the level prior to the implementation of the new patient-focus care (Schoolfield & Ordunda, 1994).

Finally, in the *re-emergence* stage, staff began to make their own decisions and felt they were being held accountable for their actions. The authors suggest that the

Clinical Nursing Specialist should provide professional growth/leadership opportunities to the staff (Schoolfield & Ordunda, 1994). The Schoolfield and Ordunda (1994) study provides insight on how the Perlman & Takacs (1990) framework on the change process could be used in studying change of employees and not just executives.

Perlman and Takacs (1990), and Schoolfield and Ordunda (1994), utilized the forms of the grief construct in examining organizations. Kearny and Hyle's (2003) article: "The Grief Cycle and Educational Change: The Kubler-Ross Contribution," utilized the grief construct in an attempt to analyze the emotional impact of change on individuals within an educational organization. This study was conducted at a technology training school where the district recently hired an assistant superintendent who the authors describe as one of their own. The Assistant Superintendent was raised in the community where the study was conducted. The Assistant Superintendent was viewed as the possible heir apparent to the Superintendent position. The new Assistant Superintendent brought in new philosophies and practices that resulted in many changes.

For their study, Kearny and Hyle (2003) examined the emotional impact of the new changes by the Assistant Superintendent on the employees of the school and the state changes to the technology school system. This study found that most of the employees viewed the changes as good, but Kearny and Hyle (2003) found that many of the changes were still associated with some type of loss by the employees.

Although research exists on the Kubler-Ross grief construct, this research has not examined the beliefs, feelings, emotions, and perceptions of employees during the deaccreditation process of their institutions. This study explored the recommendations for future research from Kearny and Hyle (2003), which was to ask participants to speak to

how their experience fit or did not fit those grief models and compare their responses to existing models. Kearny and Hyle (2003) suggest this would allow better clarification of the grief model. During the focus group interviews for this study, the researcher asked each employment group: Does the model being proposed in this study about the deaccreditation of Compton Community College conform to the Kubler-Ross grief construct? By exploring this question the researcher is able to understand from the study participants if the model being presented actually reflects their beliefs, feelings, emotions, and perceptions during the deaccreditation of Compton Community College.

CHAPTER III–METHODOLOGY

The research design used in this study was an exploratory case study. According to Yin (1994), a case study is an “empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (p. 13). This case study methodology focused on the “how” and “why” of the problem, rather than seeking to determine cause and effect. Creswell (1998) describes a case study as the “exploration of a ‘bounded system’ or case over time through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information rich in context” (p. 61). This study, the case studied was the deaccreditation of Compton Community College.

Site

The site for this case study is Compton Community College District, located in the city of Compton, California, which is also located in Los Angeles County. Compton Community College District included one college, Compton Community College, serving the communities of Carson, Compton, Enterprise, North Long Beach, Lynwood, Paramount, and Willowbrook. At the time of this study, Compton Community College District is the only community college district under state receivership and administered by a state appointed Special Trustee as authorized by Assembly Bill 61 and extended by Assembly Bill 318. During the 2005-2006 academic year, Compton Community College had an enrollment headcount of 10,246 year (California Community College Data Mart, 2009). Of those students, 47% and 48.9% were Latino and African American, respectively (California Community College Data Mart, 2009). The California Community College Chancellor’s Office does not define the size of a college by

enrollment headcount because of the large number of part-time students attending community colleges. Size of an institution is determined by Full Time Equivalent Students, also referred to as FTES. FTES is calculated by student enrollments in 12 units of coursework, the requirement to be considered a full time student. Each 12 units of enrollment is equivalent to 1 FTES. Compton Community College reported 4,923.37 credit FTES and 57.35 non-credit FTES to the California Community College System Office for the 2005-2006 school year (California Community College Data Mart, 2009).

Compton Community College District is located in the city of Compton. The city of Compton is an urban community with nearly 100,000 residents. The population in the city of Compton consist of 56.8% Hispanic or Latino; 40.3 % Black or African American; 1.1% Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander; 7% Native American or Alaskan Native, and the remaining population consisting of Asian, White, or other race (City of Compton, 2009)

Participants

Participants in this study included administrators, faculty, and staff who were employed during the deaccreditation of Compton Community College. Potential participants for this study received an email from the researcher requesting their participation. Included in the email correspondence to the potential participants was the web link to an online survey. After reading the study information sheet on the web link, potential participants were asked to participate. If the potential participants choose to participate in the study, they were then directed to the online survey questions. For the one-on-one interviews and focus group sessions, the researcher randomly selected participants from each of the employment groups who completed the online survey. For

the selection of the one-on-one interview and the focus group participants, the researcher employed informal stratified sampling by taking into account gender, ethnicity, and work department in order to approximate a representative sample. During the one-on-one interview and focus group sessions the researcher obtained consent forms from the participants. In addition, prior to asking the first questions during the one-on-one interview and focus group sessions, the researcher asked each participant whether they agreed to participate in this study. After receiving participants answer to the above question, the researcher began to ask the one-on-one interview and focus group questions to the participants.

Data Collection

Three data collection methods were used in accordance with standard case study procedures. First, the researcher administered an online survey to Compton Community College District employees who were employed with the district from January, 2005 through September, 2006. The online survey was designed using techniques suggested by Bradburn, Sudman and Wansink (2004) in the book *Asking Questions*. The online survey consisted primarily of multiple-choice or Likert scale questions and the online survey provided opportunity for open-ended comments. The researcher asked employees to complete the online survey between November 7, 2010 and December 22, 2010. The original deadline for the online survey to be completed was November 22, 2010. However, due to a low initial participation the deadline was extended to December 22, 2010. A second email correspondence was sent to the potential participants, informing the potential participants that the deadline to complete the online survey was extended.

Included in the second email correspondence to the potential participants was the web link to online survey

Second, the researcher conducted one-on-one interviews with four employees from each of the employment groups. Each one-on-one interview participant received an email correspondence from the researcher requesting their participation in the one-on-one interview sessions. In total, the researcher conducted 12 one-on-one interview sessions. The one-on-one interviews were conducted between December 1, 2010 and December 22, 2010.

Third, the researcher conducted focus groups with administrators, faculty, and staff. The focus group sessions were conducted between January 3, 2011 and February 22, 2011. Each focus group participant received an email from the researcher requesting their participation in the focus group sessions. Four employees from each employment group participated in the focus groups sessions. In total, 12 employees participated in the focus group sessions with the researcher. The administrator focus group and the faculty focus group participants had some overlap with the participants in the one-on-one interview sessions. The online survey questions, one-on-one interviews questions, and focus group questions are included as Appendix A, Appendix B, and Appendix C.

Interviews

The one-on-one interviews were a key component in this study. During the one-on-one interview sessions the participants provided insight into their beliefs, feelings, emotions, and perceptions during the deaccreditation of Compton Community College. Participants met with the researcher at an agreed upon time and location for their one-on-one interview session. The one-on-one interviews lasted approximately thirty-five minutes and were conducted between December 1, 2010 and December 22, 2010. The

one-on-one interview questions were semi-structured, as the researcher had a basic list of relevant questions but in some cases the researcher altered and/or modify the questions depending on the content and issues rose during the interview. All one-on-one interviews were tape-recorded with the permission of all participants, except one (i.e. Administrator # 4), who requested that their interview session not be recorded. Tape-recorded interviews were transcribed for the data analysis component of this study. After the one-on-one interviews were transcribed the researcher requested each one-on-one interview participant to review their interview transcription and verify their responses to the interview questions.

Focus Groups

The researcher conducted three focus group sessions, one for each employment group. During the focus group sessions, the participants provided insight into their and other employees from their employment group beliefs, feelings, emotions, and perceptions during the deaccreditation of Compton Community College. For the focus group sessions the participants met with the researcher at an agreed upon time and in a conference room, except one (i.e. staff), was conducted in the researchers office on the Compton Community College District site. The focus group sessions lasted approximately forty-five minutes and were conducted between January 1, 2011 and February 22, 2011. The focus group questions were semi-structured, as the researcher had a basic list of relevant questions, but in some cases the researcher altered and/or modify the questions depending on the content and issues raised during the focus group session. Tape-recorded focus group sessions were transcribed for the data analysis component of

this study. After the focus group sessions were transcribed, the researcher requested each focus group participant to review the focus group transcription and verify their responses.

Data Analysis Plan

The data analysis for this study included three components. The first phase, was the analysis of the study participants' responses to the online survey questions. The researcher analyzed the employee responses to the online survey questions by their employment group (administrators, faculty, and staff). The online survey had 39 items, which included 9 demographic questions, with the remaining questions aimed at discovering the employees' beliefs, feelings, emotions, and perceptions during the following grief construct stages: *denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance* of the grief construct. Each of the online survey questions were coded and categorized as one of the grief construct stages.

The online survey questions provide insight into the first and second research questions for this study. The demographic information requested in the online survey included current job classification, job classification during 2005-2006 academic year, years of employment with Compton Community College District, gender, ethnicity, whether respondents attended Compton Community College as a student, if a family members attended Compton Community College, and if the employee lived within the Compton Community College service area.

The second phase of the data analysis began with the transcription of the one-on-one interview sessions. Once the one-one interviews were completed, the content was coded by themes. The themes from the one-on-one interview were coded and then categorized into the following grief construct stages: *denial, anger, bargaining,*

depression, and *acceptance*. These categories were then used to report the study findings and were compared to the findings from the online survey results. The detailed information gathered from the study participants provided the researcher with greater insight into their beliefs, feelings, emotions, and perceptions during the deaccreditation of Compton Community College. In addition, the information gathered provided the researcher with insight to answer the first and second research questions for this study.

The third phase of the data analysis was the transcription of the focus group sessions. Once the focus group sessions were completed, the content was coded by themes. The themes that emerged from the sessions were categorized into the following three categories: *grief construct*, *assistances to other institutions*, and *future directions*. These three categories were used to report the study findings from the focus group sessions. The detailed information gathered from the focus group participants provided the researcher with greater insight into the participants thoughts and feelings and addressed the researcher's hypothesis concerning how their thoughts and feelings during the deaccreditation of Compton Community College could assist other institution of higher education that are on the path to deaccreditation. Finally, the focus group participants provided the researcher with insight into future directions for this research study.

CHAPTER IV–FINDINGS

In this chapter, the researcher presents data from the online survey, one-on-one interview sessions, and focus group sessions to address the following three research questions:

1. Do the beliefs, feelings, emotions, and perceptions of the Compton Community College District employees conform to the stages of the Kubler-Ross grief construct?
2. What variations exist in the grief process among the different employee groups of Compton Community College District?
3. Were the stages of the grief construct functional or dysfunctional in helping the personnel negotiate change in the institution?

The first set of data presented is the demographic composition of the research study participants. The second set of data presented in this chapter consists of results from the online survey. The third data set presents the one-on-one interview results, and the fourth and final set of data presents the focus group session results. The second, third, and fourth sets of data are used to answer the three research questions explored in this study. In addition, the second, third, and fourth sets of data are used by the researcher to understand the beliefs, feelings, emotions, and perceptions of employees during the deaccreditation of Compton Community College.

Study Participants Demographic Composition

The demographic composition of the sample (n = 55) is presented in Tables 3 through 10. Table 3 displays the employment group profile for all study participants during the 2005-2006 academic year. In this study, half (50.9%), of the study participants were staff at Compton Community College during the 2005-2006 academic year. Approximately, one-third were faculty, and the remainder were administrators.

Table 3. 2005-2006 Study Participants Employment Group

Employment Group	Percentage (n=55)
Staff	50.9%
Full-time Faculty	32.7%
Part-time Faculty	1.8%
Administrator	14.5%

Since the 2005-2006 school year, two full-time faculty members became administrators and one administrator became a full-time faculty member. Table 4 displays the changes in job classifications for the study participants since the 2005-2006 year.

Table 4. 2010-2011 Study Participants Employment Group

Employment Group	Percentage (n=55)
Staff	50.9 %
Full-time Faculty	30.9 %
Part-time Faculty	1.8%
Administrator	16.4 %

Table 5 displays the study participants' duration of employment with Compton Community College District. At the time of the study, the majority of the study participants had been employed with Compton Community College District between 6 and 10 years.

Table 5. Years of Employment with Compton Community College District (CCCD)

All Study Participants	Percentage (n=55)
< 4 years	14.5%
4-5 years	14.5 %
6-10 years	32.7%
11-15 years	10.9 %
16-20 years	16.4%
21-25 years	3.6%
>26	7.3%
Staff	Percentage (n=28)
< 4 years	14.3%
4-5 years	25.0%
6-10 years	39.3%
11-15 years	7.1 %
16-20 years	10.7%
21-25 years	3.6%
Faculty	Percentage (n=18)
< 4 years	11.1%
4-5 years	5.6 %
6-10 years	22.2%
11-15 years	22.2 %
16-20 years	16.7%
>26	22.2%
Administrator	Percentage (n=8)
< 4 years	12.5%
6-10 years	37.5%
16-20 years	37.5%
21-25 years	12.5%

Table 6 displays the gender of the study participants during the 2005-2006 year. At the time of the study, the majority (58.2%) of the study participants' were female, and the gender breakdown varied by employment group: three-fourths (75.0%) of the staff were female and the majority (61.1%) of the faculty were male.

Table 6. Gender of Study Participants

All Study Participants	Percentage (n=55)
Female	58.2 %
Male	41.8%
Staff	Percentage (n=28)
Female	75.0%
Male	25.0%
Faculty	Percentage (n=18)
Female	38.9%
Male	61.1%
Administrator	Percentage (n=8)
Female	50.0%
Male	50.0%

Table 7 displays the ethnicity of the study participants. At the time of this study, the majority of the study participants were Black or African-American. Again, demographic factors varied by employment groups: 75% of the administrators were Black or African-American, and whereas a much smaller percentage of faculty, 38.9%, were Black or African-American.

Table 7. Ethnicity of Study Participants

All Study Participants	Percentage (n=55)
American Indian or Alaska Native	3.6%
Asian	7.3%
Black or African-American	56.4%
Hispanic/Latino	27.3%
White	14.5%
Other	3.6%
Staff	Percentage (n=28)
American Indian or Alaska Native	7.1%
Asian	3.6%
Black or African-American	60.7%
Hispanic/Latino	39.3%
White	10.7%
Other	3.6%
Faculty	Percentage (n=18)
Asian	16.7%
Black or African-American	38.9%
Hispanic/Latino	16.7%
White	22.2%
Other	5.6%
Administrator	Percentage (n=8)
Black or African-American	75.0%
Hispanic/Latino	12.5%
White	12.5%

As shown in Table 8, 45.5% of the study participants had taken classes at Compton Community College. At the time of this study, the majority (57.1%) of the staff had taken classes at Compton Community College. However, three-fourths (75.0%) of the administrators had not taken classes at Compton Community College.

Table 8. Study Participants Attended Classes at Compton Community College (CCC)

All Study Participants	Percentage (n=55)
Attended CCC	45.5%
Did not attend CCC	54.5%
Staff	Percentage (n=28)
Attended CCC	57.1%
Did not attend CCC	42.9%
Faculty	Percentage (n=18)
Attended CCC	33.3%
Did not attend CCC	66.7%
Administrator	Percentage (n=8)
Attended CCC	25.0%
Did not attend CCC	75.0%

Table 9 displays the proportion of study participants who had a family member that attended Compton Community College. About half (49.1%) of the participants had a family member that attended Compton Community College. A slightly higher proportion, 57.1%, of the staff had a family member that attended Compton Community College.

Table 9. Study Participants Who Family Member Attended Compton Community College (CCC)

All Study Participants	Percentage (n=55)
Attended CCC	49.1%
Did not attend CCC	50.9%
Staff	Percentage (n=28)
Attended CCC	57.1%
Did not attend CCC	42.9%
Faculty	Percentage (n=18)
Attended CCC	44.4%
Did not attend CCC	55.6%
Administrator	Percentage (n=8)
Attended CCC	37.5%
Did not attend CCC	62.5%

Table 10 displays who of study participants lived within the Compton Community College District service area. At the time of the study, 32.7% of the study participants' lived within the service area. A somewhat higher proportion, 46.4%, of the staff lived within the Compton Community College District.

Table 10. Study Participants Who Live In the Compton Community College District (CCCD) Service Area

All Study Participants	Percentage (n=55)
Lived within CCCD	32.7%
Did not lived within CCCD	67.3%
Staff	Percentage (n=28)
Lived within CCCD	46.4%
Did not lived within CCCD	53.6%
Faculty	Percentage (n=18)
Lived within CCCD	27.8%
Did not lived within CCCD	72.2%
Administrator	Percentage (n=8)
Did not lived within CCCD	100%

Online Survey Results

In order to analyze the study participants' beliefs, feelings, emotions, and perceptions during the deaccreditation of Compton Community College, the researcher coded and categorized responses to the online survey questions as indicators of the grief construct stages: *denial*, *anger*, *bargaining*, *depression*, and *acceptance*. The online survey results are presented in this section by the grief construct stages.

Denial. Tables 11 through 14, represent the study participants' responses to the online survey questions that examine the *denial* stage of the grief construct. Table 11 displays the response of the study participants when they learned of the Accrediting Commission decision to place Compton Community College on Show Cause on January 31, 2005. At the time of this study, three-fourths (75.5%) of the study participants knew the reasons why the Compton Community College was place on Show Cause by the Accrediting Commission.

Table 11. Study Participants Understanding of the Accrediting Commission Decision

All Study Participants	Percentage (n=53)
Knew the reasons why the college was placed on Show Cause	75.5%
Did not know why the college was placed on Show Cause	18.9%
Was not aware the college was placed on Show Cause	5.7%
Staff	Percentage (n=26)
Knew the reasons why the college was placed on Show Cause	73.1%
Did not know why the college was placed on Show Cause	19.2%
Was not aware the college was placed on Show Cause	7.7%
Faculty	Percentage (n=18)
Knew the reasons why the college was placed on Show Cause	77.8%
Did not know why the college was placed on Show Cause	22.2%
Administrator	Percentage (n=8)
Knew the reasons why the college was placed on Show Cause	75.0%
Did not know why the college was placed on Show Cause	12.5%
Was not aware the college was placed on Show Cause	12.5%

Table 12 displays the thoughts of the study participants when they learned of the Accrediting Commission deaccreditation decision on June 17, 2005. Of the study participants, about half (49.1%) did not believe the deaccreditation of Compton Community College would happen. A slightly higher proportion of the faculty, 55.6%, did not believe the deaccreditation of Compton Community College would occur.

Table 12. Study Participant Beliefs When They Learned About the Deaccreditation Decision

All Study Participants	Percentage (n=53)
Believed the deaccreditation would happen	45.3%
Did not believe the deaccreditation would happen	49.1%
Was not aware of the deaccreditation decision	5.7%
Staff	Percentage (n=26)
Believed the deaccreditation would happen	46.2%
Did not believe the deaccreditation would happen	50.0%
Was not aware of the deaccreditation decision	3.8%
Faculty	Percentage (n=18)
Believed the deaccreditation would happen	44.4%
Did not believe the deaccreditation would happen	55.6%
Administrator	Percentage (n=8)
Believed the deaccreditation would happen	37.5%
Did not believe the deaccreditation would happen	37.5%
Was not aware of the deaccreditation decision	25.0%

Table 13 displays the reasons the study participants believed Compton Community College was deaccredited. In Table 13, campus neglect is defined as untended and filthy bathrooms, and grounds littered with trash. Of the study participants, more than two-thirds believed the reasons Compton Community College was deaccredited was the Compton Community College District Board of Trustees (71.7%) and the Administration (75.5%). However, only 37.5% of the administrators believed the administration was the reason Compton Community College was deaccredited, and 62.5% of the administrators believed the Compton Community College District Board of Trustees was the cause of the deaccreditation of Compton Community College.

Table 13. Reasons the Study Participants Believed Compton Community College Was Deaccredited

All Study Participants	Percentage (n=53)
Poor quality of classroom instruction	15.1%
Campus neglect	13.2%
Administration	75.5%
CCC District Board of Trustee members	71.7%
Poor facilities (old buildings, poor lighting)	18.9%
None of the above	5.7%
Other	28.3%
Staff	Percentage (n=26)
Poor quality of classroom instruction	19.2%
Campus neglect	11.5%
Administration	80.8%
CCC District Board of Trustee members	76.9%
Poor facilities(old buildings, poor lighting)	23.1%
None of the above	3.8%
Other	23.1%
Faculty	Percentage (n=18)
Poor quality of classroom instruction	11.1%
Campus neglect	16.7%
Administration	83.3%
CCC District Board of Trustee members	66.7%
Poor facilities(old buildings, poor lighting)	16.7%
Other	27.8%
Administrator	Percentage (n=8)
Poor quality of classroom instruction	12.5%
Administration	37.5%
CCC District Board of Trustee members	62.5%
None of the above	25.0%
Other	37.5%

Table 14 displays study participants’ beliefs when they learned Compton Community College submitted its “Statement of Reasons” in support of its deaccreditation appeal to the Accrediting Commission on August 5, 2005. The majority (52.8%) believed the Compton Community College appeal would be accepted by the

Accrediting Commission. However, half (50.0%) of the administrators believed the Compton Community College appeal would be denied by the Accrediting Commission.

Table 14. Study Participants' Beliefs About Compton Community College (CCC) Appeal to the Accrediting Commission.

All Study Participants	Percentage (n=53)
Believed the appeal would be accepted	52.8%
Believed the appeal would be denied	41.5%
Was not aware the college submitted an appeal	5.7%
Staff	Percentage (n=26)
Believed the appeal would be accepted	57.7%
Believed the appeal would be denied	38.5%
Was not aware the college submitted an appeal	3.8%
Faculty	Percentage (n=18)
Believed the appeal would be accepted	55.6%
Believed the appeal would be denied	38.9%
Was not aware the college submitted an appeal	5.6%
Administrator	Percentage (n=8)
Believed the appeal would be accepted	37.5%
Believed the appeal would be denied	50.0%
Was not aware of college submitted an appeal	12.5%

Anger. Tables 15 through 19, represent the study participants' responses to the online survey questions that examine the *anger* stage of the grief construct. Table 15 displays the study participants thoughts when they learned Compton Community College deaccreditation appeal was denied by the Accrediting Commission on November 18, 2005. Of the study participants, about half (52.8%) were surprised when the appeal decision was denied by the Accrediting Commission. A slightly higher proportion of the faculty, 61.1%, was surprised when the appeal decision was denied by the Accrediting Commission.

Table 15. Study Participants Beliefs About the Compton Community College (CCC) Deaccreditation After the Appeal Was Denied

All Study Participants	Percentage (n=53)
Knew the appeal would be denied	41.5%
Surprised when the appeal decision was denied	52.8%
Was not aware of the decision	5.7%
Staff	Percentage (n=26)
Knew the appeal would be denied	46.2%
Surprised when the appeal decision was denied	46.2%
Was not aware of the decision	7.7%
Faculty	Percentage (n=18)
Knew the appeal would be denied	38.9%
Surprised when the appeal decision was denied	61.1%
Administrator	Percentage (n=8)
Knew the appeal would be denied	37.5%
Surprised when the appeal decision was denied	50.0%
Was not aware of the decision	12.5%

Table 16 displays the percentage of the study participants, who felt angry about the Accrediting Commission deaccreditation decision of Compton Community College between the months of November, 2005 and February, 2006. Two-thirds (66.0%) of the study participants felt angry about the Accrediting Commission deaccreditation decision. However, a high proportion of the faculty (77.8%), and the administrators (87.5%) were angry about the Accrediting Commission deaccreditation decision compared to slightly more than half (53.8%) of the staff who felt angry about the Accrediting Commission deaccreditation decision.

Table 16. Study Participants Who Felt Angry About the Accrediting Commission Decision

All Study Participants	Percentage (n=53)
Felt angry about the deaccreditation decision	66.0%
Did not feel angry about the deaccreditation decision	34.0%
Staff	Percentage (n=26)
Felt angry about the deaccreditation decision	53.8%
Did not feel angry about the deaccreditation decision	46.2%
Faculty	Percentage (n=18)
Felt angry about the deaccreditation decision	77.8%
Did not feel angry about the deaccreditation decision	22.2%
Administrator	Percentage (n=8)
Felt angry about the deaccreditation decision	87.5%
Did not feel angry about the deaccreditation decision	12.5%

Table 17 displays who the study participants felt angry towards during the deaccreditation of Compton Community College. Four out of five (79.4%) were angry towards the Compton Community College Board of Trustee members and more than half (61.8%) of the study participants felt anger towards the Accrediting Commission because of the deaccreditation decision. However, only 42.9%, of the administrators felt angry towards the Accrediting Commission because of the deaccreditation decision.

Table 17. Targets of Study Participants Anger Because of the Deaccreditation Decision of Compton Community College (CCC)

All Study Participants	Percentage (n=34)
Accrediting Commission	61.8%
Chancellor of the California Community Colleges	38.2%
CCC District Board of Trustee Members	79.4%
Local and statewide political leaders	32.4%
Special Trustee	20.6%
Other	23.5%
Staff	Percentage (n=13)
Accrediting Commission	76.9%
Chancellor of the California Community Colleges	53.8%
CCC District Board of Trustee Members	84.6%
Local and statewide political leaders	46.2%
Special Trustee	23.1%
Other	23.1%
Faculty	Percentage (n=14)
Accrediting Commission	57.1%
Chancellor of the California Community Colleges	21.4%
CCC District Board of Trustee Members	85.7%
Local and statewide political leaders	21.4%
Special Trustee	14.3%
Other	14.3%
Administrator	Percentage (n=7)
Accrediting Commission	42.9%
Chancellor of the California Community Colleges	42.9%
CCC District Board of Trustee Members	57.1%
Local and statewide political leaders	28.6%
Special Trustee	28.6%
Other	42.9%

In association with the *anger* stage, one research hypothesis was that each employment group (administrators, faculty, and staff) blamed others for the deaccreditation of the Compton Community College. Table 18 displays the distribution of study participants who blamed someone else because of the Accrediting Commission deaccreditation decision between the months of November, 2005, and February, 2006. Over two-thirds (71.2%) blamed someone because of the deaccreditation decision.

Table 18. Blamed Someone Because of the Deaccreditation Decision

All Study Participants	Percentage (n=52)
Blamed someone	71.2%
Did not blame someone	28.8%
Staff	Percentage (n=26)
Blamed someone	65.4%
Did not blame someone	34.6%
Faculty	Percentage (n=18)
Blamed someone	77.8%
Did not blame someone	22.2%
Administrator	Percentage (n=8)
Blamed someone	85.7%
Did not blame someone	14.3%

Table 19 presents whether or not the study participants blamed someone following the deaccreditation decision of Compton Community College between of November, 2005, and February, 2006. Of the study participants, three-fourths (86.1%) blamed the Compton Community College District Board of Trustees for the deaccreditation of Compton Community College. In addition, over half of the study participants blamed former administrators (63.9%) and half blamed the Accrediting Commission (50.0%) for the deaccreditation. However, 100% of the administrators blamed the Compton Community College District Board of Trustees and the former administrators for the Deaccreditation of Compton Community College.

Table 19. Targets of Study Participants Blame Following the Compton Community College (CCC) Deaccreditation Decision

All Study Participants	Percentage (n=36)
Faculty	11.1%
Staff	11.1%
Administrators	36.1%
Former Administrators	63.9%
CCC District Board of Trustees	86.1%
Accrediting Commission	50.0%
Chancellor of the California Community Colleges	36.1%
Other	11.1%
Staff	Percentage (n=17)
Faculty	17.6%
Staff	17.6%
Administrators	47.1%
Former Administrators	58.8%
CCC District Board of Trustees	82.4%
Accrediting Commission	41.2%
Chancellor of the California Community Colleges	35.3%
Other	23.5%
Faculty	Percentage (n=14)
Faculty	7.1%
Staff	7.1%
Administrators	35.7%
Former Administrators	57.1%
CCC District Board of Trustees	85.7%
Accrediting Commission	57.1%
Chancellor of the California Community Colleges	28.6%
Administrator	Percentage (n=5)
Former Administrators	100%
CCC District Board of Trustees	100%
Accrediting Commission	60.0%
Chancellor of the California Community Colleges	60.0%

Bargaining. Tables 20 through 22 represent the study participants' responses to survey questions that examine the *bargaining* stage of the grief construct. For this study, the researcher hypothesized that during the *bargaining* stage employees sought assistance from their union leadership, local and state-wide politicians, community members, and

state-wide organizations they were affiliated with, to help save Compton Community College from being deaccredited. On questions associated with the *bargaining* stage, there was a low response rate among the study participants. If participants did not indicate they sought guidance or assistance during the *bargaining* stage, their responses were not tabulated. The main reason for the low response rate was that 71.2% of the study participants indicated that they did not seek assistance or guidance during the deaccreditation process of Compton Community College. The low response rate implies that employees seeking guidance or assistance did not figure very prominently in the *bargaining* stage of the grief construct for the employment groups during the deaccreditation of Compton Community College

Among study participants who did seek guidance or assistance during the deaccreditation of Compton Community College, more than half sought guidance or assistance from community members (53.8%) and from their local and statewide politicians (53.8%).

Table 20. Study Participants Who Sought Assistance or Guidance During the Deaccreditation of Compton Community College (CCC)

All Study Participants	Percentage (n=13)
Statewide organization they were affiliated with	30.8%
Colleagues throughout the state	38.5%
Local and statewide labor leaders	30.8%
Community members	53.8%
Local and statewide politicians	53.8%
Other	46.2%
Staff	Percentage (n=3)
Colleagues throughout the state	33.3%
Local and statewide labor leaders	66.7%
Community members	100%
Local and statewide politicians	66.7%
Other	33.3%
Faculty	Percentage (n=8)
Statewide organization they were affiliated with	50.0%
Colleagues throughout the state	25.0%
Local and statewide labor leaders	25.0%
Community members	37.5%
Local and statewide politicians	62.5%
Other	50.0%
Administrator	Percentage (n=2)
Colleagues throughout the state	100%
Local and statewide labor leaders	66.7%
Community members	50.0%
Other	50.0%

As Table 20 illustrates, faculty participants sought guidance from their statewide organizations and from their local and statewide politicians at a higher rate compared to the other employment groups.

The researcher's second assertion was that during the *bargaining* stage employees were expecting special legislation, Assembly Bill 318, to save the Compton Community College from being deaccredited. Table 21 displays who of the study participants were

familiar with Assembly Bill 318. Over three-fourths (80.4%) were familiar with Assembly Bill 318 compared to 19.6% who were not familiar with Assembly Bill 318.

Table 21. Study Participants Who Were Familiar With Assembly Bill 318

All Study Participants	Percentage (n=51)
Familiar with Assembly Bill 318	80.4%
Was not familiar with Assembly Bill 318	19.6%
Staff	Percentage (n=26)
Familiar with Assembly Bill 318	76.9%
Was not familiar with Assembly Bill 318	23.1%
Faculty	Percentage (n=18)
Familiar with Assembly Bill 318	77.8%
Was not familiar with Assembly Bill 318	22.2%
Administrator	Percentage (n=6)
Familiar with Assembly Bill 318	100%

Table 22 displays who of the study participants' supported Assembly Bill 318. Of the study participants, over three-fourths (80.0%) supported Assembly Bill 318. A slightly higher proportion (92.9%) of the faculty supported Assembly Bill 318. What is of particular interest to the researcher, 31.6% of the staff did not support Assembly Bill 318 compared to 20.0% of all study participants.

Table 22. Study Participants Who Supported Assembly Bill 318

All Study Participants	Percentage (n=40)
Supported Assembly Bill 318	80.0%
Did not support Assembly Bill 318	20.0%
Staff	Percentage (n=19)
Supported Assembly Bill 318	68.4%
Did not support Assembly Bill 318	31.6%
Faculty	Percentage (n=14)
Supported Assembly Bill 318	92.9%
Did not support Assembly Bill 318	7.1%
Administrator	Percentage (n=6)
Supported Assembly Bill 318	83.3%
Did not support Assembly Bill 318	16.7%

The researcher's third assertion was that the employees expected, through their local and state-wide politicians, to exert political pressure on the Accrediting Commission to overturn the previous decisions. However, this assertion was not supported by the study participants' comment responses, because in the comment responses the majority of the participants explained why they supported Assembly Bill 318.

Depression. Tables 23 through 26 represent the online survey participants' responses to survey questions that examine the *depression* stage of the grief construct. In the hypotheses for the *depression* stage of the grief construct, the researcher asserted that employees appeared to be in *depression* about the possible loss of their employment after receiving their layoff notice. Table 23 displays the study participants' thoughts and feelings when they received their layoff notice dated March 26, 2006. Two-thirds (68.6%) felt sad and discouraged after receiving their layoff notice. A slightly higher

proportion, (83.3%) of the faculty felt sad and discouraged after receiving their layoff notice.

Table 23. Study Participants' Thoughts and Feelings When They Received Their Layoff Notice Dated March 26, 2006

All Study Participants	Percentage (n=51)
Felt sad and discouraged	68.6%
Did not feel sad and discouraged	19.6%
Do not remember their thoughts and feelings	11.8%
Staff	Percentage (n=26)
Felt sad and discouraged	61.5%
Did not feel sad and discouraged	19.2%
Do not remember their thoughts and feelings	19.2%
Faculty	Percentage (n=18)
Felt sad and discouraged	83.3%
Did not feel sad and discouraged	11.1%
Do not remember their thoughts and feelings	5.6%
Administrator	Percentage (n=6)
Felt sad and discouraged	66.7%
Did not feel sad and discouraged	33.3%

With respect to the *depression* stage, the researcher hypothesized that each employment group gave up hope that the institution would survive after they received their layoff notice. Table 24 displays who of the study participants lost hope that Compton Community College would remain open after they received their layoff notice. Of the study participants, two-thirds (66.7%) did not give up hope that their institution would survive after they received their layoff notice.

Table 24. Study Participants Who Lost Hope That the College Would Remain Open After They Received Their Layoff Notice

All Study Participants	Percentage (n=51)
Lost hope	21.6%
Did not lose hope	66.7%
Do not remember their thoughts and feelings	11.8%
Staff	Percentage (n=26)
Lost hope	15.4%
Did not lose hope	69.2%
Do not remember their thoughts and feelings	15.4%
Faculty	Percentage (n=18)
Lost hope	33.3%
Did not lose hope	55.6%
Do not remember their thoughts and feelings	11.1%
Administrator	Percentage (n=6)
Lost hope	16.7%
Did not lose hope	83.3%

The researcher also hypothesized that all employment groups began to seek guidance regarding their employment status at Compton Community College. Table 25 displays who among the study participants sought guidance about their future employment after receiving their layout notice. More than half (60.8%) did not seek guidance about their future employment after receiving their layoff notice.

Table 25. Study Participants Who Sought Guidance About Their Future Employment After Receiving Their Layoff Notice

All Study Participants	Percentage (n=51)
Sought guidance	23.5%
Did not seek guidance	60.8%
Do not recall	15.7%
Staff	Percentage (n=26)
Sought guidance	19.2%
Did not seek guidance	57.7%
Do not recall	23.1%
Faculty	Percentage (n=18)
Sought guidance	27.8%
Did not seek guidance	66.7%
Do not recall	5.6%
Administrator	Percentage (n=6)
Sought guidance	33.3%
Did not seek guidance	50.0%
Do not recall	16.7%

There was a low response rate among the study participants who sought guidance after receiving their lay-off notice. The low response rate implies that employees seeking guidance after receiving their layoff notice did not figure very prominently in the *depression* stage of the grief construct for the employment groups. Table 26 shows that 7.7% of the study participants sought guidance from their statewide organization that they were affiliated with, 23.1% from colleagues throughout the State, 15.4% from their immediate supervisor at that time, 46.2% from campus leaders, and 15.4% from the administrator responsible for their department.

Table 26. Study Participants Sought Guidance From After Receiving Their Layoff Notice

All Study Participants	Percentage (n=13)
Statewide organizations they were affiliated with	7.7%
Colleagues throughout the state	23.1%
Immediate supervisor	15.4%
Campus labor leaders	46.2%
Community members	15.4%
Administrator responsible for their department	15.4%
Other	38.5%
Staff	Percentage (n=5)
Colleagues throughout the state	20.0%
Immediate supervisor	40.0%
Campus labor leaders	40.0%
Community members	20.0%
Administrator responsible for their department	20.0%
Other	40.0%
Faculty	Percentage (n=6)
Statewide organizations they were affiliated with	16.7%
Colleagues throughout the state	16.7%
Campus labor leaders	66.7%
Community members	16.7%
Other	33.3%
Administrator	Percentage (n=6)
Colleagues throughout the state	50.0%
Administrator responsible for their department	50.0%
Other	50.0%

Acceptance. Tables 27 through 30 represent the online survey participants' responses to survey questions that examine the *acceptance* stage of the grief construct. Table 27 displays the study participants thoughts and feelings when they learned about the agreement with Santa Monica College to provide courses on the Compton Community College District site during the summer of 2006. The researcher hypothesized that the employment groups were pleased with this agreement Santa Monica College, because they would have employment for the summer of 2006. Of the

study participants, a large majority (82.0%) was pleased when they learned about the agreement with Santa Monica College for the summer of 2006. An even higher proportion, 94.4%, of the faculty was pleased when they learned about the agreement with Santa Monica College for the summer of 2006.

Table 27. Study Participants' Thoughts and Feeling When They Learned About the Agreement With Santa Monica College

All Study Participants	Percentage (n=50)
Pleased	82.0%
Displeased	4.0%
Neither pleased nor displeased	10.0%
Not aware of this agreement	4.0%
Staff	Percentage (n=25)
Pleased	72.0%
Displeased	4.0%
Neither pleased nor displeased	20.0%
Not aware of this agreement	4.0%
Faculty	Percentage (n=18)
Pleased	94.4%
Displeased	5.6%
Administrator	Percentage (n=6)
Pleased	83.3%
Not aware of this agreement	16.7%

Table 28 displays participants' thoughts and feeling when they learned that Assembly Bill 318 was signed by the Governor on June 30, 2006. This allowed for educational services to be provided on the Compton Community College site by an accredited college. Almost 75% of the participants were pleased when they Assembly Bill 318 was signed by the Governor of the State of California on June 30, 2006. A slightly higher proportion, 83.3%, of administrators were pleased when Assembly Bill 318 was signed by the Governor of the State of California on June 30, 2006.

Table 28. Study Participants' Thoughts and Feelings When They Learned Assembly Bill 318 Was Signed by the Governor of California

All Study Participants	Percentage (n=50)
Pleased	74.0%
Displeased	8.0%
Not aware of Assembly Bill 318 at that time	18.0%
Staff	Percentage (n=25)
Pleased	68.0%
Displeased	12.0%
Not aware of Assembly Bill 318 at that time	20.0%
Faculty	Percentage (n=18)
Pleased	77.8%
Displeased	5.6%
Not aware of Assembly Bill 318 at that time	16.7%
Administrator	Percentage (n=6)
Pleased	83.3%
Not aware of Assembly Bill 318 at that time	16.7%

Table 29 displays study participants' thoughts and feelings when they learned of the agreement with El Camino Community College. The researcher believed that the employment groups had accepted the death of the institution because their employment status would remain while providing services for El Camino College. Of the study participants, more than two-thirds (68.0%) were pleased with the agreement with El Camino College. An even higher proportion, 83.3%, of the administrators were pleased with the agreement with El Camino College.

Table 29. Study Participants' Thoughts and Feelings When They Learned About the Agreement with El Camino College

All Study Participants	Percentage (n=50)
Pleased	68.0%
Displeased	16.0%
Neither pleased nor displeased	16.0%
Staff	Percentage (n=25)
Pleased	68.0%
Displeased	16.0%
Neither pleased nor displeased	16.0%
Faculty	Percentage (n=18)
Pleased	61.1%
Displeased	22.2%
Neither pleased nor displeased	16.7%
Administrator	Percentage (n=6)
Pleased	83.3%
Neither pleased nor displeased	16.7%

Table 30 displays who of the study participants accepted the possible closure of Compton Community College during the 2005-2006 year. Half (50%) accepted the possible closure of Compton Community College during the 2005-2006 year.

Table 30. Study Participants Who Did or Did Not Accept the Possible Closure of Compton Community College (CCC) during the 2005-2006 year

All Study Participants	Percentage (n=50)
Accepted the possible closure	50.0%
Did not accept at the time but later accepted the closure	12.0%
Still do not accept the closure	38.0%
Staff	Percentage (n=25)
Accepted the possible closure	48.0%
Did not accept at the time but later accepted the closure	8.0%
Still do not accept the closure	44.0%
Faculty	Percentage (n=18)
Accepted the possible closure	55.6%
Did not accept at the time but later accepted the closure	16.7%
Still do not accept the closure	27.8%
Administrator	Percentage (n=6)
Accepted the possible closure	50.0%
Did not accept at the time but later accepted the closure	16.7%
Still do not accept the closure	33.3%

Table 31 displays who accepted the deaccreditation of Compton Community College in 2010. In 2010, the percentage of study participants who have accepted the deaccreditation of Compton Community College changed by 18.0% compared to the percentage who accepted the possible closure in the 2005-2006 year.

Table 31. Study Participants Who Did or Did Not Accept the Deaccreditation of Compton Community College in 2010

All Study Participants	Percentage (n=50)
Accepted	68.0%
Did not accept	32.0%
Staff	Percentage (n=25)
Accepted	64.0%
Did not accept	36.0%
Faculty	Percentage (n=18)
Accepted	66.7%
Did not accept	33.3%
Administrator	Percentage (n=6)
Accepted	83.3%
Did not accept	16.7%

One-On-One Interview Results

Several hypotheses were proposed in this study and the hypotheses were anchored by the Kubler-Ross grief construct. Together, these hypotheses formed an initial model of the beliefs, feelings, emotions, and perceptions of the employees of Compton Community College. The one-on-one interviews sessions allowed the researcher an opportunity to examine whether the study participants' beliefs, feelings, emotions, and perceptions conform to the stages of the Kubler-Ross grief construct. In addition, the interviews allowed the researcher to explore if variations existed in the grief process among the different employment groups.

Denial. During the one-on-one interview sessions the researcher found that administrators, faculty, and staff who participated in the study experienced some form of *denial*. The responses from the employment groups differed for various reasons. Some of the administrators, faculty, and staff did not believe the deaccreditation of Compton Community would occur. This was similar to the responses the researcher received from

the online survey results, which showed that 49.1% of the study participants did not believe the deaccreditation would happen. When Compton Community College was placed on Show Cause by the Accrediting Commission, many of the administrators, faculty, and staff did not want their institution to lose its accreditation. This sentiment was summarized during the one-on-one interviews session with Staff 1 and Faculty 2:

Pretty much I was in denial, you know, because I didn't want it to happen. Once I found out I didn't want it to happen. Yes, I was in denial. (Staff 1)

To a certain extent. I couldn't believe what was actually happening—that we were being literally considered to have our accreditation taken away from us. It was just something that's been unheard of. (Faculty 2)

However, from the online survey results we know that 45.3% of the study participants believed the deaccreditation would happen. This was consistent with the responses the researcher received from the administrators, faculty, and staff of Compton Community College who participated in the one-on-one interview session. Staff 4, Administrator 3, and Administrator 4 expressed this viewpoint:

No, I've never been in denial because, I mean, the word was out there. (Staff 4)

No. And I say that because of past experience. Other places that I worked at I saw it was different and plus I had, you know, talked to others that were with the Chancellor's office before I took the job and they told me it was different. And I experienced it. (Administrator 3)

No. because I was a part of the senior management team at the college. Because, I had to help prepare the college for possible closure. (Administrator 4)

The online survey results showed that 75.5% of the study participants knew why Compton Community College was placed on Show Cause. Furthermore, 71.5% of the study participants identified the Compton Community College Board of Trustees members as one of the reasons they believed Compton Community College was deaccredited. This belief was summarized by Staff 3 during the one-on-one interview session:

I think so, I just didn't want to accept the fact, well I accepted the fact that there were things that were not working right, that there were things that were done wrong, but that the whole campus would pay for what Board members were doing at that time. (Staff 3)

Other reasons the employees who participated in the one-on-one interviews felt the college was being deaccredited was because of the fiscal mismanagement of the institution. Staff 2 discussed the fiscal mismanagement during the one-on-one interview session:

Due to the reasoning behind fiscal mismanagement and the way the school was run at the time, and I could tell by looking—just working here looking around the campus—the state of the campus. (Staff 2)

The fiscal mismanagement of the campus was also mentioned by Hoffman and Wallace (2008), where the faculty believed the financial irregularities would be corrected by the administration, but those irregularities were not corrected. In addition, Hoffman and Wallace (2008) characterized the facilities at Compton Community College as being untended; they noted filthy bathrooms and grounds littered with trash. However, few of the faculty and administrators interviewed in this study shared this view. From the online

survey results, only 15.2% of the study participants believed the college was deaccredited because of campus neglect (untended filthy bathrooms and grounds littered with trash). Staff 2 expressed this view in the one-on-one interview session:

The campus was filthy. I couldn't find anybody. Nobody was around—the maintenance people. There weren't that many students here then. It looked like an empty campus. (Staff 2)

Even though the online study participants and some of the one-on-one interview participants knew the reasons why the college was placed on Show Cause by the Accrediting Commission, several participants who were interviewed felt a sense of helplessness or unease. This feeling was summarized by Staff 4 and Faculty 3 during the one-on-one interview session:

Helpless, upset because as an individual there was nothing really I could do. You know, one voice wouldn't stand out. And helpless because it was like the upper management—the board—which really could have helped resolve this. So, we had no power and no control. So, it was just like a helpless cause, your future laid in the hands of others and you just had to wait and see what would happen the next day. (Staff 4)

I can remember how I was feeling, part of the time I felt very uneasy, very worried, frightened, at the prospect of losing accreditation. At the same time I also felt that since I'd been working really hard at preventing that from happening, so you know there is a kind of a energy level that I felt. I was certainly willing to go places like to the Concerned Citizens meetings, and local churches, and things

like that, things that I wouldn't ordinarily do, in hopes that it would avert that.

(Faculty 3)

In addition to feeling a sense of helplessness and unease, some study participants had feelings of disbelief and some were depressed about what was happening to Compton Community College. This was summarized by Staff 3, Faculty 2, and Administrator 4 during the one-on-one interview session:

I was feeling kind of stressed at the time but some time I guess was wishful thinking that it was never going to happen, that we were a very strong college and the college will support itself. Stress, because of the things that were going on, all the rumors that you were hearing, that we are going to lose our accreditation, that they are going to close us down, and so on and so forth, so that's stressful. My colleagues were stressed as well, they were in meetings, they were stressed up, not as stressed but concerned. There was a high level of concern with what was going to happen. (Staff 3)

Very anxious, but in disbelief that this was actually happening. I thought at the time that we were being singled out for the capricious attitude of some people on the campus—which wasn't really reflective of the general attitude of most people on the campus. (Faculty 2)

Depressed, because I worked on the Accreditation of the institution in 1996 and after putting so much work on a project and to find out everything went down the drain. (Administrator 4)

Even though some study participants felt helpless, uneasy, depressed, and had a feeling of disbelief about what was happening to Compton Community College, many were hopeful

that the deaccreditation be overturned through the appeal process. This reaction was similar to the online survey results, in which 52.8% of the study participants believed the appeal would be accepted. Many employees who participated in the one-on-one interview sessions were hopeful the appeal would be accepted for various reasons, such as keeping their current employment with the institution, that the financial irregularities had been resolved, and that the Accrediting Commission was going to rescue and/or save their institution. Staff 1, Staff 4, Faculty 2, and Staff 3 summarized how they knew the appeal was being submitted and why they were hoping it would be overturned:

I felt once we found out that numerous of us were going to lose our jobs. So, I felt like if someone else was going to take over, is going to come in with their own ideas, is going to change a lot of things. So, I was hoping that it would get overturned at that time. (Staff 1)

I felt that once we did the appeal they would have seen that we wasn't in the negative. With the budget cause they said the state came in cause we was like \$1 million in deficit. They recovered the monies and we wasn't in the negative as they said. We was in the black. The money was just in different accounts. It wasn't showing properly from what we was told. And so, they recovered the monies and our district wasn't in as worse shape as some other districts that still have their accreditation. (Staff 4)

I really did. I thought for sure that it was a misunderstanding, a little rush to judgment, but that the appeal would be upheld. (Faculty 2)

Oh yes, that was one of the things I said, oh, they cannot get away with this, the appeals sound like they were going to get through somebody over there so we were going to get our accreditation back. (Staff 3)

However, even though some of the interview participants felt the deaccreditation appeal would be overturned by the Accrediting Commission, others did not believe the deaccreditation appeal would be overturned. This conforms to the online survey results, which showed that 41.5% of the study participants believed the appeal would be denied. This is illustrated by comments from Staff 2, Faculty 3, Administrator 1, Administrator 3, and Administrator 4 during the one-on-one interview sessions:

No, because the school was not financially solvent. (Staff 2)

No I really didn't, again I hoped that it would. (Faculty 3)

I don't have an answer to that, I don't have a clue. I didn't have any thoughts, because there was no substantial data to support, this was the first time that anything like that had occurred so I didn't have any thoughts about what would happen. (Administrator 1)

No, I did not think it was possible, because of my previous experience with accreditation in 1996. (Administrator 4)

The researcher found that some of the study participants who participated in the interview did not recall their thoughts, feelings, and beliefs when they were informed that the college was placed on Show Cause by the Accrediting Commission in January, 2005. Some employees who participated in the one-on-one interview session felt they were in *denial* after the de-accreditation of Compton Community College. This feeling of *denial* was noted by Staff 3 and Administrator 2 during the one-on-one interview session:

I felt in denial after we lost accreditation. I don't know why, I thought that maybe some miracle was going to happen that maybe it can't be true what's happening to us. I thought it was very unreal what was happening. Because I didn't want to accept the fact that we were getting so close to losing our accreditation until after the fact that they had told us we had lost our accreditation, we had lost our appeals, there was nothing we could do, we had lost our accreditation. After the fact I still thought that something was going to happen. (Staff 3)

No, not until after the fact. Not until after the fact. Well after it was done, I knew that the threat was imminent; I knew that whatever needed fixing would be modified or fixed. I saw the state take over, and I would never believe that any school would lose its accreditation while under state leadership for two years. (Administrator 2)

Based on the one-on one interview sessions, the researcher now contends that employees did have a sense of helplessness and disbelief about the deaccreditation of Compton Community College, but that the period of *denial* did not begin in January, 2005 and end in November, 2005. Rather it occurred at different times for each employment group and may have overlapped with other stages of the grief construct, depending on the employee.

Anger. During the one-on-one interview session, the researcher found there was a lot of *anger* towards the Compton Community College District Board of Trustees about what was happening at Compton Community College. In addition, the researcher found that the interview participants may be still experiencing some form of *anger* in 2011. Some but not all of the beliefs and emotions that the researcher hypothesized for the

anger stages of the grief construct were supported by statements made during the interview sessions. According to the online survey results, 66.0% of the study participants felt *anger* between November, 2005, and January, 2006. Some study participants who participated in the one-on-one interviews were angry about the deaccreditation of Compton Community College. For example, Staff 4 described *anger* about the deaccreditation:

I did not think that they was going to snatch their accreditation like they did.

(Staff 4)

Some interviewees were angry about how the Accrediting Commission placed the college on Show Cause, skipping the previous steps in the deaccreditation process. Staff 4 and Faculty 1 summarized their thoughts and feelings this way:

Because we was told we was on probation, then all of a sudden we was on show cause, then all of a sudden it was like a force takeover. And so, I thought we were waiting on our appeal. We never heard anything about the appeal being denied or anything. I just knew we was in the appeal process and then all of a sudden, we had another college to be our overseer which was Santa Monica at the time. I thought we were still in the appeals process. And then all of the sudden in August we was merged with El Camino College District. (Staff 4)

I thought we were getting screwed at the college in some ways. I just felt the process wasn't very fair. (Faculty1)

The statements by Staff 4 and Faculty 1 were supported by the research literature from Hoffman and Wallace (2008). In Hoffman and Wallace, the faculty felt *anger* towards the Accrediting Commission for the deaccreditation of their institution. The faculty would

rather have seen the institution placed on probation. The online survey results indicated that 61.8% of study participants had *anger* towards the Accrediting Commission.

The study participants who participated in the one-on-one interview sessions were angry at multiple individuals and/or organizations. Some were just angry at the deaccreditation process, as stated above. Others felt *anger* towards employees of Compton Community College. Staff 1 and Faculty 4 summarized their feelings of *anger* during the one-on-one interview session:

Well, to recall back I could say, yes, I did feel anger. I felt anger towards the old employees that was hired here and who were gone that I felt like, you know, they destroyed the college. (Staff 1)

Because I felt that if certain employees had kept their noses clean, so to speak, we would not be in this predicament. (Faculty 4)

To more fully understand the study participants, the researcher asked each employee their thoughts, feelings, and beliefs about the Accrediting Commission, The Chancellor of the California Community Colleges, The Compton Community College Board of Trustees members, local and statewide political leaders, and the Special Trustee. The researcher was exploring whether the study participants felt *anger* towards the above individuals and/or organization to determine if the researcher's hypotheses were correct. The researcher found some of the study participants who participated in the one-on-one interviews felt *anger* towards the above individuals and/or organization, but not all the study participants who participated in the one-on-one interview session had *anger* towards all them, as proposed in the researcher's hypotheses. The researcher saw similar results from the online survey, where 79.4% of the study participants expressed *anger*

towards the Compton Community College District Board of Trustees, and 61.8% of the study participants were angry towards the Accrediting Commission. During the one-on-one interview sessions the participants expressed *anger* towards the Compton Community College Board of Trustee members. Below are the study participants comments as they relate to the Compton Community College Board of Trustee members:

I didn't feel too happy about them. They was part of us losing our accreditation
(Staff 1)

Well to me they have disappoint me to the point that they should have resigned.
(Staff 3)

I felt a lot of anger because like I said I felt helpless in that my voice didn't count or the process wasn't being done fairly. And from what I read and what was being told from word of mouth I felt anger because it seemed like it was personal. If the board would have just resigned I believe none of this would have happened.
(Staff 4)

Disappointed. All the board members—they could have resigned. If I was on that board when they gave the option, “Would you like to resign and it may save the college?” I would have resigned right then and there. But no, they wanted to stick us. They know some of the things they did was wrong and they know it was personal. (Staff 4)

I felt that we were singled out and that regardless of all the rumors, just the fact that we were the first community college to have accreditation taken away—and listening to all the other stories of why it was taken away—I wasn't angry so much at the Commission as much as I was at the people that caused this according to

rumor—and I would have to point basically to some certain board members. And I thought that, “Wow! You know, we all have to pay the price for that.” I just thought it was just unbelievable. It really made me mad. (Faculty 2)

Yeah, I can remember pretty precisely why I felt anger, I was really angered that the administration and the board have this kind of reciprocity for lack of a better term, a symbiosis that didn't provide any type of check and balance on unbridled greed. No check and balance on the potential for engaging in illegal activities, and they certainly didn't want to hear any complaints about that from the union or any other group that brought up issues like that. (Faculty 3)

Yes I did, the first thing I felt angry about, is not at the state or the accreditation commission, but I felt angry that our local governance people, that was elected by the people of this community put us in that situation? (Administrator 2)

Anger at the Board of Trustees and members of the Senior Management team for setting up circumstances which contributed to the demise of this institution.

(Administrator 4)

I blame the Compton Community College District Board President because of the incident with the Executive Director of the Accrediting Commission, when he called out her name, this and then from that point on everything went downhill for Compton Community College. In addition, I blame the Board of Trustees.

Because if they would have resigned I believe that none of the accreditation threats and all that other stuff would have went on forward because all they wanted to do was to get rid of the board because they said they mismanaged and they wasn't managing things properly. (Staff 4)

Clearly, many of the study participants who participated in the one-on-one interview sessions were angry at the Compton Community College District Board of Trustee members. In addition, participants for this study had personal opinions about the Accrediting Commission, the Chancellor of the California Community Colleges and the Special Trustee but the most consistently expressed *anger* towards the Compton Community College District Board of Trustees.

Not only did the employees have anger towards the Board of Trustee members, they also blamed the administration for the deaccreditation of Compton Community College. This was summarized by several of the interview participants:

I wouldn't point out, you know, anyone per se, but it was just, you know, like I said the administration part of it. But the Board could have done better. (Staff 1)

The Board members were number one to blame, and of course we had administrators back then that had a lot of blame also. (Staff 3)

I think there were administrators that were equally corrupt. I think there was a level of corruption that filtered down, that there was simply benign neglect in this place. Over years, years, for years there were rumors of grades being sold, and some of this stuff with corruption really does go back to that period of time.

(Faculty 3)

The Board – the Board of Trustees and some of the administration. Because the board micromanaged the campus and the administration allowed it to happen. We had board members using the school bus to do trips to Las Vegas on the weekend. You had board members that would have fundraisers and kind of basically force you to buy tickets or you know, they raised money for people that ran for political

office, and basically at one point even asked all the administrators to give \$1,000. And I'm probably the only one who didn't and got jammed up behind it.

(Administrator 3)

The Board of Trustees and members of the Senior Management at Compton Community College. (Administrator 4)

It has to go to the top administrators. I would have to put the blame on the top administrators or people in charge cause it's under their charge and their vigilance that we're either going to sail in the same direction or we're all going to be going off in all kinds of different directions and total chaos becomes the norm for the day rather than stability, and integrity, and you know, doing things the right way.

(Faculty 2)

Participants in the interview sessions did not cast blame, as hypothesized by the researcher, on the faculty or to other employees (i.e. faculty and staff). They only blamed the Compton Community College District Board of Trustee members and the administrators. This is consistent with the online survey results, where 86.1% of the study participants blamed the Compton Community College District Board of Trustee members and 63.9% of the study participants blamed the former administrators for the deaccreditation of Compton Community College.

On the basis of the one-on-one interview sessions, some of the researcher's beliefs that were hypothesized were supported and some were not. The researcher's hypothesis about events that led the staff to being in the *anger* stage of the grief construct was not supported. There was no evidence from the interview sessions that the *anger* stage began in November, 2005, and concluded in February, 2006. When the researcher

asked the participants when they felt *anger* about the deaccreditation of Compton Community College, only two were able to describe when they felt *anger*. Administrator 1 and Faculty 3 stated:

Started in 2004 through the loss of accreditation. (Administrator 4)

Spring of 2006, spring semester, is when I remember feeling very angry, especially towards the end, especially when we were losing accreditation because that came in June 2006. (Faculty 3)

Having conducted the interviews, the researcher now contends that the study participants in 2011 might still be experiencing some form of *anger* about the deaccreditation of Compton Community College. Staff 2 expressed *anger* about the college losing its name, which occurred on August 21, 2006, and the changing of the college logo since the deaccreditation of Compton Community College:

Because I felt like we were being lied to about certain things. We were supposed to keep the Compton College name and a lot of people—employees and students—felt strongly about that at the time. And that didn't happen. We didn't keep the name. We were supposed to keep our logo which has been more recent. They didn't let us keep that really. (Staff 2)

Bargaining. During the one-on-one interview sessions, the researcher found that some form of *bargaining* was occurring among participants during the deaccreditation of Compton Community College. Similar to the online survey results, where 28.8% of the study participants stated that they sought assistance during the deaccreditation process of Compton Community College, several interview participants were having conversations with family members and community members, rather than with their state-wide

organizations or local and statewide politicians as described in the researcher's

hypotheses. Below are some of the relevant statements from the one-on-one participants:

My mom's boyfriend when I got hired here—and my dad. As a matter of fact, they knew about what was going on with the school. They knew better than me. (Staff 2)

I don't remember, people asked me in my community, like I go to church here in Compton so people they wanted to find out exactly what had happened. I discussed it with some people, I discussed it with family members, you know they live in Compton, and at the house I would tell them what was going on. Just regular conversations, why did you lose your de-accreditation? I mean don't you guys have a good nursing program going? I heard on the news you guys have a very good nursing program, why did you lose your de-accreditation. So I have to go back to why the deaccreditation came, why the board members got upset with their accreditation team, they got into it, they threatened each other, and then how the Assembly person came on board. I mean you have to kind of give the background so people understand why we lost our accreditation, because people had the idea that we lost our accreditation because we are horrible, we were not doing our job, that teachers were not good, this and that, and it wasn't that. We had good solid teachers, we had good teachers, we still do, but people thought that's why we lost our accreditation, because we were good for nothing. We weren't doing our job. (Staff 3)

Just various family and friends because they're concerned about, you know, people's jobs, teaching and things of that nature. But other than that it was just a

question of disbelief, not really comprehending the total complexities of why we lost our accreditation, and just bouncing that off of various people, and getting their opinions and their ideas. For the most part, maybe just a little shoulder to cry on basically. (Faculty 2)

My family members, they wanted to know what was happening at the institution. I was too embarrassed to talk about the whole process; however I did speak with my family members. (Administrator 4)

In some cases, participants did not want to talk to others outside of the institution about the deaccreditation. For example, Staff 4 and Administrator 1 did not want to discuss the matter with others:

Because they were reading it in the paper and I didn't bring it up. (Staff 4)

I don't remember discussing, that was nothing to be proud of. My position was to do everything that was possible to ensure that we provided quality services for our students, and the people that we serve, because they were really not responsible for what had happened, but they deserved to receive the education that's deemed necessary for everyone. That was my thought, but I think it was unnecessary, unfortunate that our leaders just didn't make wise decisions to take us in a direction that would have been more beneficial for this community. I think having a conversation about it would have been worse. The image was out there, and a lot of people just didn't know, and then me being an administrator I certainly didn't want to speak in a negative way against any parties, the board, because those are the same people that would have to help us get to the next level. So I just feel that there were some bad decisions made, and sometimes people

make decisions, all of us make errors or may not use our best judgment

(Administrator 1)

The researcher's hypothesis for the *bargaining* stage contended that the employees were in favor of Assembly Bill 318. This was supported in the one-on-one interview sessions:

I don't know if it was to help us or to hurt us. At that time I was very much pleased. Because it was going to save people their jobs. (Staff 1)

I think it was a good thing. It saved the college as far as I could tell. But I don't know if it saved us or not. (Staff 2)

Assembly Bill 318 they say saved the college, but it also gave the Chancellor power to put that special trustee in to like take control. So you know, they say it saved the college and then sometimes I wonder. They gave the Chancellor's office too much power. (Staff 4)

You know, I was happy with it. I mean, cause I think it was a choice. At that point the choice was, "Either we're going to close it down or we're going to stay open". And you know, I was concerned about our students and also about my job to be quite frank. I don't know if people realize what was going on. I don't think some people realize how important it was. At that point I don't know if I got into the details that much. They're just thankful that they passed the bill. And then later on you knew that they hammered out this bill and then they had to figure out what it really meant. "Okay. We want to save the college. We're going to spend this money." And then later on they're, "Okay. What does this all really mean though?" I mean, even to this day I think they're still working out a few things.

(Faculty 1)

I thought it was a fantastic piece of legislation. I think it did a lot of good for us. I didn't get into the details and all of that. But at the time the only thing that really mattered to me personally—and I think to a lot of people—is that we can come to work the next day, you know, and the next week, and the next month. (Faculty 2)

Absolutely I supported AB 318, as a union person, it saved jobs, but it also, more to the point in the reality of an educational institution you want to keep the doors open for student access. So not only did it preserve the jobs of the faculty, most of the faculty, but it also allowed the institution to remain open. Not under its own name, but as an educational institution, and it doesn't matter what you call it if it's providing access to the community's students. (Faculty 3)

I felt that it was necessary, and I am glad that it passed. Because if it hadn't we wouldn't have jobs, we wouldn't have an institution any more, and we wouldn't be educating any more. (Faculty 4)

I think it was very necessary had we not had 318 we probably wouldn't be an institution today. (Administrator 1)

I believe at that time that was the best you could do, to be honest with you, because once it had gone that far, closure was a reality. It was a definite reality. I really don't really believe that the legislator who is often blamed for it, I don't believe he thought it would go that far, and it looked to me that he was doing the best he could to back pedal and cover mistakes that he had put the college into. So it was the best of a bad situation; actually there was no alternative, there are forces who wouldn't care if the college didn't stay open, and frankly that special legislation was the only thing that saved it. (Administrator 2)

I thought it was positive. Because it kept the college open, because I think, just given the nature of community colleges in California, which is unique to any place else in the U.S., you have colleges in every neighborhood and I think that it kept the doors open and did not deprive the community of, you know, a place for higher education in the community. (Administrator 3)

I was happy about the bill, because it keep the doors open and kept jobs for the employees and the school for the community. (Administrator 4)

The above support of Assembly Bill 318 indicated by the one-on-one interview participants was confirmed by the online survey results. The online survey showed that 80.0% of the study participants supported Assembly Bill 318. From the one-on-one interview session, Staff 4 was concerned that the Chancellor of the California Community College would have too much control of what happens at Compton Community College:

Assembly Bill 318, they say, saved the college, but it also gave the Chancellor power to put that special trustee in to like take control. So you know, they say it saved the college and then sometimes I wonder. They gave the Chancellor's office too much power. (Staff 4)

From the one-on-one interview responses, the researcher concluded that all participants were pleased with the Assembly 318 because it “kept the doors” open to the institution and employees were able to keep their jobs. Even though the interview participants were pleased with Assembly Bill 318, only three had conversations with their local and/ or statewide politicians, two of whom were faculty members. Below are expressions of their thoughts, feelings, and beliefs about their conversations related to Assembly Bill 318:

Well I talked to the staff director for the Assembly person, who wrote the bill, because I used to work for the Assembly person for 5 years. (Staff 3)

So, I've been active with faculty throughout the years. Every once in a while I'd talk to them. I'd call them to talk to them about things, ask them about things. I was lobbying for us, you know, even lobbying the legislators to drop the whole process. (Faculty 1)

We met with our local Assembly person primarily, we met later on with the Assembly Bill 318 vote with another local Assembly person and had various other conversations. (Faculty 3)

Based on the one-on-one interview sessions, the researcher's hypotheses about the events that led the employees to being in the *bargaining* stage of the grief construct were not supported. There was no evidence from the one-on-one interview sessions that supported the contention that the *bargaining* stage began in November, 2005, and concluded in June, 2006. In fact, the researcher concluded that employees could still be experiencing the *bargaining* stage of the grief construct in 2011.

Depression. The researcher found there was some form of *depression* among the one-on-one interview participants during the deaccreditation of Compton Community College. Participants were sad and discouraged about the deaccreditation of Compton Community College after they received their layoff notices. This pattern of responses was similar to the online survey results, where 68.6% of the participants felt sad and discouraged, compared to 19.6% who did not feel sad and discouraged. The discouragement was expressed by the study participants who participated in the one-on-one interview sessions:

At that time I was really hurt because I was one of the ones who got the layoff notice. And at that time my concern was, you know, not being employed and you know, feeding my family not being taking care of. (Staff 1)

I thought well, you know, because they said everybody was going to get one. I thought for sure now we're going to be gone. Maybe this place for good is going to close down, because I had never received a letter. (Staff 3)

Several things, felt a sense of resignation, impotence, nothing you could do about it significantly, you lost this one, what a tragedy, looks like it's been a terrible waste, wouldn't be so bad if it was done for the improvement of the college, but when you saw the college was declining and was steadily declining further by the moves that were being made, the whole thing made for a depressing feeling.

(Administrator 2)

In some cases after receiving their layoff notice, the interview participants began looking for other forms of employment, and in one case was working two jobs:

Absolutely! Absolutely cause you didn't really know. (Staff 1)

I kept two jobs, yes. I had a full-time night job and full-time this job. (Staff 2)

I think I mentioned earlier I made a conscious decision to look for a job.

(Faculty 1)

I always look for another job. I always look for another job every year.

(Administrator 3)

In the online survey results two-thirds (66.7%) of the study participants did not lose hope that Compton Community College would remain open. However during the

one-on-one interviews some employees feared what was going to happen to their institution. This fear was expressed summarized by Staff 3:

Yeah, you kind of were wondering, especially you know how you fear the unknown, that's what it was like, because first Santa Monica took us over, and then they were gone, and then El Camino, and then El Camino came and imposed their rules. So that was kind of stressful, to digest everything. (Staff 3)

The researcher's hypothesis about the events that led the staff to being in the *depression* stage of the grief construct was not supported. No evidence from the study participants who participated in the one-on-one interview sessions supported the researcher's hypothesis that the *depression* stage began in March, 2006, and concluded in August, 2006. In fact, the researcher has concluded that the employees may still be experiencing the *depression* stage of the grief construct in 2011.

Acceptance. During the one-on-one interview sessions, the researcher found there was some form of acceptance of the deaccreditation of Compton Community College. The hypotheses for the *acceptance* stage of the grief construct were supported by remarks made in the one-on-one interview sessions. The staff was satisfied with the passage of Assembly Bill 318:

Somewhat relieved. (Staff 2)

I remember I went online, you know how you go online and check the bills, and you see you know what's pending, and every day I used to check the bills to see how it was, and one day I find out click and it was approved, signed by the governor, and I said well this is it. We are now going to be under scrutiny to the max. (Staff 3)

Well, at that time I felt, “Wow! AB318 saved the doors and we all—the majority of us—get to keep our jobs.” (Staff 4)

I was pleased. I mean, I was happy because it meant basically we’re going to stay open. Although, see, at that point we didn’t even have a partner, right? I was happy. I mean, it meant they were going to try to keep the college open. (Faculty 1)

Total relief. I mean, I was just very happy to see that happen and I was very grateful to all the people involved in that process. (Faculty 2)

Ecstatic, I mean we were really happy. Because we had worked really hard to get it passed, it was a long process, it was nail biting. You know the whole time it was on the floor of the legislature. It was so unnerving, it was a real nail biting time. We were watching the emails, we were listening to the count. You know that was really unnerving. (Faculty 3)

It was probably in the summer; I didn’t learn about it until the summer, and I saw that it might be salvageable, it might salvage something, but what would be the final outcome I did not know But I knew that that was better than nothing, and it was like a last breath before death, and so obviously that was favorable, at least it would save the college, at least it would give it some life support until it could be salvaged. (Administrator 2)

I knew that was the only hope that the college had to survive. so a positive acceptance. (Administrator 1)

However, some interviewees were concerned that the institution was going to be under additional scrutiny with the passage of Assembly Bill 318. This concern was summarized by Staff 3:

I remember I went online, you know how you go online and check the bills, and you see you know what's pending, and every day I used to check the bills to see how it was, and one day I find out click and it was approved, signed by the governor, and I said well this is it. We are now going to be under scrutiny to the max. (Staff 3)

The researcher's hypothesis that the employees did in fact accept the deaccreditation of Compton Community College because they were allowed to maintain their employment was supported. Staff 1 was typical on this point:

I was very pleased. We knew that the college was being saved by someone taking over at El Camino. And again, you know, students would be able to receive their education here, didn't have to go anywhere else, people would still be employed. (Staff 1)

Two of the three hypotheses about the events that led the staff to being in the *acceptance* stage of the grief construct was supported during the one-on-one interview session but there were no clear evidence from the one-on-one interview participants that supported the hypothesis that employees were pleased with the partnership with Santa Monica College during the summer of 2006 or with the partnership with El Camino College. This differs from the responses the researcher received from the online survey, in which 82% of the study participants indicated they were pleased with the partnership with Santa Monica College and 68% of the study participants said they were pleased with

the partnership with El Camino College. The researcher concludes from the one-on-one interviews that employees might still be experiencing the *acceptance* stage of the grief construct in 2011.

I don't know if I'm still in denial, or I don't know what is going on. Especially now that we have heard so much about getting our accreditation back and we need to work towards getting our accreditation back, I feel like this is a temporary stage of the college. Like, okay, El Camino is taking over, and we have the MOU and all the things, but I feel it's a temporary basis, not permanent. Maybe this is denial still. I don't know, but I still hope before I retire I will see the Compton district running back the way it was or better. (Staff 3)

Yeah. It's hard to know if I accepted it. I mean, at a certain point—right—I accepted the fact that we're going to get nixed because at a certain point the focus shifted to, "You need to somehow get a partner". You know, we accepted that. (Faculty 1)

Focus Group Results

The hypotheses tested in this study were anchored by the Kubler-Ross grief construct. Together, these hypotheses formed an initial model of the beliefs, feelings, emotions, and perceptions of the employees of Compton Community College. The focus sessions allowed the researcher an opportunity to examine whether the researcher's hypotheses actually reflected how the deaccreditation of Compton Community College affected the employment groups. In addition, two other themes emerged from the sessions and were coded and then categorized into the following: *assistances to other*

institutions and *future directions*. The focus results are presented as follows: *grief construct*, *assistance to other institutions*, and *future directions*.

Grief Construct. The focus group for this study explored the recommendations for future research from Kearny and Hyle (2003), who asked participants to speak on how their experience fit or did not fit existing grief models. Kearny and Hyle (2003) suggest that this would allow better clarification of the grief model. During each of the focus group sessions for administrator, faculty, and staff it became apparent to the researcher that the focus group participants believed the model being presented by the researcher accurately reflected the study participants' beliefs, feelings, emotions, and perceptions during the deaccreditation of Compton Community College. The following statements summarize the response from the focus group sessions:

I think it does because as you, the way that you are doing it, the steps through, like going through death and that is how everything went. I mean people, you know they got angry and they went through all these different things. Because they were in fear of what was going to happen to their jobs mostly, I think is what happened and then also what was going to happen to the college, was it going to disappear? The college has been a vital institution in the community for many years and they just didn't want to see it go away. They were willing to do whatever we had to do to make sure that we kept our jobs and kept the doors open. (Staff 5)

I think this model is helpful. (Staff 5)

Yes. (Staff 6)

I believe it's accurate. (Staff 7)

Because we went through each of those stages. (Staff 5)

We went through those things. (Staff 7)

Well, I think it does. I think, I can only speak for myself. I took, but at first it was denied. I couldn't believe. When I said the news, I said, "What?" I think we were all convinced that it would overturned either through the work of the chancellor or the legislators. We had a lot of hope that the Commission and also but our special people, we thought that Interim President and the first Special Trustee would able to turn it around and I don't think we really expected it. Then, when they actually did it, I was in shock, I couldn't believe they would do it to a public college in a minority community and then we started scrambling. What the hell did we do?

And we had to bargain; bargain Perlta Community College District, Santa Monica Community College, the Chancellor, Interim President, Assembly Person, and good god. That was most of the leadership. On the rank and file, I don't know if they knew all of the things that the leadership was doing, but that is true and we barely got the bill passed. It was signed by the governor in the last possible time.(Faculty 5)

I'm just going through it with the development stages of Kubler-Ross with these group stages that signify the grief of someone that's going through some traumatic experience and expecting demise so I clearly understand those development stages. They're also part of dying as well. So I see the correlation.

(Administrator 1)

But the way it's been laid out when you say denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance, I think that's a pretty good analysis. That's just the way I'm seeing it. (Administrator 2)

Yeah. I would agree with that. Although the thing about the lay-off notices that was something new to me because ever since I came here we were getting, a May fifteenth letter but everyone else I think was really shocked by it.

(Administrator 3)

I do agree. (Administrator 5)

Well to me it provided some framework for putting it all together. And if you look at all the various feelings and stages that a person goes through is helpful too when you have a handle or means of being able to put it all together and to lay it out. And this serves a good person because I had a whole gang of feelings but they weren't organized and that's what this does. It organized and allowed me to put the whole spectrum of feelings into perspective. And because they did evolve, they didn't all come at once. One stage led to another state and the outcome of what occurred at those stages lead to another phase in terms of our feelings and our mindset. (Administrator 2)

As shown above, the administrators, faculty, and staff who participated in the focus group sessions agreed that the model presented actually reflects the employee's beliefs, feelings, emotions, and perceptions during the deaccreditation of Compton Community College. However, during the one-on-one interview and focus group sessions the researchers contends that hypotheses for the events that led to each grief construct stage and the timeline associated with each of the grief stages did not conform; rather, the

grief stages occurred at different times for each Compton Community College employee and may have overlapped with other stages of the grief construct, depending on the employee.

Assistances to other institutions. During the focus group session, the researcher explored how this model and/or the deaccreditation of Compton Community College could serve to assist other institutions who are on the path to deaccreditation. Below are response from the staff focus group session:

Ok, with denial I would tell them to wake up and smell the coffee. You know look around and just take things the way they are because it's never the way it seems. You have to really be truthful even then too with this denial thing, not so much just the institution in itself, people have to come out of this denial themselves, personally. We had people personally walking around and I would talk to someone and they would say "No, that's not going on". Come on, they've been there longer than I am; they know what's going on. (Staff 7)

The anger stage? Get over it. Really. You created that anger while you were walking around in denial. That's why you're so angry now because you feel someone has done you wrong when you could have opened your eyes and saw this coming and saw this happening. (Staff 7)

Well, we can start with the trustee, start with the CEO, somebody that will just listen, that will empty the feelings that are harbored inside and you can get them out. Now, what might happen I don't know but at least we can be heard? Everyone can be heard and there won't be any of these little

side mark conversations where information is getting back to us as incorrect in the first place. (Staff 7)

I feel that depression, that if you have someone to talk to about all of the problems (Staff 6)

And the union has an officer and they can bring in counselors to sit down and talk with. It's just the same as if a shooting happens somewhere, the grief and the depression that people feel then, you can have counselors come in and sit and talk with us to help us to deal with it. (Staff 7)

I think it would be helpful, especially in the acceptance stage. If another college comes and helps them out, I don't want to say takeover because a lot of people see it as a takeover but I saw it and I still do and I'm not afraid to say that in any group of people that I saw the El Camino company coming in not as a takeover but to help us get out of this situation and you have to be willing to help. You can't bite the hand that feeds you. You have to be willing to accept the help that anyone extends to you. Of course we're mad, we lost our college and all of that but if someone is going to throw you a life jacket (Staff 7)

Below are the counterpart faculty responses:

Look for a job. (Faculty 5)

Save yourself some stress (Faculty 6)

How can you give advice like that, There is no advice. You either close or you stay open. (Faculty 6)

There are so many reasons for the loss of accreditation actually. We tried to get different board members, that didn't work. It might have helped, but we needed to whole set of change in the board, we needed everybody.
(Faculty 3)

Below are the administrators' responses to how this model could assist other institutions who are on the path to deaccreditation:

I think it would educationally beneficial to, in any institution that might be experiencing a situation of the magnitude that occurred at Compton college because what it does is, it shows the steps that they went through with the stages and it also gives a credence to that you don't remain at that statement, that there's life after death. (Administrator 1)

No you're not. The thing that comes to my mind right now really is outside the scope of the model. Because the model is based on the assumption and it does very well after people have lost their accreditation. So I think one of the most helpful things to other people would be looking at what put us in a position and what could we have done to protect our long-term interests to prevent the college from ever being in a position to lose its accreditation. Now the model doesn't lend itself to that. That to me would be one of the most useful aspects but for a college that has lost it, you can't beat this model. The thing that comes into my mind, I look at how we evolved as a campus the six or seven years leading up to the loss of the accreditation. And it was an evolving process and it's almost like a frog in water, if you put a frog in cold water and gradually increase the temperature and allow his body to adjust, he would be eventually dead, cook him up to a ball and

he'll cook him to death because you did it in small increments and that's what occurred here. If you look at the behavior of our board from eighty-nine, gradually all the way up until the point of the loss of accreditation. We sat there and because we were intimidated and we feared the loss of our jobs, we shut up and buried our heads in the sand and allowed nobodies who were crooks to rape our school and put it in a position where somebody could come in and take it over. (Administrator 2)

I would like to speak to that because I think that at that time there were two-fold things happening. One, we were achieving, we were at our highest enrollment. We had won two state championships in basketball. I mean there were areas that were flush and we had two federal programs. And so we had won a state program that was the largest in the state for foster care and AmeriCrops program so we were striving in one area and then in another area they were peril so my thought is that these should be a warning sign to an institution facing peril. These things should be in neon lights. What not to notice as a warning sign and move in another direction to avoid this process. (Administrator 1)

Future Directions. Many of the faculty, staff, and administrators who participated in the study enjoyed the opportunity to speak and discuss what happened to Compton Community College. In the faculty focus group session, Faculty Member 6 mentioned that the African-American faculty had a tougher time dealing with the deaccreditation of Compton Community College because of racism. Below is an excerpt from this participant's comments:

I was stunned that in 2006 that whites could still be that racist. I'm going to just put this on the table, because I was really stunned, because it had nothing to do with academics, it had to do with race. So, I was strictly stunned at the behavior of the Commission, because I for one, had hoped by the time we reached the 2000s that racism was on the decline significantly, but I was wrong. And I've been wrong before. (Faculty 6)

Throughout the one-on-one interview sessions and during the staff and administrator focus group sessions, the researcher did not receive responses from the participants that they felt the deaccreditation of Compton Community College was due to perceived racism on the part of the Accrediting Commission. Furthermore, Faculty Member 5 thought that because the institution was a majority black institution, the Accrediting Commission would not close Compton Community College. The researcher now contends that the data from this study should be analyzed in future research to explore if a variation exists among the study participant's beliefs, feelings, emotions, and perceptions during the deaccreditation of Compton Community College among different racial and ethnic groups.

CHAPTER V–DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to understand the beliefs, feelings, emotions, and perceptions of Compton Community College District employees during the deaccreditation of their institution. In this chapter, the researcher will address the following three research questions that were explored in this research study:

1. Do the beliefs, feelings, emotions, and perceptions of the Compton Community College District employees conform to the stages of the Kubler-Ross grief construct?
2. What variations exist in the grief process among the different employee groups of Compton Community College District?
3. Were the stages of the grief construct functional or dysfunctional in helping the personnel negotiate change in the institution?

The researcher triangulated the data from three sources: online survey results, one-on-one interviews, and the focus groups, to answer the three research questions.

Summary of Findings

Research Question 1

Do the beliefs, feelings, emotions, and perceptions of Compton Community College District employees conform to the stages of the Kubler-Ross grief construct?

From the triangulated data, the researcher inferred that employees of Compton Community College significantly experienced the stages of the Kubler-Ross grief construct during the deaccreditation of Compton Community College. Moreover, some of the employees may still be experiencing the stages in 2011. The researcher now contends that each stage of the grief construct occurred at variable time period for each employee,

and each stage sometimes overlapped with others, depending on the employee. Even though the study participants experienced the different stages of the grief construct to some degree, some of the researcher's hypotheses concerning the stages were weakly supported or not supported at all. The only stage in which all of the researcher's hypotheses were supported was the *acceptance* stage. In the *denial* stage, the staff and the faculty largely believed the deaccreditation would not happen; some of the administrators believed the deaccreditation would occur (37.5%) and some did not (37.5%). In addition, half (50%) of the administrators believed the appeal would be denied, an expectation that also conforms to *denial*. Furthermore, Staff and administrators in the *denial* stage felt the deaccreditation of Compton Community College had nothing to do with classroom instruction. Initially, the researcher asserted that only the faculty believed the deaccreditation decision had nothing to do with classroom instruction. In the online survey, however, only 19.2 % of the staff and 12.5% of administrators believed the deaccreditation of Compton Community College was because of the poor quality of classroom instruction.

In the hypothesized *anger* stage, study participants did not feel anger toward the local and statewide political leaders, nor did they feel anger toward either of the Special Trustees who were appointed to oversee Compton Community College District. The study participants did feel *anger* toward the Accrediting Commission, the Compton Community College District Board of Trustees, and the former administrators. In addition, the researcher's hypothesized that during the *anger* stage each employment group began to blame others for the deaccreditation of their institution was shared by some, but not all, participants.

In association with the *bargaining* stage, the researcher initially asserted that the employees sought assistance from their union leadership, local and state-wide politicians, community members, and state-wide organizations they were affiliated with, to help save their institution from being deaccredited. This hypothesis was not supported in the findings for this study. A large majority (71.2%) of participants did not seek assistance or guidance during the deaccreditation of Compton Community College. Furthermore, during the one-on-one interviews, several participants indicated that they did not want to discuss the deaccreditation of Compton Community College during 2005-2006. Moreover, if the study participants did discuss the deaccreditation of Compton Community College, they did so primarily with their family members.

Finally, in association with the *depression* stage, the researcher initially asserted that the employees sought guidance regarding their employment after receiving their layoff notice, dated March 26, 2006. In some cases employees did seek guidance; however less than one-quarter (23.5%) of participants indicated they received guidance. The researcher's initial assertion was not supported in the online survey results, one-on-one interviews, or focus group sessions. Also, the researcher initially hypothesized that during the *depression* stage employees gave up hope that the institution would survive. This was not supported in the research study findings, as two-thirds (66.7%) of participants did not lose hope that Compton Community College would remain open.

Table 32 summarizes the researcher's findings on how the deaccreditation of Compton Community College District affected the employment groups, organized by grief stages.

Table 32. Summary of Findings on How the Deaccreditation of Compton Community College District Affected the Employment Groups

Grief Stages	Administrators Beliefs/Emotions	Faculty Beliefs/Emotions	Staff Beliefs/Emotions
DENIAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Believed the deaccreditation would be denied through the appeals process. • Felt that the deaccreditation had nothing to do with classroom instruction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did not believe the deaccreditation would occur. • Believed the deaccreditation would be overturned through the appeals process • Felt that the deaccreditation had nothing to do with classroom instruction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did not believe the deaccreditation would occur. • Believed the deaccreditation would be overturned through the appeals process • Felt that the deaccreditation had nothing to do with classroom instruction
ANGER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Felt anger toward: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Accrediting Commission ○ The Chancellor of the California Community Colleges ○ The Compton Community College District Board of Trustees • Blamed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Accrediting Commission ○ The Chancellor of the California Community Colleges ○ The Compton Community College District Board of Trustees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Felt anger toward: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Accrediting Commission ○ The Chancellor of the California Community Colleges ○ The Compton Community College District Board of Trustees • Blamed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Accrediting Commission ○ The Chancellor of the California Community Colleges ○ The Compton Community College District Board of Trustees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Felt anger toward: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Accrediting Commission ○ The Chancellor of the California Community Colleges ○ The Compton Community College District Board of Trustees • Blamed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Accrediting Commission ○ The Chancellor of the California Community Colleges ○ The Compton Community College District Board of Trustees

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Administrators ○ Former administrators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Administrators ○ Former administrators 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Administrators ○ Former administrators
BARGAINING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Supported Assembly Bill 318, the special legislation to save the institution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Supported Assembly Bill 318, the special legislation to save the institution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Supported Assembly Bill 318, the special legislation to save the institution
DEPRESSION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Felt sad and discouraged after receiving layoff notices ● Concerned about whether they would have employment ● Hope that the institution would be remain. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Felt sad and discouraged after receiving layoff notices ● Concerned about whether they would have employment ● Hope that the institution would be remain. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Felt sad and discouraged after receiving layoff notices ● Concerned about whether they would have employment ● Hope that the institution would be remain.
ACCEPTANCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Satisfied with the passage of Assembly Bill 318 ● Were pleased with the partnership with Santa Monica College, during the summer of 2006 ● Accepted the deaccreditation of Compton Community College, and the agreement with El Camino College, because they were allowed to maintain their employment status while providing services for El Camino College 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Satisfied with the passage of Assembly Bill 318 ● Were pleased with the partnership with Santa Monica College, during the summer of 2006 ● Accepted the deaccreditation of Compton Community College, and the agreement with El Camino College, because they were allowed to maintain their employment status while teaching El Camino College courses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Satisfied with the passage of Assembly Bill 318 ● Were pleased with the partnership with Santa Monica College, during the summer of 2006 ● Accepted the deaccreditation of Compton Community College, and the agreement with El Camino College, because they were allowed to maintain their employment status while providing services for El Camino College

Research Question 2

What variations exist in the grief process of Compton Community College District among the different employee groups?

As shown in Table 32, some variation was found in the grief process among the Compton Community College District employee groups. Variation existed in the *denial* stage, in which many administrators believed Compton Community College would be deaccredited and the deaccreditation appeal would be denied. In this the study, the variations in the Kubler-Ross grief construct were more frequently found among the administrators. One underlying reason for the variation is that administrators had greater access to information during the deaccreditation process compared to their counterparts. As noted in Chapter 1, Compton Community College received various correspondences from the Accrediting Commission during the deaccreditation process. Those correspondences included letters and the supporting documentation from the Accrediting Commission that place the institution on Show Cause and the letter that took action to terminate the institution accreditation.

In the letter to the Compton Community College President dated January 31, 2005, the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges placed the institution on Show Cause, because Compton Community College was out of compliance in the following areas: Fiscal Management and Stability of the College, Human Resources and Personnel Practices, and Leadership and Governance. In the area of Fiscal Management and Stability, the Accrediting Commission noted six areas in which Compton Community College was out of compliance with the Commission standards. One of the six areas noted was Compton Community College use of an interim Business

Officer. The Accrediting Commission recommended that Compton Community College begin the process of hiring a permanent Chief Business Officer (Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, January 2005). In addition, the Accrediting Commission recommended that Compton Community College review its administrative structure for efficacy and that the College should implement an administrative evaluation system that would enable the President to hold the administrative staff responsible for their job performance (Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, January 2005).

In the area of Human Resources and Personnel Practices, the Accrediting Commission noted seven areas in which Compton Community College was out of compliance with Commission standards. One of the seven areas noted was that the College should review all job descriptions and revise them to ensure that they represent the skill sets needed to fulfill the duties and responsibilities assigned to each position (Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, January 2005). In addition, the Accrediting Commission recommended that the College conduct on a regular basis personnel evaluations and that the college establish and implement a written code of ethics policy for all Compton Community College District personnel (Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, January 2005).

Finally, in the area of Leadership and Governance the Accrediting Commission noted ten areas in which Compton Community College was out of compliance with the commission standards. One of the ten noted was that the college should provide basic skills training to the members of the Compton Community College District Board of Trustee members and the Compton Community College District Board of Trustees

should design and implement an annual evaluation of the Board of Trustees performance (Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, January 2005). In addition, the Accrediting Commission recommended that the College review and revise its entire governance process to ensure that appropriate and significant voices provide input to the administration and faculty on academic matters and that budgetary and other decisions are made utilizing a sound governance and decision making process (Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, January 2005).

In the letter dated June 17, 2005, the Accrediting Commission took action to terminate the accreditation of Compton Community College because the College continued to be out of compliance with the Commission standards (Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges, June 2005). Having access to these documents, administrators fully understood why the College would be deaccredited and the deaccreditation appeal would be denied.

Research Question 3

Were the stages of the grief construct functional or dysfunctional in helping the personnel negotiate change in the institution?

Based on the research study results, the researcher contends that the *denial*, *anger*, *bargaining*, and *depression* stages of the grief construct were mostly dysfunctional for the personnel as they negotiated change in the institution. However, the researcher contends that the acceptance stage of the grief construct was functional in helping personnel negotiate change. The study participants were in full support of Assembly Bill 318, and were pleased with the agreements with Santa Monica College and El Camino College because it “kept the doors open” to their institution. This acceptance of a

compromised solution allowed them to continue their employment at the institution under a new arrangement.

Limitations of the Study

There were several limitations to this study. First, this study included specific questions about the deaccreditation of Compton Community College. The deaccreditation of this institution happened five years prior, and some of the study participants did not accurately remember the details of events that led to the deaccreditation and some could not recall their beliefs, feelings, emotions, and perceptions they had during the deaccreditation of Compton Community College.

Second, the sample size for the online survey results was low, placing into question the generalizability of finding from the online survey. The researcher sent two emails to all Compton Community College District employees asking for their participation in the study. In addition, several employees, who were randomly selected for the one-on-one interview session and the focus group sessions, declined to participate because they were too busy with their current work assignments. In some cases, they declined to participate in the one-on-one interview session and the focus group sessions because they did not want to talk about the deaccreditation of Compton Community College.

The third limitation to the study was that the researcher is a current administrator of the Compton Community College District and the manager of the departments that many of the employees were assigned to. Some employees who work in the departments under the administrator declined to participate because they did not want their thoughts, feelings, and beliefs about the deaccreditation of Compton Community College to be

shared with the administration at either the Compton College or El Camino College. The researcher on several occasions shared the Institutional Review Board approved Study Information Sheet with employees who had concerns about the study. However, some employees still chose not to participate. If further studies are to be conducted about the thoughts, feelings, and beliefs of Compton Community College employees, the researcher strongly recommends that a researcher with no affiliation to Compton Community College and/or El Camino College conduct the study. This independence will allow the employees of Compton Community College to feel more comfortable about participating in the study, and the researcher believes this will generate more participation.

Recommendations

This study yielded valuable information about the employees' thoughts, feelings, and beliefs about the deaccreditation of Compton Community College. This research can help colleges that are in the process of deaccreditation anticipate actions, beliefs, feelings, emotions, and perceptions of their employees during the deaccreditation process.

The first recommendation is that such institutions implement the counseling strategies recommended by Finley and Lee (1981), including: access their family patterns, assess their "sociometric" stability, and access their significant others as professional resources, and provide the employees with self-help literature. The researcher contends that the administration of Compton Community College should have assessed each employee during the deaccreditation process and provided them with support or self-help literature to assist them through the grieving process. For example, Staff Member 6 was dealing with the loss of a child. If the administration of Compton

Community College had known this, they might have provided the staff member with additional counseling support to assist in the dual grieving losses being faced. During the deaccreditation of Compton Community College, the institution should have provided positive and mental activities, as Finley and Lee (1981) recommend. This would have allowed for the employees to feel they were not alone in dealing with the deaccreditation of Compton Community College. The college administration should have assisted each employee with developing a professional plan. The plan could have included where the individual saw themselves professionally in the next five to ten years. From this professional plan, Compton Community College officials could have developed professional development activities for the employees. Employees who needed to attend college to receive an advanced degree should have been given the opportunity to do so. The professional development workshops could have also given employees the opportunity to learn valuable skills to be used in their current position or in different position within another institution/organization.

In addition, Compton Community College could have provided employees with job announcements about positions available at other institutions. This would have given the employees a sense that someone cared about them and their future employment. Compton Community College could also have developed exercise or fitness activities for the employees during the workday, which would have kept stress level down during the deaccreditation process. The above-mentioned activities could have provided the employees with an opportunity to plan for the future and would have addressed some of their thoughts, feelings, and beliefs during the deaccreditation of Compton Community College.

The second recommendation is to provide information sessions to the employees when the institution received correspondences (i.e. letters and the supporting documentation) from the Accrediting Commission regarding the deaccreditation of the institution. The deaccreditation process may have been less painful and more transparent to the employees if they have access to the information. During the information session, the administration should address employees' concerns about the deaccreditation of their institution. The institution should have utilized these information sessions to assess how the employees are feeling about the deaccreditation at that particular moment. The third recommendation is to work with the faculty, staff labor leaders, and the college administration to establish small group meetings with departments to discuss the deaccreditation process. In these meetings, staff and faculty would be given an opportunity to discuss how they are dealing with the possible closure of their institution.

The fourth recommendation is that the college administration provides workshops for the administrators on campus to assist them with dealing with the deaccreditation of their institution. Many administrators who participated in the study knew what was happening at Compton Community College during the deaccreditation process, but were not provided with training on how to deal with their employees' feelings during this period. The administrators should have met more often during the deaccreditation process, so that the administrators who were working with the staff on a day-to-day basis were fully informed. This would have enabled those administrators to lead the group meetings mentioned in the third recommendation, above. This recommendation is supported by the Perlman and Takacs' (1990) article "10 Stages of Change," which

provided assistance to executives, managers, and supervisors by providing them with tools to make decisions about dealing with change within their own organizations.

Future Directions of the Study

The researcher offers two recommendations for future directions from this study. The first is to examine whether variations exist in the grief process of Compton Community College District employees by ethnicity. During the faculty focus group session, the study participants discussed how the African-American employees felt that the deaccreditation had a lot to do with racism. In this study, the researcher did not ask, nor did he explore racism and/or how perceived racism might have affected the employees during the deaccreditation of their institution. In addition, one of the faculty members in the focus group mentioned that the white faculty believed that the deaccreditation of Compton Community College would not happen since it was perceived to be a historically black institution. The researcher believes this issue needs to be explored in future research. The data from this study may be a starting point. By examining the online survey results and conducting another set of information sessions with each of the employment groups, a researcher could explore the African-American employees' beliefs, feelings, emotions, and perceptions and compare those results to those of other ethnic groups. Furthermore, the researcher recommends that additional one-on-one interviews be conducted with the African-American employees and members of other ethnic groups to explore whether they felt or witnessed acts of racism during the deaccreditation of Compton Community College.

The second recommendation is to closely examine whether and how the employees accepted the deaccreditation of their institution. Some of the employees who

participated in the one-on-one interviews and in the focus group session mentioned they still have not accepted the partnership with El Camino Community College. The researcher contends that additional research should be conducted to explore the employees' perceptions of the partnership with El Camino College. The researcher believes this information will be useful to administrators of El Camino College and the Compton Community College District. In addition, this information will be useful to other colleges that enter into a similar agreement as the one formed between El Camino College and the Compton Community College District.

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Appendix A-Online Survey Questions

1. I wish to participate in the study
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

2. Were you an employee of Compton Community College District from January 1, 2005 through September 30, 2006?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

3. During the **2005-2006** academic year, what was your job classification?
 - a. Classified Staff
 - b. Full-time Faculty
 - c. Part-time Faculty
 - d. Supervisor, Manager, or Administrator

4. What is your current job classification? (**Select the classification in which you spend the most time**)
 - a. Classified Staff
 - b. Full-time Faculty
 - c. Part-time Faculty
 - d. Supervisor, Manager, or Administrator

5. During the **2005-2006** academic year, how many years **had** you been employed with the Compton Community College District?
 - a. Less than 4 years
 - b. 4-5 years
 - c. 6-10 years
 - d. 11-15 years
 - e. 16-20 years
 - f. 21-25 years
 - g. Over 26 years

6. Gender
 - a. Female
 - b. Male

7. What is your ethnicity? (**Select all that apply**)
 - a. American Indian or Alaska Native
 - b. Asian
 - c. Black or African American
 - d. Hispanic/Latino
 - e. Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - f. White
 - g. Other, Please specify_____

8. Prior to **2006-2007** academic year, did you ever attend Compton Community College as a student?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

9. Prior to **2006-2007** academic year, did any member of your family ever attend Compton Community College as a student?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

10. During the **2005-2006** academic year, did you live within the Compton Community College District service area?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

11. On **January 31, 2005**, Compton Community College was notified by the Accrediting Commission that the institution was being placed on Show Cause. Select the response below that best describes your understanding of the Accrediting Commission decision.
 - a. I knew the reasons why the college was placed on Show Cause.
 - b. I did not know why the college was placed on Show Cause.
 - c. I was not aware the college was placed on Accrediting Commission Show Cause.

12. On **June 17, 2005**, Compton Community College was notified by the Accrediting Commission the institution was to be deaccredited. What were your thoughts when you learned about the Accrediting Commission decision?
 - a. I believed the deaccreditation would happen.
 - b. I did not believe the deaccreditation would happen.
 - c. I was not aware of the Accrediting Commission decision.

13. For the list below, select the reason you believe Compton Community College was deaccredited? (**Select all that apply**)
 - a. Poor quality of classroom instruction
 - b. Campus neglect (unattended and filthy bathrooms, grounds littered with trash)
 - c. Administration
 - d. Compton Community College District Board of Trustees members
 - e. Poor facilities (old building, poor lighting)
 - f. Other, Please specify _____
 - g. Other, Please specify _____
 - h. None of the above

14. On **August 5, 2005**, the Compton Community College submitted its “Statement of Reasons” in support of a request for review of the deaccreditation decision by the

Accrediting Commission. At that time, what were your thoughts about the Compton Community College deaccreditation appeal?

- a. I believed the appeal would be accepted.
- b. I believed the appeal would be denied.
- c. I was not aware the college submitted an appeal.

15. On **November 18, 2005**, Compton Community College received a letter from the Accrediting Commission denying the College's appeal. At that time, what were your thoughts when you learned about the Accrediting Commission appeals decision?

- a. I knew the appeal would be denied.
- b. I was surprised when the appeal decision was denied.
- c. I was not aware of the Accrediting Commission decision to deny the college appeal.

16. Between **November of 2005** through **February of 2006**, did you ever feel angry about the Accrediting Commission decision to deaccreditation of Compton Community College?

- a. Yes
- b. No (if no, skip to question # 19)

17. If you felt angry, who were you angry toward? **(Select all that apply)**

- a. The Accrediting Commission
- b. The Chancellor of the California Community Colleges
- c. The Compton Community College Board of Trustee Members
- d. Local and statewide political leaders
- e. The Special Trustee
- f. Other. Please specify _____

18. Why did you feel anger? **(Provide response below)**

19. Between **November of 2005** through **February of 2006**, did you ever blame anyone following the deaccreditation decision of Compton Community College?

- a. Yes
- b. No (if no, skip to question # 22)

20. Who, if anyone, during **November of 2005** through **February of 2006**, did you blame following the deaccreditation decision of Compton Community College? **(Select all that apply)**

- a. Faculty
- b. Staff
- c. Administrators
- d. Former administrators
- e. The Accrediting Commission
- f. The Chancellor of the California Community Colleges
- g. The Compton Community College Board of Trustee Members

- h. Other. Please specify _____
21. If you blamed anyone, describe why you blamed them for the deaccreditation of Compton Community College? **(Provide response below)**
22. Between November of 2005 through June of 2006, did you seek assistance and/or guidance during the deaccreditation process of Compton Community College?
- Yes
 - (if no, skip to question # 25)
23. Who, if anyone, between **November of 2005** through **June of 2006**, did you seek assistance and/or guidance during the deaccreditation process of Compton Community College? **(Select all that apply)**
- Statewide organization you were affiliated with
 - Colleagues throughout the state
 - Local and statewide labor leaders
 - Community members
 - Local and statewide politicians
 - Other. Please specify _____
24. If you sought assistance and/or guidance, what type of guidance did you receive? **(Provide responses below)**
25. Are you familiar with Compton Community College District, Assembly Bill 318?
- Yes
 - No (if no, skip to question # 27)
26. If yes, what did you know about the bill at the time it was going through the California legislature? **(Provide responses below)**
27. Did you support Compton Community College District, Assembly Bill 318?
- Yes
 - No (if no, skip to question # 29)
28. If yes, please describe why you supported the Compton Community College District, Assembly Bill 318? **(Provide responses below)**
29. On **March 26, 2006**, the Interim President/Superintendent of Compton Community College sent lay-off notices to all Compton Community College employees. What were your thoughts and feelings when you received your lay-off notice?
- I felt sad and discouraged.
 - I did not feel sad and discouraged.
 - I do not remember my thoughts and feelings.
30. After receiving your lay-off notice, did you lose hope that Compton Community College would remain open?

- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. I do not remember my thoughts and feelings.
31. After receiving your lay-off notice from the Interim President/Superintendent of Compton Community College, did you seek guidance about your future employment?
- a. Yes
 - b. No (if no, skip to Question # 34)
 - c. I do not recall.
32. After receiving your lay-off notice from the Interim President/Superintendent of Compton Community College, who, if anyone did you seek guidance from about your employment? **(Select all that apply)**
- a. Statewide organization you were affiliated with
 - b. Colleagues throughout the state
 - c. Immediate supervisor
 - d. Campus labor leaders
 - e. Community members
 - f. The administrator responsible for your department
 - g. Local and statewide politicians
 - h. The Interim President/Superintendent
 - i. The Special Trustee
 - j. Other. Please specify _____
33. If you sought guidance, what type of guidance did you receive? **(Provide responses below)**
34. On **June 5, 2006**, the Compton Community College District Special Trustee approved an instructional services agreement with Santa Monica College to provide accredited courses at the Compton campus during the summer of 2006. What were your thoughts and feeling when you learned about the agreement with Santa Monica College to provide courses on the Compton campus?
- a. I was pleased.
 - b. I was displeased.
 - c. I was neither pleased nor displeased.
 - d. I was not aware of this agreement.
35. On **June 30, 2006**, the Governor California signed Assembly Bill 318. Were you pleased when you learned that Assembly Bill 318 was passed and signed by the Governor of California?
- a. Yes
 - b. No
 - c. I was not aware of Assembly Bill 318 at that time.

36. On August 21, 2006, the Compton Community College District Special Trustee approved the agreement with El Camino Community College to provide educational and student support services to the residents of the District. What were your thoughts and feeling when you learned about the agreement with El Camino Community College?
- I was pleased.
 - I was displeased.
 - I was neither please nor displeased.
 - I was not aware of this agreement.
37. During the 2005-2006 year, did you accept the possible closure of Compton Community College?
- I accepted the possible closure.
 - I did not accept at the time the possible closure but later I accepted the closure.
 - I still do not accept the closure.
38. Today, in 2010 have you accepted the deaccreditation of Compton Community College?
- Yes
 - No
39. If yes, when did you accept the deaccreditation (Month and Year)? (**Provide responses below**)
40. If no, why do you not accept the deaccreditation of Compton Community College?

Thank you for participating in the survey.

Appendix B: One-on-One Interview Questions

The following are the planned open-ended questions for the semi-structured interviews. Follow-up questions will be asked depending on the nature of responses.

1. What Compton Community College District department are you currently employed in? How long have you been employed with this department?
2. Did you attend the Compton Community College in the past? If so, when did you attend?
3. What about family members – do you have family who attended Compton Community College? Other connections?
4. Do you reside in the Compton Community College District serve area? If so, in what city do you reside in?
5. Thinking about the deaccreditation of Compton Community College, did you ever doubt that the deaccreditation of Compton Community College would actually happen? Can you remember when you had feelings of doubt?
6. Did you believe the deaccreditation of Compton Community College would be overturned through the appeal process?
7. How does it make you feel now when you remember the deaccreditation of Compton Community College?
8. Do you think you were ever in denial about what happen at Compton Community College? When did you feel this way?
9. Doing the deaccreditation process of Compton Community College, did you ever feel anger? Can you remember why you felt angry? Can you recall when you felt this way?
10. Thinking about the deaccreditation of Compton Community College
 - a. How did you feel about the Accrediting Commission?
 - b. How did you feel about the then Chancellor of the California Community Colleges?

- c. How did you feel about the members of the Compton Community College District Board of Trustees?
 - d. How did you feel about the local and state-wide political leaders?
 - e. How did you feel about the Special Trustee?
11. Did you feel there is anyone to blame for the deaccredited Compton Community College? If so, who, and why do you blame them?
 12. Can you remember if you spoke with people outside of the institution about the deaccreditation of Compton Community College? If so, who did you speak with? When did you speak to them? Why did you speak to them? What type of conversations did you have with them?
 13. How did you feel about the special legislation to save the college, Assembly Bill 318?
 14. Can you remember if you did speak with your local and/or state-wide politicians about the deaccreditation of Compton Community College? If so, what was discussed during those conversations?
 15. Did you feel you or other employees were trying to “cut their losses” during the deaccreditation of Compton Community College? If so, how and when did this occur?
 16. Did you ever feel sudden depression, because of the events that occurred during the deaccreditation of Compton Community College? What were those events? When then those events occur?
 17. After receiving your lay-off notice, how were you feeling? What were you concerned about?
 18. Did you speak to campus officials about your lay-off notice? If so, who did you speak with? What type of conversations did you have?
 19. Were there instances during the process of deaccreditation when you felt that you accepted what was happening to Compton Community College? When did you feel that way?
 20. How did you feel when the special legislation to save the college, Assembly Bill 318 was passed by legislators and signed by the governor?

Appendix C: Focus Groups Interview Questions

During the focus group interview session, participants will be presented with the grief construct model used for this study. The following are the planned open-ended questions for the semi-structured focus interview questions. Follow-up questions will be asked depending on the nature of responses.

1. Does the model being used in this study accurately reflect the feelings and beliefs of the employees of Compton Community College during the deaccreditation process? Why or why not?
2. In what ways do you think the grieving process was helpful to Compton Community College employees?
3. In what ways might the grieving process have been counterproductive or dysfunctional for Compton Community College employees?
4. What suggestions do you have to improve this model being explored in this study?
5. Having lived through the deaccreditation of Compton Community College, how could this model be useful to personnel at other institutions who are experiencing similar challenges?
6. What advice would you give to personnel at other institutions who are experiencing similar challenges?

Appendix D: Institutional Review Board Approved Study Information Sheet

University of California, Irvine Study Information Sheet

The Deaccreditation of Compton Community College: An Interpretation Through the Kubler-Ross Grief Construct

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- You are being asked to participate in a research study that looks at thoughts and feelings about the deaccreditation of Compton Community College. You are eligible to participate if you are currently employed at Compton Community College and also worked there during the period January 2005 through August 2006.
- You will be asked to complete an online survey that asks about your background and your thoughts about the deaccreditation process. It will take 20-30 minutes to complete.
- A small number of participants, chosen at random, will be asked to complete one of two additional procedures, either a 45- to 60-minute individual interview or a 60- to 90-minute focus group with 3-4 other people in their employment group (faculty, staff, administrators). The interviews and focus group meetings will be conducted in a closed room on the Compton Community College campus or other location convenient to the participants, and will be audiotaped and transcribed. You may choose whether to complete an interview or focus group if you are selected for one of these procedures.
- The only foreseeable discomforts associated with the study are the invasion of your privacy and the potential for a breach of confidentiality. You will not directly benefit from participation in the study. However, this study may assist other higher education institutions in finding ways to manage their employees' beliefs, feelings, emotions, and perceptions through the deaccreditation or potential deaccreditation process of their institution.
- Participation in this study is voluntary and there is no cost for you for participating. You may refuse to participate or discontinue your involvement at any time without penalty. You also may choose to skip particular survey or interview questions. Your decision about whether to participate will not have any effect on your current or future employment relationship with Compton Community College.
- You will not be paid for completing the online survey. If you are chosen for and complete an interview or focus group session, you will receive a \$25 gift card.

- All research data collected will be stored securely and confidentially in a locked cabinet in the Lead Researcher's office. The data, including the interview recordings, will be kept for 5 years and then destroyed. All identifiable information that is collected about you will be removed and replaced with a code to ensure that the data are kept confidential. No names or other identifying information will be used in reports or publications from this study.
- The research team and authorized UCI personnel may have access to your study records to protect your safety and welfare. Any information derived from this research project that personally identifies you will not be voluntarily released or disclosed by these entities without your separate consent, except as specifically required by law.
- If you have any comments, concerns, or questions regarding the conduct of this research, please contact the researchers listed at the top of this form. If you are unable to reach the researchers and have general questions, or you have concerns or complaints about the research, or questions about your rights as a research subject, please contact UCI's Office of Research by phone at (949) 824-6662, by email at IRB@rgs.uci.edu or at 5171 California Avenue, Suite 150, Irvine, CA 92697-76