Past, present, future:

The role of mission and culture in higher education institutions

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ABSTRACT

This study examines how university administrators make decisions related to the academic core, the extent to which they utilize and adhere to the university mission during their decision-making processes, and the ways in which the culture of the institution frames and influences these decisions. Through use of a cultural lens, connections between explicit and implicit institutional mission, culture, and decision making are explored using a qualitative, comparative case study design of six public, masters-granting universities. Data in this study consisted of 36 interviews with chief academic officers and key institutional leaders, case study reports, and documents obtained online and in person. Emergent themes related to institutional cultural factors and decision making are discussed. This study contributes to the understanding of the mechanisms by which institutional leaders ground their enactments of their missions.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Over the years, many forces have caused significant shifts in higher education. Clark Kerr (1963) in his landmark analysis argued that over time the combination of multiple stakeholders' demands combined with the fragmentation of institutions has diminished colleges' abilities to fulfill their missions, both those missions that are explicit (stated) as well as those missions that are not. Arthur Levine (2001) also predicted an "unbundling" of the traditional institutional missions of teaching, research and service and believed institutions will choose to specialize rather than continue to support the resource-heavy triumvirate. As a result of changes in technology, student demographic shifts, and the current marketplace, Levine (2001) suggested that institutions will cope with more varied options, including the formation of online "brick and click" universities and faculty who will become independent from their institutions. Eckel, Hill, and Green (1998) among others have noted the need for institutions to raise their levels of productivity and efficiency to be held accountable to a variety of stakeholders. As seen in recent years, all these various changes can affect the ways in which faculty deliver subject material, design courses, and interact with students – and ultimately how institutions enact their missions. Throughout my own 15 years in higher education administration I have been witness to senior level administrators debating very fundamental questions of what institutional components should be retained, expanded, or eliminated. Those decisions, whether explicitly or implicitly, give clues to what an institution is, what its priorities are, and where it is going; in short, what the institutional mission is, may have been, or may be in the future.

The Dimensions of the Problem

Considering the changes, competing priorities, pressures from multiple stakeholders and declining resources that public higher education institutions are facing, the convergence of these challenges present an opportune time to study institutional mission and its importance. Transformational change tends to happen when institutions alter the mechanisms through which they carry out their teaching, research and service missions in ways that remain true to those missions (Eckel et al., 1998). According to Eckel et al. (1998) although institutions may be changing, they are doing so in ways that do not necessarily go against their goals. Is this characteristic and feasible for public institutions under current pressures? This study is important both overall as well as at this particular time because there is a need to examine how today's leaders make decisions, the extent to which they utilize and adhere to the mission of the institution, and the ways in which the culture of the institution frames and influences these decisions.

The challenges of the master's university. Higher education in the United States consists of an array of institutions founded for various purposes, many of which have changed over time. The master's university in particular often finds itself pulled in many directions – from a teaching focus, on one hand, to an increasing emphasis on research on the other (Henderson, 2009). In navigating within this "muddy middle," master's degree granting institutions do not have the focused, narrow scope of baccalaureate institutions, nor do they have the opportunity for research dollars and prestige that can accompany their large doctoral granting brothers and sisters. In a

period of declining state funding with increasing pressure to be efficient, this sector often finds itself (and its mission) being influenced to a greater degree from both within and outside the university (Henderson, 2009) particularly for those that exist as part of a large, diverse public system. Thus this provides an opportunity to examine decision making in a particularly complex but poorly understood context.

Further complicating the current outlook for master's granting institutions is the stressed relationship between public institutions, state legislatures, and other stakeholders. Stakeholders are "any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organization's objectives" (Freeman, 1984, p. 46). Standard & Poor's Ratings Services (S&P) predicted that funding challenges may lead to new, creative arrangements between public institutions and state government (Peloquin-Dodd, 2011); these agreements are thought to produce a greater benefit for flagship universities with larger budgets and more built-in flexibility. Institutions with smaller budgets, higher levels of debt, and limited liquidity "could experience severe stress" (Peloquin-Dodd, 2011, p. 2). According to S&P:

> Most public universities made significant budget cuts for fiscal 2009 and 2010. They reduced administrative expenses, cut the number of courses, eliminated noncore programs, lowered future enrollment levels, cut merit increases and cost-of-living adjustments, and even furloughed faculty and staff. (Peloquin-Dodd, 2011, p. 3)

Increased competition between private and public non-profit and for-profit institutions will increase levels of stress among institutions and may decrease the competitive advantage seen previously by public universities.

A recent survey of chief academic officers (CAOs) released by Inside Higher Ed (Green, 2012) revealed further the gap between master's granting institutions and other institutional types. When asked whether "financial pressures have made our faculty willing to explore options to innovate in ways that would not have been possible under other circumstances," only 19.0% of public master's degree granting institution CAOs agreed, compared to 60.8% of CAOs at public doctoral granting institutions and 48.9% at public baccalaureate institutions (p. 15). The study of institutional mission and how decisions are made is particularly salient for this population of institutions.

The challenges of modern historically black colleges and universities. Although the 105 historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) in the United States represent only three percent of all institutions, they enroll 11 percent of African American students and grant 25 percent of their undergraduate degrees (Gasman, n.d.; Minor, 2005). The initial design of HBCUs differed from their predominantly white counterparts in that they were founded on missions of open access and/or an applied curriculum focused on community as well as institutional needs. The role of HBCUs has often been to integrate "thinking" and "doing", a model developed out of the competing educational philosophies of W.E.B. Du Bois' scholastic view of higher education and Booker T. Washington's vocational training emphasis (Allen & Jewell, 2002; Brown, Ricard, & Donahoo, 2004). HBCUs' goals continue to be: 1) maintaining

black culture and history, 2) developing black leaders, 3) improving economic conditions within the black community, 4) producing graduates who understand the minority/majority context, 5) growing researchers, and 6) developing change agents and role models who understand contextual underpinnings of political and economic realities (Roebuck & Murty, 1993).

Modern-day HBCUs are faced with continuing the aforementioned goals that have been historically attributed to their institutions while also adapting to changing realities. For example, HBCUs continue their tradition of access and commitment to the African-American community, but have grown and expanded to embrace a changing and more racially and socioeconomically diverse student population. This challenge, as Brown et al. (2004) states, "…is for black colleges to maintain their cultural identity while simultaneously adhering to the pressure to make their campuses diverse" (p. 20). Gasman (n.d.) notes that a quarter of HBCUs have a student body that is at least 20% non-Black; some view that this change threatens HBCUs uniqueness, while others argue that the diversity makes them stronger. Fundamental questions of institutional mission, curriculum, funding, and enrollment are intertwined within the historical context of HBCUs and the current higher education context.

Context of the Study

The immediacy of fiscal concerns in public higher education provides a unique context in which to examine the intersection of decision making and leadership under these conditions; there are many recent examples that illuminate these tensions. For example, in May 2010, when asked about reductions in employee salaries and increased

selectivity of admissions, then-University of California president Mark Yudof admitted that the actions were leading to an abandonment of the University's mission – but that "it's necessary to preserve the place" (Yudof, 2010, p. 1). In February 2011, then-University of Minnesota president Robert Bruininks outlined steps planned to save money and "protect the University's academic quality" including wage freezes, adjustments to faculty and staff benefits, and reductions in new investments in "academic priorities and emerging opportunities" (p. 1). In April 2011, the Louisiana Board of Regents eliminated more than 100 degree programs that were identified as not having produced enough graduates and announced over 200 academic programs to be reorganized and/or consolidated (Blum, 2011). In a memo to its Committee on Educational Planning, Policies and Programs dated February 1, 2011, the University of North Carolina (UNC) announced that it would eliminate 60 academic programs system-wide that were underperforming. UNC Board of Governors chairwoman Hannah Gage stated "We've gotten more aggressive about it now, and have forced our institutions to really look at their missions" (Ferreri, 2011, p. 1). And in perhaps the most well-known and controversial of recent examples, the president of the University of Wisconsin, in response to the Governor's proposal to reduce employee benefits and bargaining rights, outlined new elements of oversight flexibility aimed at saving money and protecting the University from legislative interference with their budgets; institutions would be able to prioritize spending in ways that would help them "establish niches" in higher education (University of Wisconsin, 2011). Although Wisconsin's idea did not go any further than their proposal, this move away from a close relationship

between the university system and the state government is yet another example of an institution's attempt to conserve and control spending during these difficult financial times.

There exists no shortage of examples of ways in which public institutions in the United States are struggling to adapt to changing funding structures, reduced state appropriations and increased scrutiny from the public. Universities have been forced to consider difficult belt-tightening decisions ranging from employee salary reductions and changes to the entering class profile (as in California), to examinations of core academic priorities (as in Minnesota), to considerations of the relationship between the state and the universities (as in Wisconsin), to reduction in degree programs (as in Louisiana and North Carolina). Considering these declining resources in addition to the ongoing changes and competing priorities in public higher education, it is fitting at this time to consider how institutional leaders make decisions about the academic core and how change manifests itself.

Literature Gaps, Implications for Research, and Significance

A review of the literature on organizational mission, leadership theory, strategic planning, and decision making developed in Chapter 2 will reveal several gaps and opportunities for further research. Particularly relevant yet missing from the current research is how the intersection of mission and leadership can help to explain the process of decision making for administrators in public master's granting institutions in particular.

While mission statements are commonplace in higher education, the literature specifically examining the use of institutional mission to guide decision making is inconclusive. Some researchers contend that mission statements are rarely used in planning by institutions (Lang & Lopers-Sweetman, 1991; Newsom & Hayes, 1991), others argue that if they are used, they may be only a smoke screen rather than a decision making tool (Davies, 1986; Eckel, 2002a; Lake & Mrozinski, 2001), while still others believe they have value when used strategically (Dill, 1997; Dominick, 1990). According to March, Simon and Guetzkow (1993) and Simon (1993) the making of decisions itself can be tied to elements of organizational identity. In the context of university mission statements, this suggests that the words and meaning of mission statements (like constitutions) may be reinterpreted as new (non-routine) decisions arise; Weick, Sutcliffe, and Obstfeld (2005) refer to this as "sensemaking".

While costs and finances associated with higher education are well studied, there is a lack of literature that examines the relationship between budgetary concerns and mission. While it is easy enough to consider institutional mission a valuable tool to aid decision making when determining whether to make cuts to aspects that are peripheral to an institution, to what extent do academic leaders use institutional mission to help guide them when it comes to decisions regarding the core mission of the institution? According to Holland (1999): "…curricular philosophy and programs and faculty roles and rewards…represent the core of the academy and the heart of every institution. Therein lies, as well, the vast majority of the institutional budget" (p. 63). There is also

a need for research that examines the impact of financial pressures on institutional missions themselves.

The use of culture as a theoretical frame as described in the following section provides the optimal opportunity for examination of organizations during financial stress. According to Dill (1982), "the strength of academic culture is particularly important when academic institutions face declining resources" (p. 304). Many researchers argue that having a clear, well-defined mission can help weather difficult times, and still others tell us that a mission rooted deep in institutional culture is particularly effective. Others however, tell us that mission is not a useful component when making institutional decisions. Further research on mission through a cultural context reveals the circumstances under which mission is or is not valuable for academic leaders in decision making.

Similarly, little empirical research has been conducted to determine how university administrators and middle-managers perceive their institution's mission statement or how mission differentiation in public higher education systems impacts decision making broadly and academic decisions more specifically. For example, changes to curriculum are often a "flash point" for institutions because faculty consider the curriculum to be the institutional core under their jurisdiction, while boards of trustees or similar governing boards want to oversee the curriculum due to the potential impact on institutional mission (ASHE, 2003). For this reason, much of the academic restructuring we have seen at institutions can be particularly volatile. Another intersection in the literature that is not fully explored is sense-making and change

among middle managers and institutional leaders related to changes in the academic core.

Finally, in addition to conceptual gaps in the literature, methodological gaps on academic decision making, institutional mission, and financial constraints also exist. The existing literature on mission in institutions has emerged from studies primarily of major research universities (Cole, 2010; Mohrman, Ma, & Baker, 2008) and private liberal arts colleges (Alemán & Salkever, 2003; Delucchi, 1997; Hartley, 2002; Taylor & Morphew, 2010). The institutions that educate most students enrolled in four-year programs – the public master's university – are virtually ignored (Chronicle of Higher Education, 2010; National Center for Education Statistics, 2008). There is a need to examine change processes specifically among public institutions and particularly among public institutions that are part of a large, diverse state system.

Conceptual Framework

Mission is central to any organization; it can be a statement of direction or priorities, or can provide guidelines for how an institution should function (Lang & Lopers-Sweetman, 1991). Institutional missions also serve a symbolic function and can act as glue that hold members together under a common, unified, belief; a clear mission statement helps members of the organization identify activities that correspond to the goals of the institution (Morphew & Hartley, 2006). This mission can be driven from inside or outside the organization, influenced by stakeholders and institutional culture.

Several recent examples have been illustrated that show the very real impact of fiscal constraints on public universities today and the extent to which the study of

mission is ideal to examine under these strained circumstances. Through use of an institutional cultural lens to interpret the research questions posed in Chapter 3, I am able to examine how aspects of the institutional culture set the stage for the way a university operates and how decisions are made. Examination through a cultural lens can help identify institutional priorities, values, and motivations.

A cultural lens allows for a focus on how institutional elements such as symbols, values and beliefs affect organizational functions (Clark, 1970; Deal & Kennedy, 2000; Koprowski, 1983; Kuh & Whitt, 1988; Tierney, 1992; Zucker, 1988). These values and assumptions guide an institution and its members, often implicitly. Kezar and Eckel (2004) also noted that institutional culture must be understood when examining decision making; without this contextual knowledge, elements may be misunderstood or ignored completely. According to Tierney (2008), mission *is* part of the institutional culture; it is one example of the external realization of culture for all members of the organization. As explored in Chapter 2, the theoretical paradigm of Bolman and Deal's (1997) cultural frame works to further explain this phenomenon.

The origins of organizational culture can be as complex as the organization itself; to understand an institution's culture, you must know its history (Kuh & Whitt, 1988; Schein, 2004). The mission therefore can serve as a guiding principle, often making the connection between the history and values of the institution. An institution's sense of its historical place and the stated or unstated assumptions about who it is meant to serve (all of which are likely components of the institutional mission) may impact decision making. Alternatively, under external and internal pressures,

missions may not reflect culture but attempt to guide it, through rhetoric and aspiration (Morphew & Hartley, 2006).

Outline of the Study

Demands placed on institutions forced to do more with less require questioning the ability of public universities to carry out the missions under which they operate. Changes at public institutions present specific leadership challenges including "setting priorities among competing community and constituent groups; competition for funding and capacity building; establishing a vision, plan, and decision making process that includes multiple stakeholders; context-based assessment; and incorporating community knowledge" (Kezar, 1994, p. 6). While there is extensive research on leadership and decision making in institutions, the extent to which mission impacts these decision making processes has been shown to not be fully explored.

The university is part of a bound system, composed of a culture that encompasses it and of elements of power and influence – all of which intersect with institutional mission. It is this interconnectivity and understanding that context is important in examining institutional phenomena that calls for a qualitative study to examine how these parts work together to form a whole; Merriam (1998) indicates this consideration of context as a cornerstone of qualitative research. The data collection method described in Chapter 3 was designed to allow for exploration of the connections between the concepts of explicit institutional mission, implicit institutional mission (decisions), power, and culture and through consideration of context, the case study methodology works to capture the complexity of the relationships among the concepts.

This study therefore examines the intersection of institutional mission and decision making in public, master's granting institutions. Thirty-six chief academic officers, deans, department chairs, and faculty were interviewed, interviews were coded and analyzed, and emergent themes were examined through an institutional cultural lens.

Chapter 2 that follows provides a review of the research literature on organizational mission, leadership theory, strategic planning, and decision making. Chapter 3 describes the methodology of the study and the conceptual framework that guides the research, while Chapters 4 and 5 provide the within-case data analysis provided via three exemplary single case studies (Chapter 4), and cross-case analysis (Chapter 5) of all six cases. Finally, Chapter 6 discusses the implications for practice and future research.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

As described in Chapter 1, the relationship between public universities and state governments is more strained than it has ever been. A better understanding of the research literature as it pertains to mission, leadership theory, strategic planning and decision making provides a context for understanding what we currently know and what still needs to be examined regarding how leaders make decisions, the extent to which they utilize mission, and the ways in which the culture of the institution influences these decisions.

The Stakes are Raised: A Snapshot of Public Institutions' Responses to the Recession

While some public institutions have threatened to "secede" from their state entities in response to strained relationships with state governments, others have attempted to strengthen the relationship between the institutions and their states. For example, in examining tense relationships between public universities and state governments such as those illustrated at the University of Wisconsin, Stripling (2011) cited the University of North Carolina as a possible exception to this strife, indicating that the UNC system has used the lobbying power of its 17 campuses to its advantage – including a $3.1 billion bonding bill for infrastructure in 2000. However, this relationship, while historically very strong, has undergone recent strain since Stripling's (2011) article, with net cuts to the University of North Carolina system of $407 million in 2011 (Ross, 2011).

Despite the significant consequences that institutions are facing as a result of recent financial strain, little research has been conducted on institutions' responses. In 2011, Lounder et al. analyzed the cost-saving measures institutions put in place to deal with the recession and identified seven categories of action including: 1) hiring freezes, 2) pay adjustments, 3) limiting professional development, 4) dismissing faculty and consolidating programs (both academic and other services), 5) cutting academic unit budgets, 6) increasing teaching loads, and 7) shifting faculty appointments (p. 20). Lounder et al.'s (2011) analysis found that "…most campus leaders have focused on improving cost efficiency" (p. 22). Difficult fiscal times bring into focus the central institutional mission of "creation and dispersion of knowledge" (Lounder et al., 2011, p. 26). Lounder et al.'s (2011) recommendations to campus leaders stated: "Rather than cutting both academic cost and quality, campus leaders should recognize the necessity to invest in and invigorate faculty work, particularly in ways that enhance the quality of academic processes and products" (p. 27). In a similar essay detailing higher education's reaction to this financial strain, Bueja (2011) outlined ten observed strategies that universities used to balance their budget including curtailing curricular expansion and reorganization of both individual academic programs and other units across campus.

Some researchers argue that the most common areas considered when cuts need to be made in higher education are those critical to the core functioning of the institution and must therefore align with institutional mission. These areas include what Holland (1999) referred to as administrative restructuring, administrative processes, and

academic organization. Institutions are comfortable with changes in these units, as restructuring among academic units is seen as an effective means of addressing changing needs or priorities. According to Holland (1999): "While changing processes and structures can achieve real savings and contribute to mission effectiveness, such success will only be achieved if the changes are directly related to specific objectives articulated in the institutional mission" (p. 63).

Finally, Brenenman (2002) suggested that the outcome of previous recessions has been less of a financial impact felt by the recession itself, but instead more of a responsiveness of leaders. In 2002 however, Brenenman realized the difference between modern and previous recessions: "What distinguishes the recession of the early 2000s from previous downturns is that it is posing much more serious questions about the values of our society and the strength of our commitment to educational opportunity" (p. 1).

Institutional responses and the academic core.

> Cutting or suspending programs, as the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education, for example, has done more than 90 times over the past two years, appears to have accomplished little more than to assuage legislators, says Mark D. Cloud, a professor of psychology at Lock Haven University of Pennsylvania. 'They haven't saved a dollar'. (Berrett, 2011, p. 4)

There are a few macro- and micro-level studies examining program termination and other types of academic restructuring at institutions, most providing examples of restructuring that have taken place, examining the impact of such decisions or

discussing the criteria used to make the decision. Many recent examples of program reviews and termination are seen as a result of financial stress and strategic planning across institutions; examples, in addition to those mentioned previously, include the Universities of Missouri, Ohio, and Nebraska (Berrett, 2011).

Increased public scrutiny has also led to the assumption that some institutions' academic offerings are stale, inefficient, and slow to adapt to change (Eckel, 2002a). Eckel (2002b) examined academic program closure at higher education institutions and attempted to explore what decisions were employed when determining to end an academic program. The researcher used two primary guiding theoretical paradigms to frame his research on academic program closure: limited rational choice and the concepts of decision rationality versus action rationality. Limited rational choice assumes a relationship between various choices and the outcomes that could result from those choices. Limited rational choice, however, also assumes that the choices are indeed "limited"; a person does not (and probably logistically cannot) consider all possible choices. Eckel (2002b) identified the implications for academic program closure as being that "…all programs are most likely *not* under consideration" (p. 239). The second guiding theoretical paradigm used in the study examined was the concept of decision rationality versus action rationality (Brunsson, 1982). The balance between these two paradigms is the pull between doing what's right ("decision rationality") versus doing what is feasible ("action rationality"). Eckel (2002b) identified the implication for academic program closure as one of constantly finding this balance; institutional leaders make many academic program closure decisions according to

decision rationality because of the need to appear that they are "doing the right thing." These same "right" decisions, however, may not necessarily be the most efficient decisions.

While Eckel (2002b) determined that decision makers identify criteria used in academic program closure, an analysis of the criteria identified revealed that the majority of these criteria were action criteria rather than decision criteria; decision criteria served a more symbolic function to help solidify support for decisions. The researcher found that institutions do not decide to end academic programs for reasons of cost, mission centrality or quality (all previously hypothesized reasons gathered from the literature), but rather chose to close the program that was most easily closed and most feasible to implement. Eckel (2002b) concluded with his advice to institutional decision makers: if the decision to close an academic program is not going to save cost or contribute to the mission or reputation of the institution, perhaps the institution is receiving "little actual return" (p. 258). Similarly, Eckel surmised that his research lends evidence for those institutions for which closing *any* program is more important than actually closing the *right* program.

According to Gumport (1993), reduction of academic programs has been a "common retrenchment strategy" among public research universities under financial stress. Gumport (1993) examined academic program reduction at two public flagship institutions that had experienced reductions in state appropriations and focused on the effects of program termination on the faculty. Gumport (1993) determined that the outcome of academic program cuts depended on that program's ability to be seen as

important to the state in which it is situated and provided an example of how institutions' goals can shift over time and the possible impact as new revenue streams are discovered and embraced.

According to Bastedo and Gumport (2003), "Particularly in times of resource constraint, mission differentiation has gained momentum in the name of avoiding unnecessary program duplication" (p. 342). Bastedo and Gumport's (2003) comparative case study of public systems in New York and Massachusetts examined efforts to eliminate academic programs and expand honors programs, which, according to the researchers, had an impact on access. The authors found that in both public systems, policy changes were guided by a mission to "promote differentiation" (p. 354). The explicit reasons stated for policy changes included: "to increase the legitimacy of the system, to reduce duplication and concentrate resources in programmatic areas of identified strength, and to provide more academic opportunities for high performing students" (Bastedo & Gumport, 2003, p. 354).

Holub (2011) described a first-hand account of an attempt at academic restructuring at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst in 2008; the proposed restructuring reduced the nine colleges and schools by three. In the account the researcher described a mission driven decision for cost-containment:

> I reasoned that I should look in areas of administration before turning to instruction and research. Accordingly, I sought to eliminate costs in non-core areas, that is, in non-academic areas and in administrative areas in the academic

> realm in order to protect essential obligations of the flagship institution. (Holub, 2011, p. 102)

Holub (2011) described the lessons learned about academic reorganization, which included the determination that "rational arguments are not always successful arguments" and that personal connection is important in the process. Holub (2011) also noted that the institutional history and culture were stronger than anticipated, particularly in his role as a relative newcomer to the organization:

> Institutional history has an enormous hold on faculty and their judgment. As a new chancellor unfamiliar with nuances of the campus, I was unprepared for the objections I faced, many of which had more to do with past treatment and grievances than actual propositions and future directions. (p. 114)

Dickeson (1999) described ten pieces of advice for academic leaders to assist decision makers in the process of academic program closure and emphasized that decision rules in higher education are frequently thought of as being made based on a combination of factors including history, quality, cost, and various internal and external pressures. Similarly, Dill (1997) examined the role of strategic planning and academic restructuring and identified five criteria that research universities used in terminating degree programs: program quality, centrality of mission, demand, cost-effectiveness, and uniqueness. But additional research cited by Eckel (2002b) revealed that these often cited reasons do not address other possible underlying issues used in institutional decision making such as desires of stakeholders, historical implications, and other aspects of power and political expectations.

Finally, while there are macro-level studies of academic program restructuring at colleges and universities (Leslie & Fretwell, 1996), and few micro-level (Gumport, 1993; Slaughter & Silva, 1985) there exist even fewer studies examining the intersection of strategic planning and academic program restructuring. One such study is Morphew's (2000) single-institution case study that looked at this intersection and how the decision of program termination was reached through an institutional strategic plan. According to Morphew (2000), "A program termination provides insight into an institution's goals and priorities. The program's quality, enrollment, prestige or centrality to the institution's mission may be cited as the primary cause for the program's termination" (p. 259).

Organizational Mission

Mission statements help guide institutions by providing a distinct purpose and direction and by setting guidelines and structure to allow for institutional evaluation (Scott, 2006); an effective mission statement will explain the purpose, values, and philosophy of the organization (Sidhu, 2003). Early research on organizational mission has focused on types and characteristics of missions and their utility, or lack thereof. Lang and Lopers-Sweetman (1991) described this existing research on mission statements as belonging to two distinct categories: "caricature" or "a defense of." More recent literature examines organizational performance, decision making, and how organizations respond to change. In higher education, recent research on institutional mission has focused on areas of mission drift and mission differentiation (particularly at

private liberal arts and major research institutions); and mission agreement: whether institutions are exemplifying their mission in their activities.

Organizational mission outside of academia. Organizational mission and its applicability to decision making is not unique to higher education; the business and non-profit sectors have been examining this phenomenon for years. The majority of literature on mission statements, particularly as it pertains to the corporate sector, has focused on the components of mission statements and their purposes. There is general consensus that mission statements describe the purpose of the organization (Blanchard & Stoner, 2003; Campbell & Yeung, 1991; David, 1989; Sidhu, 2003) and philosophy (Campbell & Yeung, 1991; David, 1989), and make explicit core competencies that should exist to help the organization accomplish the mission (Davies & Glaister, 1997). The mission guides the organization and provides a sense of purpose for members (Collins, 2008). According to Pollard (2002): "…our ultimate job [as leaders] is to be champions of the mission of the firm and, more important, to live that mission" (p. 54).

There is also a large body of research on the effectiveness of mission statements in the private sector including the influence of mission on organizational performance, the results of which appear mixed (Bart, 1997; David, 1989; Meyer, 2005; Sidhu, 2003). In addition, this research is also focused on effectiveness of mission statements and the performance of companies and/or employees in relation to the mission of the organization.

University mission types and utility. In the past 20 years, there has been a growth in the perpetuation of mission statements at colleges and universities. While in

1991, Newsom and Hayes stated that about 60% of institutions had a formal mission statement, today it is a required component for reaffirmation by all regional institutional accrediting bodies in the United States (Middle States Commission on Higher Education, 2009; New England Association of Schools and Colleges, 2011; North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, 2003; Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities, 2010; Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, 2010; Western Association of Schools and Colleges, 2008).

Formal mission statements reflect the core values and purpose of universities and are the guidepost of most institutions (Nowlin, 2009). Gardiner (1989) identifies five primary functions of institutional missions: 1) identification of overall purpose, 2) indication of strategic direction, 3) contextual setting to justify institutional goals, 4) indication of the programs and services offered, and 5) distinguishing of institution from others. "A mission statement succinctly communicates what the organization is, the needs to which it responds, whom it serves, its basic strategies, and its uniqueness" (Crosby & Bryson, 2005, p. 81).

For years, research on mission has focused on characteristics: this includes the research on mission in higher education. Most definitions of institutional mission describe the three components of teaching, research, and service. Scott (2006) analyzed six types of institutional missions – teaching, research, nationalization, democratization, public service, and internationalization – and traced their evolution and development throughout history. He concluded that establishing a mission statement helped to guide institutions by providing a distinct purpose and direction and setting guidelines and

structure to allow for institutional evaluation. Higher education is expected to respond to societal changes, which can result in a "multiplicity of missions" that develop over time. Institutional missions, similarly, are "dynamic and fluid; they reflect the ever-changing philosophical ideals, educational policies, and cultures of particular societies or learned institutions" (Scott, 2006, p. 3).

Distinctive missions can aid institutions in identifying resources and meeting their goals. While no two institutions are the same, colleges and universities serve similar purposes and their mission statements are often nearly identical in many ways. Gardiner (1989) noted that mission statements vary most in terms of specificity: the level of degrees and types of programs offered, the ways in which admission policies are identified and carried out, and the emphasis placed on research and service within each specific institutional context.

The role of institutional mission can be a statement of direction, priorities, or what the institution wants to accomplish (Lang & Lopers-Sweetman, 1991). According to Lang and Lopers-Sweetman (1991), the content of mission statements can be organized into six categories: 1) historical-philosophical, 2) action plans, 3) interrogative, 4) expression of capacity, 5) presidential expression, and 6) anthologies of unit statements. The "historical-philosophical" mission statement was found by Lang and Lopers-Sweetman (1991) to be one of the most common, providing historical context for who the institution is and why it is that way.

According to Gross and Grambsch (1974), the problem is not in institutions' inability to identify their goals, but in the ways in which they often have too many (and

often competing) goals and stakeholders. Lang and Lopers-Sweetman (1991) examined 32 institutional mission statements and 12 system statements to consider the question of utility and purpose of mission. The researchers concluded that mission statements can be useful in some situations, depending on who is using the mission statement, what it is being used for, and what it says. In other circumstances, however, the mission statement is not at all effective; the utility of institutional mission depends first on who is using it, as different audiences (e.g. faculty, administrators, students, legislators) may see the same mission statement in different ways.

Institutional missions serve as a guide for decision making by clarifying competing goals and prioritizing among these goals. The mission brings multiple stakeholders of the institution together under one umbrella. Senior university administrators are often viewed as needing to maintain a balance between faculty and public expectations, which for public institutions includes that of the state legislature. Recently, Kelderman (2011) notes that several state legislatures introduced bills designed to save money and cut finances at public institutions, thereby asserting themselves and demanding greater accountability as institutional stakeholders; it is part of administrators' role to ensure the institution's mission is understood by all these varied stakeholders (Dressel, 1987). For example, Iowa's legislature proposed a measure limiting the number of sabbaticals granted each year as well as the proposed sale of a valuable painting to cover the cost of student scholarships. Utah sought to eliminate tenure, while South Carolina proposed a requirement of faculty to teach a minimum of nine credit hours each semester.

Much literature on institutional mission has focused on the components of mission, with an emphasis on the often generic, overly optimistic, and simplistic missions that exist. In higher education, the role of institutions has changed over the years, and as Kerr pointed out in 1963, one institution can, and does, perform multiple functions to serve the needs of society. The modern American university has changed over time to fulfill multiple roles as necessary, which some (Davies, 1986; Scott, 2006) argue has given rise to generic or a "multiplicity" of mission statements. Others contend that increased public attention to the activities of colleges and universities as well as the need for increased accountability, particularly for public institutions, has led to greater distinctiveness in college missions (Holland, 1999).

Researchers have debated over the years the extent to which institutional missions are or are not too similar or too "general." On one hand, goal diversity may be reflected in mission confusion; however it may also show that some institutions operate best through pluralistic goals. Institutions facing environmental constraints may be more effective if they have inconsistent goals (Birnbaum, 1988a). Davies' (1986) early, classic work "The Importance of Being General" argued that institutional mission statements are purposefully general and couched in an idealistic philosophy. According to Davies (1986), historical research on institutional mission recognizes the generalities of missions, yet continues to support the idea that specific objectives can come out of such general statements. According to Davies (1986), organizational theorists argue that clearly defined missions are essential to organizations; however, there are often

well-meaning reasons behind institutions' decisions for vague mission statements, including the need to appeal to broad stakeholder constituencies:

> A university president uses the mission statement to inspire and motivate the constituencies that are vital to the institution…It is also a bludgeon to be used within the institution….state planners and policymakers can use the same mission as a reason not to permit academic program developments. (p. 91)

Davies (1986) therefore advised against close adherence to mission statements for strategic decision making. Dominick (1990) also argued that the fact that many institutional missions look and sound alike should not be surprising, considering that institutions are often founded with similar priorities, despite perhaps different histories or motivations for being established.

Mission agreement. Little empirical evidence examines the relationship between institutional mission and organizational performance, although many suggest that despite differences in context, this is due in large part to a lack of clear, concise institutional mission statements themselves. Researchers have considered the relationship between the content and agreement of institutional mission and actual university activity to partially explore this phenomenon. Rowley, Hurtado and Ponjuan's (2002) research was an example of the extent to which institutions are fulfilling their missions, in this case the institutional commitment to diversity. The researchers observed a disconnect between institutional rhetoric and institutional performance. Similarly, Pike, Kuh and Gonyea's (2003) study examined the relationship between institutional mission and student learning and development. Their

results echoed that of previous research (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991) indicating that the type of institution a student attends does not have a direct impact on their educational outcomes; the effects of institutional characteristics on student learning are weak and overall the "research on the relationships between institutional mission and learning outcomes has produced either inconclusive or similar results" (p. 242).

Morphew and Hartley's (2006) analysis of 300 college mission statements revealed that statements regarding liberal education cross institutional type in an attempt to both attract prospective students and also legitimize themselves among other institutions. The researchers determined that the rhetoric of mission statements between private and public institutions differs; they each emphasize their unique challenges. According to Morphew and Hartley (2006), a clear mission statement helps the members of the organization identify activities that correspond to the goals of the institution. The mission statement may not in this way reflect culture, but instead attempt to guide it.

Holland's (1999) analysis of 23 case studies examined institutional mission alignment with the academic environment with respect to universities' stated mission of engaging with the community. Institutions that are highly engaged in significant academic changes need a clear mission to help with those changes, and many institutions are striving to define their unique niche in hopes of improving relationships with their stakeholders (Holland, 1999).

Birnbaum (1988a) examined to what extent campus leaders share consistent goals, and the nature of the relationship between these goals and subsequent

communication. Birnbaum (1988a) found a relationship between presidential goals and the goals of other campus leaders as well as a relationship between goal consistency and institutional type. Fjortoft and Smart (1994) examined the effects of organizational type and mission agreement on the effectiveness of four-year institutions through a national study of 334 four-year colleges and universities and determined: "Mission agreement and consistency in carrying out the activities inherent in that mission are also important elements in the enhancement of the organizational performance of colleges and universities" (p. 431). As Fjortoft and Smart (1994) pointed out, some institutions operate successfully with clear missions, while others seem to operate just as successfully with vague and unclear missions. This is consistent with some of the limited literature on college missions examined earlier that seem to support this notion (Birnbaum, 1988a; Davies, 1986).

Similarly, there is no agreement that behaving in accordance with institutional mission necessarily contributes to increased institutional effectiveness. Some have suggested that adhering strictly to academic mission may impede an institution's ability to make swift changes and respond to changes in the environment (Birnbaum, 1988a; Davies, 1986; Fjortoft & Smart, 1994).

Institutional-level analysis of mission. Recent research in higher education on institutional mission has focused on areas of mission content, drift, and differentiation, particularly at the level of institution or institution-type. The synopsis that follows provides an overview of this institution-type research to illustrate some of what has been examined and to highlight what is missing from the current literature.

Community colleges and religious institutions. A small body of literature has examined various aspects related to institutional mission at both community colleges and religious-affiliated institutions. For example, Lake and Mrozinski (2001) examined the usefulness of institutional mission in community college strategic planning processes and found that institutional members were often able to define the core institutional mission but failed to differentiate between the mission (statement of purpose) and the vision (aspirational goals). The researchers identified five themes for mission statements: 1) goal clarification, 2) smokescreen for opportunism, 3) description of reality, 4) aspirations, and 5) marketing tool; and two emergent roles of mission statements: 1) requirement for accreditation, and 2) teambuilding tool (Lake & Mrozinski, 2001). The mission statement as a function of goal clarification is useful for setting priorities and allocating resources, particularly in difficult times: "When fewer resources are available, important and often difficult decisions must be made regarding just what is the core work of the college" (Lake & Mrozinski, 2001, p. 7). Participants in the Lake and Mrozinski (2001) study also described various conflicting goals of mission statements, which may have the above themes working at cross-purposes. The researchers determined that the effectiveness of community college mission statements depends on their clarity of purpose: "If those purposes are clear and clearly articulated to stakeholders, efficacy is likely. Without this clarity, efficacy will seem nebulous and elusive" (Lake & Mrozinski, 2001, p. 14).

The research focusing on mission in religious institutions often examines the extent to which institutions adhere to mission driven activities. For example, Davis,

Ruhe, Lee and Rajadhyaksha (2007) examined whether there was a relationship between ethical content in institutional mission statements and students with higher perceived character traits associated with ethical dimensions. The researchers determined that students graduating from religious institutions perceived a higher character trait importance on traits associated with the missions of religious schools; they noted however that this may also be attributable to self-selection of students who attend religious institutions.

Velcoff and Ferrari (2006) examined senior administrators' perceptions of institutional mission statements and related mission driven activities at one private Midwestern Catholic university. Results from Velcoff and Ferrari's (2006) study revealed that administrators at the university reported high perceptions of both the mission statement of the institution and the mission driven priorities.

Private liberal arts and baccalaureate institutions. Another body of literature has examined multiple aspects related to institutional mission at baccalaureate degree-granting and liberal arts colleges. For example, Alemán and Salkever (2003) examined the relationship between the academic mission of a liberal arts college and its desire to become more multicultural. This qualitative study conducted an assessment of faculty, student, and administrator perceptions of the institutional mission and its relevance for multiculturalism on campus.

Delucchi (1997) also examined 327 institutions' claims (via their mission statements) to the liberal arts and the extent to which the claims are reflected in their curricula. According to Delucchi (1997), curriculum does not necessarily drive

institutions' claims to the liberal arts, but rather there are many institutional characteristics that determine the extent to which there is congruity between the institutional mission and the curriculum.

Taylor and Morphew (2010) conducted an examination of baccalaureate college mission statements in an attempt to understand how institutions use the statements to represent themselves to prospective students and other external stakeholders. The researchers found that most baccalaureate institutions used claims of a liberal education and the benefits of a small student body in their mission statements. Taylor and Morphew (2010) also found that mission statements may not always serve the purpose of instilling confidence in the institution, due to the difference in mission statements held internally and those presented to outside constituencies for recruitment; institutions often presented different versions of the mission statement to different constituencies.

Finally, Hartley (2002) examined three liberal arts colleges that were previously in crisis and had adopted a new and/or improved institutional vision. Hartley's (2002) examination revealed that a strong sense of institutional purpose is important to "inspire and motivate." For institutional mission to be an influential factor, it must be more than a written statement, but a living document that is imbedded within the culture of the institution. According to Hartley (2002), "what matters is not what a mission says but what it means" (p. 121); a clear institutional mission helps institutions inform day-to-day decision making and inspires organizational members. Despite much literature that argues institutional missions are for the most part vague, similar, and not distinctive, Hartley's (2002) work reveals that although mission statements may sound similar to

those outside the institution, within the institution the statement brings a cohesive meaning for members to internalize.

Major research universities. Recent research on mission focuses on specific research institutions and the applicability of their roles today. Cole (2010) describes American research universities as "national treasures" that are in need of our support. He is quick to point out that it is not undergraduate education or the training of professional students that makes U.S. institutions great, but rather the ability of institutions to generate research and produce knowledge. His research focuses on a very specific subset of major research universities, the top tier of institutions that he argues are so linked to the business and government sectors that there is a need to protect this sector of institutions. Similarly, Mohrman, Ma & Baker (2008) focus on the top tier of research universities and argue that countries will have less influence over institutions than previously due to the reach of global connectivity.

Historically black colleges and universities. Little literature exists on institutional mission at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), and what literature does exist focuses primarily on the content of the mission statements themselves. Gasman et al. (2007) explored the mission statements of 39 four-year public HBCUs and the impact of the mission statements on African Americans. Gasman et al. (2007) viewed mission statements as a reflection of the values of HBCUs and found that the mission statements of HBCUs included several common characteristics, including commitments to ethical principles and community service.

Abelman and Dalessandro (2009) conducted a content analysis of the mission and vision statements of HBCUs and found that mission statements of HBCUs lacked clarity when compared to other types of institutions. According to the researchers, vision statements at non-HBCUs tended to focus on the environment in which the institution exists (physically, socially, politically), and made explicit outcomes to which the institution should aspire. Vision statements at HBCUs however were "severely lacking in these areas," particularly for community colleges. Abelman and Dalessandro (2009) surmised:

> HBCUs are grounded in a shared, historical mission. Although this provides legacy and unity, and helps give definition and branding to those institutions, it may also hinder efforts to identify and promote key characteristics and academic aspirations that make each institution distinctive and appealing. (p. 124)

Mission creep. Higher education in the United States consists of an array of institutions that were founded for various purposes, which may have changed over time. For example, land grant universities evolved from locally serving schools to large research institutions, and regional state universities were once normal schools and then teaching colleges. According to Henderson (2009), "Since World War II many kinds of universities have strived to become research universities" (p. 186). Henderson (2009) is one of a few researchers in the past decade who have examined the idea of mission creep at institutions, a body of literature that has tended to focus on mid-size public institutions, lower-tier research universities and master's granting institutions.

Morphew (2002) described mission creep as changing status or rank order of an institution. Henderson (2009) discussed mission creep at master's universities, arguing that such institutions often strive to be more like research universities that ultimately may harm the faculty and teaching focus that the master's university uniquely provides. The researcher argued that master's universities need to embrace a model where teaching and learning are core to the institution, rather than allow mission creep towards the research institution model. Kelderman (2010) also argued that many research universities are placing emphasis on gaining prestige, research dollars, and increasing their private-public partnerships at the expense of other aspects of their institutional mission such as quality of undergraduate program and access.

There is also a small body of literature on faculty and student perceptions of mission creep. O'Meara and Bloomgarden (2011) described the faculty experience at one liberal arts college that was striving to conduct activities beyond what had often been defined as its scope. The researchers found that on one hand the faculty believed the institutional goals led to an "identity crisis," while on the other hand they resulted in increased innovation across campus. Gardner (2010) also examined faculty and student perceptions of how one institution's quest for prestige influenced their opinions of the institution and found a pervasive faculty perception that the institution was not doing enough and a perception on the part of the students that efforts were misguided.

Mission utility in strategic planning and organizational decision making.

> "A well-defined mission is a touchstone, a kind of common law by which information is interpreted and decisions made" (Hartley, 2002, p. 10).

According to Bryson (2004a), planning in organizations requires clarifying its purpose or mission: “Ultimately strategic planning is about purpose, meaning, values, and virtue. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the clarification of mission and the subsequent development of a vision of success” (p. 103); mission statements provide direction and guidance for those in the organization and function as the hub around which everything else revolves while often also providing direction in terms of resource allocation (Bryson, 2004a). Crosby and Bryson (2005) offered a step-by-step exercise to help organizational leaders work through the development of a mission which includes questions such as “Who are we?”; “What is our purpose?”; “How should we respond to our key stakeholders?”; and “What makes us distinct or unique?” (Crosby & Bryson, 2005, p. 85).

Leadership during strategic planning within an organization requires intense attention to those who care about the outcome. Success for public organizations depends on the organization’s ability to satisfy the needs of key stakeholders (Bryson, 2004a). Bryson (2004b) argued that all stakeholders should be considered, regardless of the amount of power or influence they hold. “Failure to attend to the information and concerns of stakeholders clearly is a kind of flaw in thinking or action that too often and too predictably leads to poor performance, outright failure or even disaster” (Bryson, 2004b, p. 23). Bryson (2004a) provided an in-depth ‘how to’ of the strategic planning process, including an overarching framework for the strict identification of and attention to the needs of stakeholders. By identifying and understanding the issues associated

with multiple stakeholders, Bryson argued that the process of strategic planning will be more effective.

Cross-sector collaborations are necessary to tackle complex problems and to foster public value. Crosby and Bryson (2010) described "integrative public leadership" as a way of bringing these diverse sectors together. Bryson (2004b) described stakeholder identification techniques and the ways in which leaders can use stakeholder analysis to frame issues that are important and valuable to each stakeholder. Ideally according to Bryson (2004b), leaders will not just identify stakeholders and their needs, but through the analysis will gain an understanding of how to enhance "public value and advance the common good" (p. 26).

According to Crosby and Bryson (2005), in order to ensure that organizational culture supports the mission, the organization must possess integrity, inclusion, learning, and productivity. A culture of integrity for example, encourages organizational members to align with the mission of the institution. Kezar (2002) also recommended that institutions undergo an assessment of their institutional culture prior to strategic planning. As will be outlined below, an examination of planning through a cultural lens is integral to understanding the organization and attempting change.

Planning and decision making in higher education. While mission statements have become commonplace in higher education and are a key component to strategic planning efforts (Hartley, 2002; Morphew & Hartley, 2006), the body of literature specifically examining the use of institutional mission to guide decision making is inconclusive. Some researchers contend that mission statements are rarely used in

institutional planning (Lang & Lopers-Sweetman, 1991; Newsom & Hayes, 1991), others argue that they are used as a type of distraction (Davies, 1986; Eckel, 2002a; Lake & Mrozinski, 2001), while still others believe they can be used strategically (Dill, 1997; Dominick, 1990).

According to Lang and Lopers-Sweetman (1991), mission statements can perform a variety of functions for an institution: 1) goal clarification, 2) smoke screen, 3) description of current state, 4) aspirations, and 5) marketing tool; these functional characteristics of mission statements are echoed by several researchers (Clark, 1983; Davies, 1986). Of the institutions studied by Lang and Lopers-Sweetman (1991) however, only a few were "plans for action," a finding echoed by Clark (1983). The utility of mission statements for planning purposes according to Lang and Lopers-Sweetman (1991) is dependent on the clarity of the mission and who is using it for what purpose: a trustee may use the mission to guide future program and building plans, while a faculty member may use the mission to guide their work with students.

The effectiveness of mission statements in institutional planning depends on whether the institution can be flexible and make quick decisions, which is a quality that most institutions' governance and decision making structures – as "loosely coupled systems" – are not set up for (Cohen & March, 1986, 1987). Similarly, Lang and Lopers-Sweetman (1991) identified a disconnect between mission statements and mention of financial cost and suggest this disconnect may be one example of how mission and decision making can be at odds. The researchers suggested this as an

example of Cohen and March's (1986) organized anarchy and garbage can model of decision making, which will be described later in this literature review.

Newsom and Hayes' (1991) small study sought to determine whether institutional mission statements were useful in planning, and determined that they are rarely used for this purpose. While some institutions studied indicated they may use the mission statement for "program evaluations" or "the consideration of a proposed new program," most institutions studied stated they did not use the mission statement in strategic planning. When asked to identify their institutions' mission statements, individuals were not able to do so. In particular, public institutions were less likely to define specific organizational purposes than private institutions. In successful planning and decision making, the institution must have a clear purpose of where it is and where it wants to be (Gardiner, 1989). Gardiner (1989) argues: "Without effective mission statements, the institution's activities and practices can take on the role of the mission and drive the institution" (p. 24).

Other researchers with an alternative perspective see the utility in institutional mission and its ability to drive institutional change. Dill (1997) examined the relationship between strategic planning in institutions and the clarification of institutional mission and suggested that a weak mission statement is of little assistance to an institution while a strong mission that is "grounded in the culture and tradition of a particular institution" can become the mechanism by which institutions make successful decisions, plan strategically, and determine resource allocations. According to Dill (1997): "Mission in this sense addresses the means by which a college or university

defines the niche in which it will choose to compete and the social values by which it will shape its scale, scope and core competencies" (p. 188). Dominick (1990) agreed:

> What finally distinguishes one campus from another is the extent to which a college or university allows its sense of mission, which embodies its vision of and for itself, to influence its planning and to guide its actions. A well-articulated and successfully embodied statement of purpose can essentially define an institution. (p. 30)

Institutions in greater numbers are indeed using the mission to guide decisions and to set and determine priorities. The mission can not only guide goal-setting, but also can serve to guide behavior within the organization. Holland (1999) studied 23 case studies that were conducted between 1994 and 1998 and examined the alignment of the academic mission and institutional environment among institutions that had missions as both teaching and research institutions and were attempting to integrate service to the community. Holland's (1999) examination found that no institutions were successful in implementing significant academic change without a "clear consensus on mission" (p. 62).

Many researchers agree that an effective mission reflects the campus culture, serves as a link between the institution, its constituencies, and its environment, and provides direction for decision making. Having institutional mission as the foundation of change decisions in higher education allows institutional leaders to set strategies based on what competencies are needed to reach those goals. Nowlin (2009) examined the extent to which institutional leaders utilize mission in decision making by focusing

on Executive Directors of California State University foundations. The researcher determined that decisions related to finance and investments were reportedly more influenced by organizational mission than others. Nowlin's (2009) study concluded that 75% of the participants believed organizational mission usually or always influenced their decision making.

Mission utility during difficult times. The small body of literature that has examined mission and its relevance to struggling organizations suggests that having a clear, defined, strong organizational mission can serve as an asset during difficult times. Parker's (1986) study of 56 small to medium institutions identified characteristics of surviving institutions that were not present in institutions that failed and closed. For institutions with very strong missions where organizational members adhere strongly to them, the institution can respond better to conditions of decline. Perrow (1970) also concluded that organizations without clear missions and goals may suffer from greater internal and external pressures than those with clearly defined goals.

Taylor and Koch (1996) also argued that institutions with a strong clarity of mission are better equipped to deal with internal and external pressures, and Clark (1983) argued that vague mission statements are "inappropriate when used as guides to action" (p. 22). According to Berg, Csikszentmihalyi, and Nakamura (2003), having a clear, relevant mission helps to provide focus to both the institution and the individual. A clear mission statement "mediates the relationship between the institution and the outside world," helps to provide direction for individuals in the organization, and establishes a goal to which institutional members can aspire (p. 46).

Mission driven resource allocation has been identified as an institutional strategy during difficult financial times. Schwerin (1980) noted that as the central guiding principle of the institution, financial allocations must reflect the institutional mission; doing so is "urgent to the survival of institutional integrity" (p. 8). Lang and Lopers-Sweetman (1991) argued that aspirational mission statements "generally are not useful in resource allocation except that they are often seen, particularly by faculty, as powerful tools in making cases for more government funding" (p. 610). Establishment and adherence to mission is an important way for organizations to enforce accountability. "As colleges and universities become more diverse, fragmented, specialized, and connected with other social systems, institutional missions do not become clearer; rather, they multiply and become sources of stress and conflict rather than integration" (Birnbaum, 1988b, p. 11).

Schwerin (1980) argued that institutions should not change their mission in times of financial stress but that they should adjust their approaches to achieving their mission. Schwerin (1980) explored the relationship between mission and retrenchment and stated that "the viability and survival of a mission are anchored in the rationale for its initial formulation" (p. 2). Schwerin (1980) reinforced that the economic, demographic, and socio-cultural context of an institution and the region that it is situated within should be the basis for the mission. In this sense, "the mission is the center – not the circumference" (Schwerin, 1980, p. 2).

Vision and mission are core components when conducting a change activity and as institutions face difficult times (Kezar & Eckel, 2002a, 2002b; Leslie & Fretwell,

1996). Change does not imply that institutions will change completely but rather that they look at their core mission of teaching, research, and service and make adjustments within their particular mission (Eckel, 2002a). Cowan's (1993) examination of small colleges in trouble revealed that in the years preceding their struggles, the colleges failed to identify a strong institutional self. According to Cowan (1993), "the college was whatever and for whomever each person determined" (p. 32). The critical problem for small colleges (and for institutions more broadly) is a lack of a clear sense of institutional mission to guide and drive the college. After colleges come back from the brink, one in Cowan's (1993) study commented: "There's a feeling now [that] we really are what we say we are" (p. 34).

According to Leslie and Fretwell (1996), there are three "components to resilience" during difficult financial times: 1) "distinctiveness from other institutions", 2) "effectiveness in achieving a particular mission", and 3) "quality" (p. 245). Leslie and Fretwell's (1996) work suggested that institutions with a specific, well-defined mission may be able to weather difficult times when they possess the components of resilience.

Leadership Theory

A brief history of leadership theory: From trait leadership to democratic leadership and beyond. Classic leadership theory defines one leader with particular leadership traits that must be present in order to be successful. There is *one* leader, and that leader is clearly delineated through a series of "how to's" or traits, as opposed to being created (as future theorists propose). Similarly, positional leadership is very

common in modern organizations, and the university is no exception; people are leaders due to their formal position in the institution. Classic theorist Plato (1997) stated that a democratic society is problematic and that only the captain can be trusted because he has the only real knowledge. According to this concept of leadership, the power of leaders can come from their position within the institution or is given to the leader by their followers.

Research on leadership and organizational change in education evolved in the late 1980s from a focus of individual, trait-based characteristics to an understanding of how leaders shape or work within organizational cultures to influence change (Louis, n.d.). For example, an academic institution is not governed by one leader, but by many who hold positions of power and influence. A public institution has a complex leadership structure that includes but is not limited to the President, the Board of Regents or Trustees, as well as the legislature of the state in which the institution is situated. In the 1990s, studies began to look at the role of power and politics in organizational change, and the current emphasis on measures of accountability and measurement of outcomes in higher education are based on an assumption that leaders must consider all relevant stakeholders including faculty, administrators, and the state in which the institution is situated (Louis, n.d.).

Current leadership theory includes disputed evidence regarding the role of leaders during times of change in an organization; some advocate for change from the ground up while others argue that ground-up initiatives are too time intensive and do not allow for organizations to be mobile and nimble. Top-down change advocates such

as Conger (2000) contend that effective change begins at the top and that organizations with such structures have the greatest chance at success and change due to their ability to be nimble and more apt to change. Conger (2000) and others (Lipman-Blumen, 2000) described that followers tend to believe people who are leaders in positions of power and hence a top-down structure of organization makes for more effective change. Despite the fact that implementation is carried out differently in various parts of the organization, large overarching goals are often set from the top down. Others (Bennis, 2000) disagree and believe that concentrating change efforts from the ground-up builds greater continuity and unity within key players and greater support for the change.

Providing an alternative to the disputing theories surrounding democratic versus top down leadership styles, Dunphy (2000) argued that effective change happens not only from the top down nor from the bottom up, but rather via both mechanisms. Dunphy (2000) stated that both types of change structures are true and needed: 1) the people at the ground level doing the work, and 2) leaders to make the decisions and guide the organization. According to Dunphy (2000), looking at *only* the leader or looking at *only* the organization is too simplistic; rather change structures should be examined by how they work together.

Also contrary to earlier classic leadership theories, democratic leadership defines leadership as a behavior, not a position. Gastil's (1997) work on expanding previous theories of democratic leadership explained the functions of democratic leadership and the settings in which democratic leadership principles are more appropriate than top-down approaches. Gastil (1997) described a relationship between

authority and leadership, contending that democratic leaders have a responsibility for upholding transparency during decision making processes and should aid the membership in deliberations rather than direct from a position of power. In this model, leaders "seek to spread responsibility rather than concentrate it" (Gastil, 1997, p. 160).

Leadership and change in the academy. The examination of leadership and change in academia has focused primarily on the ability or inability of higher education to change (Eckel, 2002b; Hearn, 1996; Kezar, 2009; Kezar & Eckel, 2002a, 2002b). The common misconception is that institutions are not capable of change, particularly the quick change necessary to react to societal needs. What Eckel (2002a) espoused, however, is that institutions *do* do a good job at changing, but they do a poor job at articulating the change that has occurred. Eckel (2002a) provided examples of many ways in which institutions change, and how this information can be better disseminated to relevant stakeholders. According to Eckel (2002a): "…colleges and universities prosper because of their resiliency and ability to respond to emerging social needs, which is particularly true for urban institutions" (p. 80).

Despite the continued perception that higher education is resistant to change, there is further evidence to show that change does indeed take place. Hearn (1996) argued that although colleges and universities exhibit deep, institutionalized resistance to change, the purpose of and need for higher education drives necessary change: "Our postsecondary enterprise is large enough, diverse enough, open enough, decentralized enough, and competitive enough to be simultaneously both quite open to change and stubbornly resistant to it" (p. 144).

Kezar (2009) also challenged the notion that institutions are not interested in changing by arguing that the competition of multiple stakeholders and competing priorities makes it difficult for institutions to implement change. Kezar (2009) stated a variety of factors that contribute to "initiative-overload" including "too many stakeholders, a lack of synergy among similar efforts, an inability to prioritize, turnovers in leadership, and institutional isomorphism" (p. 1). With multiple stakeholders competing for the attention and priorities of colleges and universities, it is not at all unusual to see institutions with multiple continuous initiatives all roughly attempting a similar outcome but not connected to one another. This lack of connectivity may not only be due to lack of communication across campus, but also at times may be purposeful: competing stakeholders each see their cause or concern as fundamentally important. There are multiple opportunities for increased synergy and collaboration across campus that could mobilize change on a greater scale within institutions, but these opportunities are often lost in the noise.

According to Kezar and Eckel (2004), three major changes within the last 15 years have resulted in increased challenges for those who govern higher education institutions: increased scrutiny from various stakeholders resulting in fierce competition and the call for more accountability, diverse faculty and a lack of opportunity for faculty participation, and the increasing emphasis on fast responsiveness to societal needs and changes. Kezar and Eckel's (2004) literature synthesis provided an overview of the history of organizational, political, and cultural theories applied to higher education, and offered suggestions for improving governance structures on campuses to

address increased challenges. The researchers emphasized: "The intense environmental demands on higher education place great responsibility and strain on institutional leaders to make wise decisions in a timely manner" (Kezar & Eckel, 2004, p. 371). Leslie and Fretwell (1996) described sources of stress during hard times as both external (recession, state micromanagement, political dissatisfaction, demographic demands) and internal (analytical capacity, management problems).

Despite the myriad of challenges facing higher education leaders, understanding how leaders influence institutional decisions is less explored empirically at the higher education level than in other areas of education (Louis, n.d.). Much of the research examining leaders in higher education focuses on presidents and boards (Burke, 2010; Green, 1997; Hill, Green, & Eckel, 2001). For example, Kezar (2009) described the one element of institutional culture that inhibits colleges and universities from changing rapidly: the structure of presidential leadership and the cycle of turnover. Although presidents and other high-level leaders are the people within the institution that can direct change at the broadest level, Kezar (2009) stated that for longer-term change initiatives to become ingrained in an institution, the president and other high-level leaders must delegate more authority and infuse more responsibility for change initiatives at the lower levels to help ensure they are carried out.

Sensemaking and institutional change. According to March et al. (1993) and Simon (1993), the making of decisions itself can be tied to identity. In the context of university mission statements, this suggests that the words and meaning of mission statements (like constitutions) may be reinterpreted as new (non-routine) decisions

arise. Weick et al. (2005) refer to this as “sensemaking”. Sensemaking is a process by which individuals assign meaning to an event or series of events and act on the information they have received and meaning they have assigned to it (Thomas, Clark, & Gioia, 1993). Kezar and Eckel’s (2002a) case study of six institutions provided a framework for transformational change and determined that the key characteristic to facilitating change strategies is sensemaking: “…large scale institutional change is about meaning construction” (p. 317).

Weick et al. (2005) explained that sensemaking occurs when “the current state of the world is perceived to be different from the expected state of the world” (p. 409). During sensemaking, individuals interact with one another to process and determine how to respond to an event by asking the questions: “How does something come to be an event?” and “What does this event mean?” (Weick et al., 2005). Sensemaking can be an individual or collective process; collective sensemaking can occur as a result of a specific activity or through ongoing communication (Kezar & Eckel, 2002a; Weick & Roberts, 1993). Sensemaking can be small, subtle moments, or large, substantive written works, and occurs when organizational circumstances are described through both spoken written texts (Gioia, Thomas, Clark, & Chittipeddi, 1994). According to Weick et. al (2005),

> Sensemaking is not about the truth and getting it right. Instead, it is about continued redrafting of an emerging story so that it becomes more comprehensive, incorporates more of the observed data, and is more resilient in the face of criticism. (p. 415)

In the literature that examines sensemaking among leaders and middle managers of organizations, Gioia and Thomas' (1996) qualitative case study examined how institutional leaders make sense of important issues that affect change in academia. The researchers' findings suggest that leaders' perceptions of their desired future identity and image are key to making sense of the process of change. According to Gioia and Thomas (1996): "An underlying assumption of the informants was that their institution would not change markedly without somehow altering aspects of the central qualities of their institution – their identity" (p. 394). Louis, Mayrowetz, Smiley and Murphy (2009) examined how sensemaking shapes the development of distributed leadership in secondary schools, and determined that the ways in which organizational members make sense of initiatives plays an important role, as well as the actions of administrators to connect the initiative to existing organizational characteristics. Middle managers' roles as change agents may be increasing due to the ongoing complexity of organizations. Balogun and Johnson's (2004) longitudinal study examined sensemaking among middle managers during an organizational restructuring and concluded that it is important to consider the reactions of middle managers during change.

According to Tierney (2008), a study of organizational change in a university setting must consider the institution as an "interconnected web"; an analysis needs to include an examination of the web itself as well as participants' interpretations of the web.

Role of middle managers in academic institutions. The middle-manager role in higher education is probably best exemplified by the collegiate dean. While the organizational structures that surround the dean are not necessarily unique to institutions, there are institutional components within academia that aren't found in other types of organizations (Tucker & Bryan, 1991). The role of dean is challenging because the scholarship of deans is rooted in their department and discipline, while the goals of the institution the dean is expected to carry out come from the provost and president. Deanships vary greatly in the amount and types of power they have, as well as what decisions they are expected to make. Dill (1980) in his analysis of the deanship described the position as such: "The deanship, like middle-management positions in most institutions, [is] an amorphous, variegated, perhaps ultimately indescribable role" (p. 262).

In public universities specifically, because of the increased stakeholders of the public, state agencies, and legislatures in addition to the university boards and administration, the dean is "first and foremost a negotiator" (Dill, 1980, p. 270). According to Dill (1980), the role of the dean is far more political and social in nature than it is technical or even hierarchical. The closer deans move towards the "middle" of some institutions, the more they may sit on the outside instead of being participants in the "campus power game" (p. 273). Deans, according to Dill (1980), have three primary roles: 1) to provide direction, 2) to creative incentives, and 3) to move towards accomplishment of institutional goals. Institutional mission and structure can place constraints on deans and their ability to achieve goals. Deans are sometimes described

as “doves of peace”, “dragons”, and “diplomats,” indicating the components of their roles that are negotiators, peacemakers, and cheerleaders (Tucker & Bryan, 1991, p. ix).

Additional empirical studies have examined the role of the college dean in depth, as well as the relationship between the dean and institutional change. Rosser, Johnsrud, and Heck’s (2003) study provided a framework and approach for the evaluation of deans and directors. Deans must work with a wide range of campus stakeholders, and serve “two masters:” administration and faculty (Rosser et al., 2003, p. 2). In this middle-manager role, deans are often in the center of controversy, forced to negotiate between the demands of the departments and faculty, and the demands of the president and higher administration.

Wolverton, Wolverton and Gmelch (1999) echoed that deans experience role conflict and ambiguity due to the nature of the position: “As a dean within a university, he or she holds legitimate authority, but within his or her college such direct power can rarely be exercised” (p. 81). There is also evidence that the complexity of role conflict and ambiguity can be greater at larger, more complex institutions (Wolverton et al., 1999). Academic deans are both an “extension of the presidency” and an “extension of the faculty” (Wolverton et al., 1999, p. 80).

Finally, Huffman-Joley’s (1992) single institution case analysis described the role of the dean in a college of education. According to the researcher, deans must be experts on change and play a key role in helping to create vision at the collegiate level. The role of deans is multifaceted, the goal of which should be not only to carry out specific tasks, but also to change the culture. Mercer (1997) also identified that

academic deans and directors possess a large amount of authority, providing them the opportunity to steer their college and programs.

Theoretical Paradigms

Universities as organizations can be identified by three characteristics: a single unifying purpose, existence apart from the participants, and persistence over time (Bolman & Deal, 1997). While broad organizational theory is frequently applied to higher education, colleges and universities are unique in that they are also "institutions." Institutions have a set of defining characteristics including their adherence to historical missions and their ties to society and the greater environment (Czarniawska-Joerges & Sevón, 1996). In their seminal work, Bolman and Deal (1997) defined four organizational "frames" of analysis that include bureaucratic (structural), human resource, political, and symbolic (cultural). These frames can be used as lenses through which we see and examine aspects of organizations or, in this case, institutions. Institutions do not exist within one of these four categories, but rather these lenses can be applied to help understand various organizational phenomena.

Researchers have suggested that an understanding of change can best be accomplished through an examination using a combination of theories (Bolman & Deal, 1997; Morgan, 1986). Each lens or "frame" will illuminate particular intricacies of the organization, its functionality, its participants, and its reality. In one example of an examination from multiple perspectives, Simsek and Louis (1994) offered a theoretical framework for understanding organizational change in institutions in what they refer to as "paradigm shift." In this framework, concepts from traditional structural theory

came together with cultural and political theory to represent a model of organizational change in which change is moderated by the environment in which the organization is situated. Kezar (1994) contended that modern leadership research often ignores subtleties and context and instead provides overarching global strategies that may not be useful in changing situations. For years, organizations were thought of solely in terms of their structure, but we now know that organizations can be understood by also looking at their symbolic or cultural elements as well as their political elements.

Organizations as cultural entities.

Defining organizational and institutional culture. According to Bolman and Deal (1997), "Over time, every organization develops distinctive beliefs and patterns" (p. 231). Consider the following definitions of organizational culture:

> Organizational culture is a pattern of basic assumptions that a given group has invented, discovered or developed in learning to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, and that has worked well enough to be considered valid, and therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think and feel in relation to those problems. (Schein, 1985, p. 9)

> [Culture is] …the collective, mutually shaping patterns of norms, values, practices, beliefs, and assumptions that guide the behavior of individuals and groups in an institute of higher education and provide a frame of reference

> within which to interpret the meaning of events and actions on and off campus. (Kuh & Whitt, 1988, p. 13)

> [Culture includes] …the shared assumptions of the institution's actors. The symbols, myths, histories, and ideologies of the institution reflect the culture…Culture, then, is interpreted, negotiated, and constantly reconfigured by the ever-changing circumstances in which we find ourselves…Culture also encompasses the activities we are involved in on a daily level, the special language we use to speak with one another, the manner in which decisions get made, who is involved in making those decisions, and a host of other symbolic activities; in this sense, culture is created by, and creates meaning for, the organization's participants. (Tierney, 1992, p. 16)

> Culture defines appropriate behavior, bonding and motivating individuals, while governing the way in which institutions process information, shaping their internal relations and even values. (Association for the Study of Higher Education [ASHE], 2003, p. 41)

The symbolic, or "cultural" lens (as I will refer to it for the purposes of this study) focuses, therefore, on aspects of organizational stories, myths, and communication that set the stage for how and why an organization functions as it does. Frequently cited examples of institutional culture include organizational sagas (Clark, 1970), historical

figures (Deal & Kennedy, 1982), symbols, artifacts and myths (Koprowski, 1983), and rituals, history and events (Zucker, 1988).

Peterson and Spencer (1990) provided guiding definitions of culture and climate and shared examples of how each are reflected in colleges and universities and how they both describe the "internal environment of an institution" (p. 6). According to Peterson and Spencer (1990), the features of culture include its emphasis on an institution's character through which it provides a particular meaning to the members; its deep roots in the organization; and its ability to not be easily changed (Peterson & Spencer, 1990; Schein, 2004). Climate on the other hand is defined as "…the current common patterns of important dimensions of organizational life or its members' perceptions of and attitudes toward those dimensions" (Peterson & Spencer, 1990, p. 7) and refers to peoples' perceptions and attitudes, including an emphasis on the common views of participants, a focus on current behaviors, and is an element that is malleable and able to be altered and changed.

The origins of organizational culture can be as complex as the organization itself. At the core of institutional culture are its values, the stated or unstated assumptions that underscore and guide an institution. Institutional culture evolves over time; although the values are usually stated (e.g. the mission statement), the culture evolves through the faculty, students, staff, alumni, and the community surrounding the institution. According to Schein (1985): "One of the most central elements of any culture will be the assumptions the members of the organization share about their identity and ultimate mission or functions" (pp. 92–93). The history of the institution

and institutional culture are intertwined. "The institutional memory serves as the connective tissue between and institution's past and present and, to a considerable degree, shapes how future events will be interpreted" (Kuh & Whitt, 1988, p. 45). As examined earlier in this literature review, the mission can serve as the explicit guiding principle, often making the connection between the history and values of the institution.

Institutional history and founding. According to Schein (2004), culture can derive from one of three things: the founder of the organization, existing organization members, or new members of the organization. Of these three, the founder of the organization is the most prominent in setting the culture of an organization; founders choose the mission, goals, and direction for the organization. Culture must be understood in the historical context of the institution; it's important to remember that organizations (and institutions as a type of organization) are not formed spontaneously, but rather with a distinct purpose. In addition to choosing the mission, founders also create culture by selecting the early members of the organization, who, in turn, propagate the values and beliefs of the founder, and continue to build the foundation for the institution. Schein (1985) stated: "Culture is to a group what personality or character is to an individual" (p. 8). In this sense, we see the "personality" but not the reasons or qualities that have led that personality to evolve or exist. Using this example, the complexity of institutional culture becomes clear; culture is an accumulation of many aspects that have come before.

Types of institutional culture. The literature on organizational culture in higher education often describes various types of institutional culture, and clearly points out

that one doesn't "manage" culture, but rather operates within it. According to Bergquist (1992), academic institutions are comprised of four types of cultures: collegial, managerial, developmental, and negotiating. Each culture has its own history, core values, and ways of viewing the world, and most institutions have components of each of the four cultures (although they may be at conflict). An institution with a collegial culture finds meaning in how it delivers academic content to students and operates under the guiding principle of rationality. In a managerial culture, an emphasis is placed on operating assumptions and stated goals that lead to institutional success; these institutions value supervisor development and fiscal responsibility that in turn will enable the institution to reach its goal of educating students. Institutions with a dominant developmental culture operate under a guiding principle of professional development and growth for all members of the community. In a developmental culture, an emphasis is placed on creating and maintaining programs that help faculty, staff, and students develop and mature. Finally, institutions with a dominant negotiating culture operate under a guiding principle of equity that sees institutions either as furthering a particular social agenda or responsible for forming a new one.

In one empirical study examining institutional culture, Fralinger and Olson (2007) examined university culture through a study of the artifacts, espoused values, and basic underlying assumptions of two courses in one university's health sciences department. The researchers utilized the Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument and considered four culture types cited by Cameron and Quinn (1999): hierarchy culture, clan culture, market culture and adhocracy culture. Fralinger and Olson (2007)

determined that a "clan culture" was the prevalent culture of the department studied; this culture was characterized by "a friendly place to work where people share a lot of themselves" (p. 92). Franlinger and Olson (2007) emphasized the need for additional research on university cultures, particularly those that incorporate methodologies and sample sizes beyond the scope of their single-institution study.

According to Tierney (2008), organizational culture is comprised of members' understanding of the environment framed within organizational "patterns and meanings" (p. 11). Tierney argues that mission is part of the institutional culture and therefore is an example of the external realization of culture for all members of the organization. Mission can be described as a part of an institution's identity, which Tierney also argues contains elements of history. According to Tierney (2008): "A strong sense of identity serves two important purposes: it fosters cultural integration, and it directions organizational action" (p. 18), similar to Nowlin's (2009) concept of steering or navigating the boat.

Cultural theory therefore examines how institutional elements such as symbols, totems, and the values and beliefs of members affect the functions of the organization. Understanding the culture of higher education has been likened to "peeling the layers of an onion" – the outside layer is the artifacts, the middle layers are the espoused values, and the inner core is the underlying assumptions (Kuh & Whitt, 1988). These artifacts, values, and assumptions guide an institution and its members, often implicitly. Studying an organization through a cultural lens can reveal underlying forces that contribute to individuals' behaviors within the organization over time.

Institutional mission and organizational saga. One example of organizational culture that personifies the cultural frame was Clark's (1972) concept of "organizational saga." A saga is a "collective understanding of a unique accomplishment based on historical exploits of a formal organization, offering strong normative bonds within and outside the organization" (Clark, 1972, p. 178). Clark's (1972) well-known concept of saga within institutions was first conceptualized in his work studying the small, private, liberal arts colleges of Antioch, Reed, and Swarthmore, but the concept of saga is translatable to various institutional types. A saga isn't just a story – it's a story with a strong cadre of members who believe in the story and the message or moral the story represents. An effective saga can turn a college or university into a "beloved institution, to which participants may be passionately devoted" (Clark, 1972, p. 178). Organizational sagas serve as a glue to hold organizational members together not just to one another, but more importantly to the organization itself: "…a saga produces unity. It binds together the structural elements, it links internal and external groups, and it merges…individual and organizational identities" (Clark, 1970, p. 255).

Clark (1972) used institutional examples to show the prevalence and strength of organizational saga in the formation, continuance and longevity of colleges. The organizational saga is an important tool and resource due to its ability to reel in institutional members who may develop very strong affinity and emotional commitment to the institution. Sagas are most likely to be formed during important or pivotal moments in institutional history. Clark (1972) suggested three occasions during which sagas are likely to be initiated: 1) "The New Context" – during the forming of the

institution, 2) “The Revolutionary Context” – when the established organization is at risk and members are asked to give up their previously-held ways, or 3) “The Evolutionary Context” – when the established organization deems itself ready for institutional change. According to Clark, most sagas begin within a successful institution.

Examples of institutional saga, such as legends and traditions, can either be built formally or may grow organically. In order for a saga to become laced in the fabric of the institution, five characteristics must be present: 1) faculty become believers of the legend and keep it alive, 2) the saga is integrated within features of the curriculum, 3) believers external to the organization provide support and resources, 4) students become believers and integrate the saga into their experiences, and 5) the saga takes on a momentum of its own (Clark, 1970).

According to Clark (1972), organizational sagas can be present in the mission of institutions. Subtle examples of the mission of an institution can be seen throughout the academic departments, core requirements, and the way a university is organized and structured. Kezar (2002) reiterated that “culture is reflected throughout campus process and structures such as the mission, leadership, information sharing, strategic planning, and socialization of new members” (p. 97).

In addition to implicit values that are held by institutional members, external values help to characterize the real meaning of the organization. Institutional mission is one example of organizational culture reflected in the values and beliefs of the institution – it is the external realization of institutional values and culture for all

members of the organization. According to Peterson and Spencer (1990): "While the espoused values and beliefs are often those that are widely communicated and that form the institutional identity, they often present the organization in its ideal, rather than actual, form" (p. 11). In addition to these explicit values, the implicit values that are held by the institutional members help to characterize the real meaning of the organization (Peterson & Spencer, 1990; Schein, 2001, 2004). Tierney (1988) posited that mission is one of six criteria through which institutional culture can be examined; the other criteria include environment, socialization, information, strategy, and leadership. According to Tierney (1988), "Institutions with very similar missions and curricula can perform quite differently because of the way their identities are communicated to internal and external constituents and because of the varying perceptions these groups may hold" (p. 3). Although many stakeholders look towards the highest-level leaders for guidance, it is really the responsibility of all members of an organization to "protect the underlying tenets of institutional mission" (Taylor & Koch, 1996, p. 84).

Institutional missions therefore can serve as a type of organizational saga for some institutions, acting as glue that holds members together under a common, unified, belief – a unification that may be of particular importance as institutions struggle with difficult financial decisions; institutions with a strong clarity of mission are better equipped to deal with internal and external pressures. According to Taylor and Koch (1996), "management of financial disappointments improves within institutional

cultures in which there is a clarity of purpose" (p. 86). Mission creates "a performance and a place," and the saga looks at the history of the institution (Clark, 1970, p. 235).

***Location, place, and physical manifestations of culture*.** The link between people, institutional mission and place has been examined across disciplines. Chapman (2006) described that college taught him: "…about the intricate negotiations that are made between people and place every minute of every day as part of the collegial experience" (p. xix). The intersection of people and place as part of the higher education experience is evident in the rituals, traditions, teaching, and discoveries that are made daily. Chapman (2006) emphasized that the college experience is unique because it is a purposeful experience sought out by students in particular, and by the faculty and other campus community members who support the learning environment.

Kenney, Dumont and Kenney (2005) noted that many universities have physical places or elements of campus that "immediately identify them" (p. 77). According to Kenney et al., (2005): "An institution's physical campus environment plays a key role in expressing – and in helping to achieve – that institution's mission and strategic objectives" (p. 28). Physical place helps to establish and reinforce a sense of community. Kenney et al. (2005) discussed that the need to create community on college campuses stems back to the goal of higher education as a free exchange of ideas, and a need to create the space in which these ideas can be fostered.

Place is, as Chapman (2006) notes, a "tangible expression of institutional identity" (p. xxxi). Among public regional institutions, the sense of place is magnified because these institutions were founded to serve the population of the region in which

they are located. According to Chapman (2006), "the educational, cultural, and social services that regional institutions provide make them lively centers of civic life in their localities" (p. xxx), often, as Chapman notes, with little financial support to do so. These communities, as town and gown legends tell us, balance university interference with their sense of place with the economic and social realities that come with having a regional university.

Institutional culture can be reflected in physical components on the campus. Specific buildings, artwork, naming conventions, and even the layout of the campus itself contribute to the ways in which community members intersect, interact, and understand the values of the institution. According to Kenney et al. (2005), these physical manifestations can tie the "…reputation of the institution to the image of the place, thereby making the idea of the institution more concrete and meaningful" (p. 77). This imagery, according to Chapman (2006), is evident on many public, regional campuses as the iconic "Old Main," the central building around which the university originally functioned. Regional universities, particularly those with high concentrations of commuter students, may struggle with a common student experience, but Old Main is often that point of contact and unifying image among students (Chapman, 2006). Imagery such as Old Main can be found across colleges campuses and serve as messages of institutional goals and the overall narrative of the university.

American universities, and in particular regional universities, have a goal of contributing directly to the communities that surround them. The American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) coined this concept "stewards of place."

Boyer's (1990) *Scholarship Reconsidered* helped model to institutions the possibility of thinking about the traditional teaching, research and service missions in new ways. Engaged scholarship has grown as a way in which the work of university researchers can intersect with the surrounding public context.

Organizational culture in institutional decision making and change.

> "Successful governance…depends on the extent of agreement concerning institutional mission and the degree of consensus as to the implications of institutional culture" (ASHE, 2003, p. 1).

Tierney (1988) offered the following example to illustrate the relationship between organizational culture and leadership: "Effective administrators are well aware that they can take a given action in some institutions but not in others. They are less aware why this is true" (p. 5). An understanding and study of institutional culture provides information to inform policy-making, decision making, and change at colleges and universities; a study of organizational culture is important for examining the management of institutions.

Unlike businesses where decision making more or less follows a linear path, at higher educational institutions that is often not the case. According to Kezar (2002), "Culture is reflected throughout campus process and structures such as the mission, leadership, information sharing, strategic planning, and socialization of new members" (p. 97). As resources for higher education become scarcer, an understanding of institutional culture can help inform decision making for higher education's leaders. A cultural understanding can help frame the myriad of choices within the context of what

is most viable for the institution: "…properly informed by an awareness of culture, tough decisions may contribute to an institution's sense of purpose and identity" (Tierney, 1988, p. 5). Kezar and Eckel (2004) have shown that institutional culture must be understood when examining decision making; without contextual knowledge of institutional values, many elements may be misunderstood or ignored completely.

While costs and finances associated with higher education are well studied, there is a lack of literature that relates the impact of budgetary concerns within institutional culture. There is, however, significant research on decision making and change processes within a cultural context. Tierney's (1988) case study of a public state university is used to illustrate aspects of institutional culture and provides a framework through which institutional culture can be defined and examined to improve decision making and problem solving. Tierney (1988) posited a framework of six criteria through which institutional culture can be examined: environment, mission, socialization, information, strategy, and leadership.

Institutions should evaluate and have a firm understanding of campus culture before beginning the change process, and effective change efforts must be integrated successfully into the existing culture (Hearn, 1996). Kezar and Eckel (2002b) examined the impact of institutional culture on the change process in colleges and universities and suggested that where such strategies violate the cultural norms of the institution, the change is less likely to occur.

Studying an organization through a cultural lens is necessary to identify the leadership priorities of an organization and can reveal underlying forces that contribute

to individuals' behaviors within the organization over time. According to Bolman and Deal (1997), leaders have a role in helping members of an organization understand change processes; one mechanism is through metaphors and the telling of stories or myths. An effective university culture is one that motivates employees by modeling appropriate behavior and emphasizing key messages. Culture provides a framework for decision makers as long as the decision makers have a knowledge and understanding of the underlying assumptions, historical context, and values of the organization. A cultural analysis offers a broad approach to decision makers and encourages them to consider choices within context, understand the symbolic dimensions of particular decisions, and understand why differences in opinion exist within various groups (Tierney, 1988).

The literature on higher education clearly points out that strong cultures are "better" than weak ones and that one doesn't "manage" culture, but rather culture *is*. Aspects of an organization's mission must remain latent in an effort to protect the organization. According to Schein (2004), these latent components often become visible during times of organizational change in which members realize their reliance on these latent principles. Changing the culture of an organization therefore is difficult due partially to the internal forces that although possibly hidden, may work to keep the organization together.

Every organization has a culture that can be weak or strong. The values of an organization (which can be exemplified in the mission) underlie the beliefs of the culture and define what success looks like. "If the saga is particularly salient, the saga

may be invoked to legitimate, for example, governance and decision-making processes" (Kuh & Whitt, 1988, p. 46). The values lay the groundwork for a common path for all members of the community and help to guide behavior. "In strong culture companies, nothing is too trivial" (Deal & Kennedy, 2000, p. 60). Every action in the organization is an opportunity to manage the members of the community and to establish elements of ritual. "In absence of ceremony or ritual, important values will have no impact" (Deal & Kennedy, 2000, p. 63). In one example of an examination of institutional culture, Cowan (1993) identified "Five Requisites for Turnaround" that taken together can help struggling small colleges recover and find their ways again. These five characteristics include: 1) a president willing to undertake the challenge and take responsibility for it, 2) a collaborative process across campus, 3) comprehensive solutions that affect the entire institution, 4) leaders across the institution who work to ensure operational effectiveness, and 5) and institutional sense of excitement that is reflected in symbolic gestures.

A cultural lens often reveals institutional aspects at work that may be some of the most stable yet some of the least malleable elements in organizations (Schein, 2004). Deal and Kennedy (2000) stated it best: "Culture is the barrier to change. The stronger the culture, the harder it is to change" (p. 159). Through this frame it is apparent that "the name of the game is maintaining legitimacy and support in the eyes of multiple constituencies" (Bolman & Deal, 1997, p. 235). Bolman and Deal (1997) referred to this phenomenon as organizational theater. They also stated: "You are powerful if others think you are" (p. 247). The culture is one of cooperation and unity

across a variety of perspectives, and those leaders who are seen as actively facilitating this culture are those with the most power. It is important to remember that culture exists at all levels of an institution and the organizations that work with institutions. A firm understanding of individual institutional culture is necessary to properly distinguish the various cultures and to minimize conflict between them. A cultural analysis offers a broad approach to decision makers and encourages them to consider choices within context, understand the symbolic dimensions of particular decisions, and understand the reasons why differences in opinion exist within various groups (Tierney, 1988).

Organizations as political entities. The second of Bolman and Deal's (1997) frames to be examined is the political frame. The political frame: "Views organizations as alive and screaming political arenas that host a complex web of individual and group interests" (Bolman & Deal, 1997, p. 163). According to Mintzberg (2001), "…To understand the behavior of an organization, it is necessary to understand which influencers are present, what needs each seeks to fulfill in the organization, and how each is able to exercise power to fulfill them" (p. 353). There are five primary elements according to Bolman and Deal (1997) that characterize the political frame: varied coalitions, differences among members' values, allocation of scarce resources, power as the most important resource, and outcomes that are a result of stakeholder negotiations. An analysis of institutions through this frame reveals political arenas where members have multiple interests and goals.

Power and conflict in organizations. Power is not negative, nor does viewing a situation through the political lens assume a negative analysis. Rather through a political lens we see that all parties are right, each from their own perspectives. Due to differing beliefs of organizational members, not all interests are able to be satisfied at the same time. Also, due to scarce resources, groups of participants must mobilize to get what they want. According to Bolman and Deal (1997), "power in organizations is basically the capacity to get things to happen" (p. 165). In an organization with scarce economic resources, like the modern U.S. public university, power is the most important resource. Birnbaum (1988b) also reiterated: "Power is the ability to produce intended change in others, to influence them so that they will be more likely to act in accordance with one's own preferences" (p. 12).

Conflict and power struggles can occur within every level of the organization. Bolman and Deal (1997) described this phenomenon as horizontal, vertical and cultural conflict. Horizontal conflict occurs between departments, vertical conflict occurs between departments and the general administration, and cultural conflict occurs between groups with varying belief systems. "[A]ction results from games among players who perceive quite different faces of an issue and who differ markedly in the actions they prefer" (Pfeffer, 2001, p. 313).

Institutional mission as organized anarchy. Colleges and universities tend to have goals that are rather unclear and sometimes contradictory, poorly understood techniques and systems for achieving those goals, distributed and often decentralized responsibility for decision making, and fluctuating participation in governance

activities. Many scholars (Cohen & March, 1986; Kingdon, 2003; Pfeffer, 2001) have described these qualities as "organized anarchy." Cohen and March (1986) in their study of college and university presidents described institutions characterized by technical ambiguity, members who come and go fluidly, and unclear goals as this organized anarchy; while action occurs, it is not the result of conscious planning or overarching goals. The phrase "organized anarchy" is used to describe the confusion and disorder of decision-making in "loosely coupled" organizations (Cohen & March, 1986, 1987). An organized anarchy is characterized by problematic goals, unclear technology, fluid participation, and an institutional mission where there is no agreement on its meaning or where the stated mission is ambiguous can cause confusion and lack of consensus among members. "The institution discovers what it prefers by seeing what it has already done, rather than by acting on the basis of preferences" (Birnbaum, 1988b, p. 155).

Organizational politics and institutional decision making. Within the political frame, conflict is viewed as a normal part of organizations; action is the result of "players" who have differing views and goals (Pfeffer, 2001). According to Pfeffer (2001), decision making is best understood in terms of power, authority, politics, and compromise. Questions such as who has power and why, in which decisions is power most used, and under what circumstances is compromise reached are all important when considering the political framework of an organization. As a result of multiple competing values and scarce resources, organizational conflict is a part of decision

making in political organizations. This conflict is characterized by interest groups who have been mobilized, negotiation, and resolution (Bolman & Deal, 1997).

March (1981) found that many studies of decision making have discussed ways in which organizations act based on both incomplete knowledge and on a structure that is based on what is feasible, not what is ideal. March (1981) described that while rational decision making theories are based on the assumptions that organizations have a knowledge of the alternatives and consequences, a set of rules to operate under, and an order by which to organize the alternatives (hence making the clearest alternative obvious), most organizations instead operate through a type of bounded rationality. According the March (1981), the rational elements of decision making "appear to be more symbolic than real" (p. 211).

Cohen and March's (1986) garbage can theory considered elements of power, conflict and authority. Garbage can theory views decision making as an activity in which solutions are determined in large part by a random stream of events; because systems are so overloaded with problems, solutions, and types of decisions, people will attend to only certain decisions. Decisions therefore can be the outcome of an interpretation of several independent streams of problems, solutions, participants, and opportunities that move autonomously, rather than the result of in-depth analysis of the "best" solution. According to Olsen (1976): "An organizational decision can sometimes be viewed as a result of a process in which decision makers, or some winning coalition, solve their problems or resolve their conflicts…often, however, reorganization is a garbage can" (p. 253). This depiction of decision making as a garbage can is

characterized by loosely connected problems, participants, and solutions. Kingdon (2003) identified three areas in which competing ideas operate: the problem, solution, and political streams. The problem stream included the identification of what problems need addressing, the solution stream contained the possible competing solutions to the problem, and the political stream consisted of the key stakeholders.

Garbage can theory explains that what starts out as a relatively straightforward problem is made complicated when the problem becomes tightly coupled with various other solutions and players. Garbage can theory identifies a way of making decisions common to institutions. Organizations that are susceptible to this type of decision making are those with conflicting or unclear goals, unclear technologies, and participation from many members: all characteristics of many if not most colleges and universities (Cohen & March, 1986; March, 1981; March, Simon, & Guetzkow, 1993). Politics will only continue to be more salient and more relevant during difficult times (Bolman & Deal, 1997), as resources become scarce. McLendon (2003) suggested that more rigorous empirical research is necessary to examine the role of politics in higher education leadership.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN

Through this study I sought to understand the complex nature of decision making and institutional mission in universities. I employed a qualitative, multi-institutional case study approach that allowed for both the understanding of this process at various institutions as well as for comparison of this phenomenon across those institutions.

Research Questions

To examine the phenomenon of institutional decision making in these challenging times, the following research questions were considered:

1) What is the relationship between institutional culture and decision making?
2) How do academic leaders in public master's level higher education institutions make decisions?
    a. To what extent are these decisions guided by the use of institutional mission?
    b. To what extent is the use of mission impacted by financial constraints?
3) To what degree is institutional mission embedded in decision making and for what types of decisions?
4) How are decisions perceived by other key institutional actors such as deans and faculty?
    a. Do other key institutional actors view mission as part of the academic decision making process?

The cultural analysis employed reveals underlying forces that contribute to individuals' behaviors within the institution, offering further explanation on the utility of mission in decision-making for public, master's granting institutions.

A case study design was particularly appropriate for this study because it allowed for an in-depth examination of complex phenomena through the use of multiple sources of evidence. According to Yin (2002), the determination of research method depends on three conditions: 1) the type of research question (e.g., How? Why? How much? How many? Where? Who?), 2) the extent of control the researcher has over the events, and 3) the degree to which the focus of the study is on historical or contemporary events. Case study, as an all-encompassing research method (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2009), focuses on questions of "Why" and "How" (Louis, 2008). Based on Yin's definition, the explanatory questions investigated, lack of control over the event, and a focus on contemporary events all led to case study as a desired research design method.

A strength of case study as a research design method is the researcher's ability to consider a variety of sources of evidence to examine "contextual conditions" (Yin, 2002). Through the use of case study the researcher recognizes that context is important and is useful in examining phenomena that exist within a bounded system, such as an institution. Lee (1989) defines an organizational case study as "an intensive study of a single case where the case consists of the individuals, groups, and social structure in the setting of an organization" (pp. 119–120). In an organizational case study of higher education, the main unit may be the institution, but smaller units might include the

departments within the institution or even a subset of individuals, such as the faculty. Organizational case studies are frequently used to examine phenomena that are reasonably well defined but poorly understood. Phenomena ranging from teacher and parent experiences with new curriculum, innovative programs or practices, or Hartley's (2002) examination of liberal arts colleges in crisis who rallied around a new and/or improved institutional mission (as discussed in Chapter 2) are all examples of how education researchers have used case studies for years to examine the interaction of various factors with a particular phenomenon.

The use of multiple cases was also of particular importance to the design of this study. Multiple case study design is often considered to be more robust, avoiding the vulnerability of single case studies and providing greater analytic benefit and possibilities. Results found in more than one case are more powerful than those from a single case, and due to the fact that context matters in case studies, the possibility for generalizability of findings can increase with the identification of multiple cases (Yin, 2002).

The use of extensive, multiple sources of evidence in data collection as well as the examination of a poorly-understood phenomenon situated within a particular complex organizational structure distinguishes case study design from other limited qualitative approaches, such as interview studies. Merriam (1998) suggests that case studies allow the investigation of complex social units consisting of multiple variables anchored in real-life situations. The research questions posed lend themselves best to

case study due to the fact that they attempt to answer explanatory questions as well as seek to understand the context surrounding a phenomenon (Gay et al., 2009).

The analysis of existing literature regarding mission and decision making described in Chapter 2 identified that research has been dominated by specialized, single-institution studies. There has been a need to examine change processes specifically among public institutions that are part of a larger system, and for research that expands the existing literature by exploring these phenomena across multiple institutions. The design of this study allows for examination at both the institutional and system level.

Context

A constrained context was necessary for operationalizing this study from both a theoretical and methodological standpoint. Constraints had to be placed on the state within which the institutions operate as well as on the type of institution studied. An examination of public institutions in the United States must situate itself within the relevant state context. The ability to control for state-specific financial considerations, constraints, and political factors, as well for the relationship of the institutions to one another, were imperative in the design of this study. Similarly, a focus on one institutional type, the master's university, provided another necessary focus. As master's universities often find themselves pulled in many directions, a study of decision making and institutional mission was particularly salient for this population.

Finally, constraining the study by focusing on similar institutional types within a single system provided additional important methodological considerations and allowed

a level of comparison and analysis that would not be possible with a single-institution study. Additional methodological considerations that were made regarding the sample will be discussed in greater detail to follow.

Sampling

Individuals at seven institutions were invited to participate in this study. Patten (2003) describes the identification of cases as specific, complex units with known boundaries. Institutions were chosen therefore based on the following criteria: 1) all institutions were campuses within one public university system in a singular state, 2) all institutions were master's degree granting institutions categorized as Master's/L,M or S: Master's Colleges and Universities (larger programs, medium programs, smaller programs) as defined by the Carnegie Classification system (Carnegie Foundation, 2010), and 3) one-half of the institutions were founded as minority-serving institutions. Institutional leaders as described below were contacted to determine their willingness to participate in the study; six of the seven institutions agreed to participate in the study, and initial interviews were conducted with the chief academic officer or his/her proxy as identified for those individuals who had been in their role less than one year.

The sampling method used for institution identification was a non-probability sampling procedure that has elements of both purposive and criterion sampling. As a non-probability sample, the institutions studied were not identified randomly, but rather were chosen because they met a set of pre-determined criteria that were of importance to the aspect being examined: all master's degree awarding institutions, all part of the same public operating system, and some with historical roots as minority-serving

institutions. The ability to control for state-specific context and constraints, as well as the relationship of the institutions to one another, were important to the reliability of data collected for this study. In addition, as was examined in Chapter 2, a significant component of many mission statements is tied to institutional history, which provides a theoretical reason for the inclusion of institutions that were founded as minority-serving institutions. Also, by selecting institutions of similar type in the same state and operating system, I am able to establish comparisons to illuminate similarities or differences that would not otherwise be possible.

Similarly, a small, focused sample of cases across purposefully chosen sites provides more confidence that the conclusions accurately reflect the phenomenon being examined and that the responses obtained provide sufficient context, description, and analysis of the situation. For example, having more cases would have not allowed for the deep level of data collection necessary to examine the contextual components of each institution, and the use of multiple case study design provided the opportunity for more robust data analysis and generalizability than may have been found in a single-institution study. Additionally, an examination of multiple institutions provided a greater breadth of understanding of the interplay between culture, context, decision making and mission as posed in the research questions. In this study, an analysis of phenomena at a smaller number of institutions of similar type within the same state and same operating system provided the ability to gather enough information related to the event, decision making, and context of the institution while still being able to examine the phenomena within and across cases.

Patton (2002) describes case study methodology as an "in-depth understanding" of purposefully selected participants (p. 230). To study how institutional leaders make decisions in this changing environment, a purposeful sampling procedure was employed. Chief academic officers – as the key decision makers regarding issues related to the academic core – were the natural group to recruit when examining decision making and institutional mission. Other key institutional actors that were interviewed in this study included faculty and academic deans – the "middle managers" of higher education. The role of deans is multifaceted, the goal of which can be not only to carry out specific tasks, but to also shape the culture (Huffman-Joley, 1992). Mercer (1997) also identified that academic deans possess a large amount of authority, providing them the opportunity to steer their college and programs. Similarly, it was necessary to determine how decisions made are perceived across the institution.

Within each institution, interviews were conducted with the chief academic officer (CAO) and 5-10 senior academic officers and members of the faculty. The inclusion criteria for participant selection of other key institutional actors within each institution were as follows: 1) members of the institution's Dean's Council or similar body of collegiate deans (a minimum of one from each of the largest and smallest colleges), 2) department chair and/or collegiate dean directly involved in the particular decision identified by the CAO, and 3) the current and previous president of the Faculty Council, Faculty Senate, or similar faculty governance body. Selection of the same number of participants at each institution was due to the relative similar size and institutional type of the selected institutions.

Interviews with the CAOs were solicited and organized via email, with an accompanying letter of support from a colleague at a peer institution. Identification of CAOs, members of the Dean's Council and current and previous presidents of the Faculty Council (or similar groups) was obtained from university websites. All possible participants were contacted via email and invited to participate in a face-to-face interview; contact information for all study participants was available publicly online. The study was approved by the University of Minnesota Institutional Review Board: Human Research Protection Program on June 15, 2012, IRB Code Number 1206P15521 (see Appendix J) and approved for continuing review on June 13, 2013. No participants were contacted before the Institutional Review Board granted approval of the study.

Data Collection

Data for this case study were collected through interviews with credible decision makers conducted between September 21, 2012 and February 28, 2013 as well as document analysis from multiple sources. Merriam (1998) describes that interviews are a preferred data collection method when studying phenomena that have happened in the past that cannot be recreated and when studying how participants interpret situations. Documents are described by Merriam (1998) as "ready-made source[s] of data" (p. 112). For the purposes of this study, document analysis was necessary to help understand the context of the decision made, the details surrounding the event, and pertinent elements of institutional history.

Interviews and instruments. Data collection instruments (see Appendix A and B) consisted of 10 open-ended, semi-structured questions for the CAOs and nine open-

ended, semi-structured questions for the other key institutional actors. Semi-structured interviews consisted of a combination of more-structured and less-structured questions (Merriam, 1998), "guided by a list of questions to be explored" (p. 74). Open-ended questions were used to avoid leading the participants or having influence over their answers. Interviews questions were sent to the participants in advance and the interviews were conducted in person at the institution of study and transcribed verbatim.

The instruments were designed to allow participants the opportunity to describe a decision that was made and to reflect on the process that led to the decision as well as the context surrounding it. I asked questions focusing on the processes used to make decisions at each institution, the importance and usefulness of institutional mission in guiding decision making, and the perception of these decisions by other key institutional actors. The interview instruments were designed not only to delve within the conceptual framework of the study, but also to allow new ideas and concepts to emerge as a result of participant reflection.

Document review. According to Yin (2002), the most important use of document review in case studies is to "corroborate and augment evidence from other sources" (p. 87). Document analysis was conducted following each site visit and was used to delve further into information obtained during interview and to substantiate claims made by key institutional actors. Documents for review included those primarily obtained on each institution's website; a complete list of all documents is found in Appendix C. Special attention was paid to those documents that referenced institutional mission, guiding principles, and academic decisions. In addition, institutional fact

books for all institutions were used to determine smallest and largest colleges at each university in accordance with aforementioned sampling procedures. Upon identification of relevant documents, all were assessed for authenticity by considering how the document was acquired, who the author was, and what the author was attempting to accomplish. Merriam notes it is particularly important to consider the context that surrounds the creation of the document; data obtained from document analysis can work to ground the study in context (Merriam, 1998).

Steps to Increase Trustworthiness of Study

The validity and reliability of this study were enhanced in several ways. First, internal validity was enhanced through triangulation and member checks (Merriam, 1998), allowing for confidence in the accuracy of the data. Data triangulation is the analysis of information from multiple sources to identify information convergence (Patten, 2003). The multiple sources in this study included information obtained from study participants, case study reports, and document analysis which all served to enhance construct validity, as well.

Internal and construct validity were also enhanced through member checking, in which study participants were considered members of the research team and were asked to corroborate the results (Patten, 2003). Member checks were conducted initially with the chief academic officer or proxy of the three selected within-case institutions analyzed in Chapter 4, and remaining member checks with each additional study participant were conducted following CAO feedback. The reliability of the

results of this study was strengthened further by the use of content experts at each institution, as well as through a systematic approach towards data collection.

Possible researcher biases that must be made explicit are associated primarily with my dual role as both researcher and as an employee at a peer institution within the system. To mitigate this effect, I disclosed this relationship with each interviewee and asked each to read and corroborate the analysis (member checking). Similarly, by my direct involvement as the interviewer (data collector) as well as the interpreter of the data, any possible impacts these have on data collection and interpretation have also been considered. To avoid interviewer effect, I conducted each interview myself, and as stated previously, mitigated any respondent effect by asking each respondent to review the conclusions.

Finally, the external validity of the study was enhanced by use of what Merriam (1998) refers to as "rich, thick descriptions" and "multi-site designs" (p. 211). These are two of the three mechanisms Merriam describes as ways to enhance external validity in a qualitative study. By providing detailed descriptions of the institutions studied, readers are able to determine to what extent the situation mirrors others they have experienced – and ultimately to what extent the findings can be applied to similar situations. Similarly, the multisite design of this comparative case study enhances external validity; the analysis of decision making at six institutions shows a level of diversity as well as similarity across institutions and enhances the extent to which the results can be interpreted in additional contexts.

Protection of subjects. To protect the identity of participants, I instituted several steps to ensure confidentiality to the greatest extent possible, disclosing relevant information regarding the study in the participant consent form as outlined by Creswell (1998). As indicated, interviews were organized and solicited through a colleague at a peer institution, and all interviewees were made aware of my appointment and connection to that peer institution (see Appendix A and B). The colleague through whom interviews were arranged was asked to provide contact information for all CAOs within the system, maintaining confidentiality for those institutions chosen.

To maintain confidentiality to the extent possible, participants' names and institutions are not identified in this study. Audio files of the interviews were transcribed verbatim, and participant names were removed and a numerical coding mechanism was put in place to protect participant identities. As noted, member checks were used and a final report was provided to all participants to ensure accurate representation of the data. Digital audio recordings, taken with permission by the participant, were stored on my secure computer.

Data Analysis

Data in this study consisted of 36 transcripts from recorded interviews with CAOs and key institutional leaders (see Appendix A and Appendix B), case study reports, and documents obtained online and in person (see Appendix C). Data analysis included both within-case and cross-case analyses drawing on grounded theory (Creswell, 1998). Within-case analyses were conducted via case study reports written following each campus visit that included a summary and initial analysis of materials

from each interview as well as from the documents reviewed. I used an iterative data analysis method drawing from grounded theory and constant comparative analysis (Creswell, 1998); doing so allowed me to refine ideas and concepts across multiple cases in a reflective way. As I conducted the first within-case analysis, it became apparent there was very little differentiation between the chief academic officers and other key institutional actors. Due to the lack of differentiation between levels of participants, I chose not to conduct a positional-level content analysis. I first used open coding to determine and create the initial major thematic categories, and then compared data to emerging themes by analyzing and developing these interpretive categories following each case. From these initial categories I constructed a coding system to serve as a baseline by which subsequent cases could be tested and could expand what was learned. All codes and themes were identified with a numerical coding system. After open coding was complete, I created primary and secondary categories based on themes I identified and explored the concepts that emerged from the data (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). The final coding system consisted of 12 primary and 76 secondary categories that emerged from the data.

Documents were obtained online and in person and were analyzed post-site visit for their ability to provide contextual understanding, relevant details, and to support or contradict the information obtained from participants (Yin, 2002). For example, institutional mission statements were examined to determine the explicit or stated mission of each university as well as the extent to which key institutional actors' perceptions of mission agreed with the stated mission. Additionally, information

obtained regarding institutional history, traditions, landmarks, and guiding principles was used as part of the cultural analysis to provide contextual understanding of each university. Finally, information regarding specific academic decisions obtained both in person and online was used to corroborate the data obtained from CAOs and other key institutional actors regarding specific example of academic decisions that were discussed during interviews. A complete list of documents analyzed is located in Appendix C. Within-case results are presented in the form of three exemplar case study examples in Chapter 4, and cross-case results, including corresponding tables, are presented in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 4: WITHIN-CASE DATA ANALYSIS

The following three case studies were selected from the six institutions studied to illustrate different ways in which mission is linked to strategic decision making. They were chosen because they represent variations in mission and the relationship between mission and the institution's historical and cultural context. By presenting three cases in greater detail, including the voices of the people who participated in the study, this chapter develops a theme that will be explored in greater detail in Chapter 5: Mission statements are interpreted in the context of the lived experience of administrators and faculty members as they engage with decisions that blend historical commitments with current external realities.

Magnolia State University is driven internally through its very strong sense of identity and mission as a historically black university with a social justice commitment; this sense of historical identity is a more significant driving force in decision making than its mission as a regional institution. On the other hand, Poplar State University is a rural university that feels intense pressure to be responsive to the community in which it is located. Unlike Magnolia State, Poplar State lacks a strong institutional identity and therefore decisions are notably tied to particular individuals and leaders rather than to the stated mission itself; history and mission have not always determined what the institution has done other than its strong sense of regionalism. Finally, University of the Oaks is a historically American-Indian serving institution that juggles a historical and regional commitment; it is described as "belonging" to the region; decisions are made within the context of a clear understanding of the institutional history and its role as a

regional institution serving a rural part of the state. This chapter summarizes the similarities and differences between the cases, while a cross-case interpretation using all six cases will be presented in the next chapter. Table 4.1 provides a summary of the three representative institutions and the characteristics that make them distinctive.

Table 4.1: Representative Institutions and their Characteristics

Institution	Location	Formal Mission	Historical Mission	Culturally Interpreted Mission	Connection between Mission, Leadership, and Decision Making
Magnolia State University	Medium-sized city, rural area	Promotion of educational, cultural and economic opportunities for region; commitment to diversity and opportunity	Historically Black College	Strong focus on underserved populations and social justice	Strong links; decision mission driven
University of the Oaks	Small town, rural area	Enhancement of economic and social life of region; encourages celebration of heritage and personalized instruction	American Indian serving institution	Strong focus on serving the region and maintaining institutional heritage	Strong links; decision mission driven
Poplar State University	Small town, isolated rural area	Enhancement of economic and community development; engaged learning	Serving the needs of the region	Weak cultural mission and identity; strong focus on serving the region	Weaker links; mission can be reinterpreted

Magnolia State University: Within-Case Analysis

Magnolia State University is a historically black university located in a medium-sized city. The institution is driven internally through its very strong sense of identity and mission as a historically black institution with a social justice commitment. The stated mission serves to guide and focus the institutional leaders' enactment of that mission: "You don't do it [make decisions] haphazardly," said one dean. According to the provost, decisions are made "because of the type of institution that we are," – indicating that the stated mission reflects the core values and purpose of the institution and serves as a guidepost. This explicit mission driven decision making is echoed by faculty and other key institutional leaders. The University is close-knit, small, friendly and family-oriented. "You educate families here, not just students" is a commonly voiced sentiment. The University draws faculty who want to make a difference in students' lives. Students are described as respectful, "nice kids" where roughly 48% are of non-traditional student age and 20% are affiliated with the military.

However, the strong adherence to the history of the institution at times acts as a constraint on the University's ability to change, particularly during times of financial strain. A dean at the University described that he wasn't sure the institution had the agility to adapt to changes in the market due to financial constraints and that "we are more vigilant because of decreased funding. It affects your 'vision' as a university." There is an institutional dichotomy in that the mission helps to provide focus, but can also be limiting to the institution's ability to change.

Institutional mission: A historically black institution. The University's identity as a historically black university (HBCU) is very explicit and pervasive. Faculty and administrators describe an institution of access that exists for the members of the community, and all faculty members have the institutional mission statement framed and hung in their offices. Similarly, small wallet cards have been printed with the mission statement and distributed to members of the campus community. This physical manifestation of culture is an explicit articulation of the mission and reveals in a very strong way the importance of this identity to the members of the institution. As one administrator pointed out, the embedding of the mission in the faculty, as well as the administration, is a goal:

> We've been very deliberate about building our operational plans, building our assessment efforts, having that rooted in the mission of the University. Anecdotally, we had about five or six faculty members at an assessment conference somewhere and one of the first things that they…asked the people [was], "How many of you know your institutional mission?" And so everybody sort of looked around and our guys pulled their card[s] out of their pocket[s] and said, "We do!" That may be kind of superficial, but again I think people are aware. (2-5)[1]

The effort to instill mission-consciousness in all academic units is fostered by institutional practices, such as the prominence of the mission in private as well as public spaces: "Every faculty member has got the mission statement posted in their

[1] Participant quotations have each been attributed an anonymous identifier

offices…Every time that you make a decision you refer to your mission statement…You don't do it haphazardly, even though you don't refer to it in every instance" (2-5).

Another example of a practice that reinforces mission-consciousness includes discussion of the mission not just with current members of the University community, but also with potential employees:

> Every person who interviews for a position we give them one of these [written mission statements] just so they know if you are coming here this is going to be your guide. Are you ready to do this? Don't take the job if you're not coming in to that. (2-2)

The firm establishment of the mission is reinforced by administrative practice, which assumes that the mission will be referred to as part of each unit's strategic planning efforts:

> Our strategic plan is clearly linked to the mission of the University -- or the mission of the school should be in fact to assist in accomplishing the mission of the University and then the mission of the University is linked to the mission of the overall system…[S]o that affects the mission, that affects other strategies and things like that. (2-5)

It was also important to administrators that this explicit commitment to community is not just simply embraced in the University's mission statement broadly, but also that departments and faculty work to operationalize the commitment:

> We've actually spent a good bit of time going over mission statements with various departments to say okay, let's make sure that the departmental mission statement is specific to your department so it just doesn't say something like that "we offer high quality programs"…[W]hat ties you to the mission and the history of the University? (2-5)

The numerous ways in which the institutional history as an HBCU is articulated and made explicit across the institution provides a very clear indication of the importance of this identity to members of Magnolia State University's campus community.

Institutional history and mission: HBCUs as cultural institutions. Magnolia State University was conceptualized following the Civil War in 1865 and was founded in 1867 to provide an education to the black residents of the community. The institution's website includes a detailed history of the University's founding and history (Magnolia State University, 2013b). One administrator stated, "I have got to recognize the history here. I have to respect that because of the situation" (2-1), and another administrator described the context for the institution's founding:

> I think what is unique is our history and mission. I mean, you know, in the aftermath of the Civil War, there were really very forward-thinking, progressive, free, black population in this area. And they realized after the Civil War that they had to have education for the children of slaves. So basically this institution came into being to provide teachers to enable the children of former slaves to be able to make the best of their newly found political freedom. (2-5)

Administrators and key institutional actors described a very active, vocal and loyal alumni base that helps to shape the ways in which the University's mission is enacted: "We have some really great alumni…they are very loyal…they are stakeholders; they are involved. And then they care deeply. The ones that are involved care deeply about the image of this University" (2-1).

Cultural interpretation of the mission: Institution as family. The caring, nurturing nature of the institution is evident. As an example of operationalizing of the institution's student-focused mission, the provost meets with every faculty member who comes to campus to interview for a position; institutional "fit" is very important here, and the administration strives to find caring, committed faculty members who want to make a difference in the lives of their students. It is clear that the University community takes pride in their institution and cares about their students. Many describe the institution in "familial" terms, describing a "…close-knit kind of culture, friendly for all the people" (2-3).

Another aspect of the family-focused mission is the sense that the University serves the families of their students as well as the students themselves. This is connected, in the minds of some respondents, with the social justice mission of giving students from less advantaged backgrounds the opportunity for success:

> One of the things I would say to anyone about this institution is that there is a strong sense of family, in the sense of family is one that can provide a type of support that not only do students need in order to be successful but [also] that employees need…that will help them to do their job effectively. (2-2)

An example of the family-focused mission is described by one participant through the ways in which educating students works to change the lives of the students' families: "When we help a student become successful and graduate from this University we not only transform that person's life, we have increased the life expectancy of their children and we have transformed their children's lives" (2-1).

The nurturing environment of the institution becomes not only a place where students and families are served, but where faculty develop close relationships though the process. One administrator described that the difficult life trajectories of their students create an environment conducive to these close relationships:

> [A faculty member] last semester in one class had two students give birth and two students get shot…[Y]ou can't help but get close to get students going through those kinds of things. (2-1)

Among some members of the campus community, there exists an interconnectedness of individual, personal convictions aligning with the family-focused institutional mission. Some members of the institution have explicitly chosen to be members of this community due in part to their commitment to this social justice mission: "I made a very conscious decision…my wife and I…because here is where we feel like you really can make a difference in people's lives" (2-1).

For some members of the institution, identity as an HBCU comes with it the notion of a particular sense of responsibility and commitment to the success of their students. One faculty member described her experience when she shared her decision

to accept a position at this institution with a colleague who stressed what responsibility came with the role of being a faculty member at an HBCU:

> I remember when I moved here and the first thing that one of my committee members said – who was African-American – who mentioned that "*you do not go there failing those students.*" And I didn't quite understand exactly what that meant. But to her that HBCU thing was that you need to be more nurturing, you need to be a mentor, you need to be their mother and father for those students. (2-4)

The sense of family and commitment to support of students is echoed in the Documenting Effective Educational Practices (DEEP) study, which cited the University as an example of a supportive campus environment that creates "an ethos of concern, nurturance, and support for student success [that] permeates all facets of institutional life" (Kuh, 2005, p. 59). The researchers describe that the institution sends a clear cultural message that its students are most important (Kuh, 2005).

The description of the institution as a family is partially due to the University serving a large proportion of non-traditional, first-generation college students, including a large military population:

> We describe ourselves as an institution of access and opportunity. And we're doing that. And it goes back to the history and the mission…To this day we provide opportunities for higher education to a number of individuals that might not be able to achieve that – populations that are underserved. (2-5)

This institutional commitment to access and the community, including the military, is outlined in the stated mission (Magnolia State University, 2012a), as well. There exist, however, challenges to the ways in which the access mission is enacted; recently a decision was made regarding stricter admission criteria and tightened academic standards at the University that had the institution debating its role of access as an HBCU (see: *Institutional mission and changing priorities: An example of institutional decision making*).

Attentiveness to and nurturing of students is challenging work for faculty and is the main reason that the provost chooses to meet individually with all faculty interviewees to assess their work ethic and desire for this particular type of work environment. An administrator described that the faculty member who does well at the University enjoys teaching but also wants to engage with students outside the classroom, and that is made explicit during each faculty interview (2-5). Administrators echo an incredibly hard-working faculty: "I have never been in a university where the faculty works harder" (2-1).

Institutional mission and decision making: Symbolic leadership to prioritize the historical mission. The attentiveness to institutional mission at Magnolia State University is reinforced in action through its leaders. The academic community describes a feeling of support generally and particularly from the administration. An administrator describes: "There is this…push to retain your mission and your history – you never forget that and I am very sensitive to that" (2-1). The Faculty Senate presented the provost with a plaque commending him on his

collaborative decision making with the faculty and his commitment to shared governance (2-4):

> The first line is the faculty, of course; they must feel quite motivated to do their job well. Of course, administration is very supportive; we are lucky to have people like [the provost]. He is wonderful, he is very supportive, and it's a joy to me to have such a person. (2-3)

This support extends so deeply into the campus atmosphere that administrators and key institutional actors describe a sense of camaraderie and deepened commitment to the University as a result:

> These people are so committed …and knowing that you have that type of support from the leadership … gives you some type of – it's not comfort but it is a reassurance that the individuals believe so much in what you do. The other thing which makes this institution special to me is the support and the connection to administration…[T]here is a sense of togetherness – of equality – and that helps you to feel good about the place. (2-2)

University leaders in addition to being particularly supportive are very thoughtful and intentional about the institution's mission in their processes. One dean described how he views his role as a leader in working with his unit in fulfillment of the institutional mission:

> So my job as an administrator is to get into the trenches with them [faculty] so whatever they need to do to help me fulfill that mission we do it together with me in the trenches not me up there dictating…[G]etting into the trenches helped

> me to make sure you maintain allegiance to your mission and you make sure that the decisions flow into that mission. (2-2)

In discussions with faculty and administrators, it is clear that members of the campus community can discuss their institutional mission with greater ease than in many other universities and many times without being prompted to do so. It is this extremely pervasive culture of adherence to the history of this HBCU and its role for the community that guides people at Magnolia State University.

Institutional mission and changing priorities: Emerging tensions in an increasingly multi-cultural environment. While University leaders describe a place that knows its roots and knows why it's here, changes in the enacted mission of the institution have impacted the ways in which the University operates and the ways in which the members of the campus community see themselves. There is a dichotomy among faculty, including an older generation of faculty for whom the mission of this HBCU may feel different than it does currently to the younger generation of faculty: "...when you talk to the young African-American faculty they see it differently. They talk about more open door kind of policy" (2-3). This has perpetuated a sense of an "insider" versus "outsider" mentality among generations of faculty members. Changes to the academic standards of the institution as well as increased attention to graduate programs have added to the pressures and challenges felt by faculty at the institution:

> If it's something we really want to do, maybe the institution needs to grow its mission and it's not an impossibility. But at the same time, you have to think are we truly equipped to be effective and to have quality if we grow for everything

> that looks good?... I do think we have the opportunity to change our mission because its fluid. You do have to go back and revisit your mission periodically but you should not change it every other year. (2-2)

An important institutional decision that was very explicitly tied to the University's mission was a decision to raise academic standards institution-wide; this decision is described in detail in the following section and provides an example of the dichotomy between a place with a strong mission yet a struggle with how that mission is enacted.

Institutional mission and changing priorities: An example of institutional decision making. All participants at Magnolia State University reflected on the decision to increase the academic standards of the institution, from increasing admission standards to limiting the number of course withdrawals for students and increasing the research expectations for faculty. An examination of this decision and the process (real and perceived) that accompanied it offers an illustrative example of the intersections of institutional culture and decision making at the institution and the University's strong commitment to its history and region. The following tells the chronology of the decision through the stories of the leaders and key institutional actors themselves.

The development of the initial concept to increase the academic standards of the institution was described by an administrator as originating from the hiring of a new chancellor and the perceived expectations of the system administration: "We had a new chancellor…I think what it said was that his selection meant that the [system] was looking for a different level of productivity and accountability" (2-5). While the initial

concept came from upper administration, members of the campus community described considerable consideration of the mission with institutional stakeholders:

> The first thing they did is to take us back to what the mission is…[B]efore any of the changes [in] the curriculum, before any of the changes in admission, we went back so everyone [could] remember "Okay are we doing what we said we will do?" And that part we were not doing it. We were offering courses but we were not serving the students of the community the way we intended. Students were coming in but they were not leaving, how is that serving the community? (2-2)

An understanding of the need to serve students in new and different ways was explicitly grounded in institutional leaders' commitment to the University's mission of access: "It goes back to our sense of mission and our history and the students we serve; we felt a special obligation not to burden them with loan debt if they're not moving toward degree completion" (2-5). Apparent in conversations with participants is that the heart of the institution, the core of why it is here and why it has existed over time has been consistent, but the ways in which the mission has been operationalized has changed: "That mission has changed from giving everybody a chance to trying to really empower those who haven't had that opportunity" (2-1).

While the rationale for changes to institutional academic standards were grounded in the mission, there were and continue to be struggles within the faculty over the shifting identity of the institution and what it means to be an HBCU:

> [There was the sense that if] we are changing that mission requirement then we are leaving a lot of students out…So I know that the academic quality is very important but economic success or economic transformation is also very important. So how do you weigh those two things? (2-4)

The clear, explicit adherence to institutional history and mission in the decision to raise institutional standards provides a concrete example of the importance of the University mission, but it also provides an example of the internal struggle between the ways in which the mission was historically enacted and whether changes to that were appropriate. Those interviewed talked about questions of "Who are we? What does it mean for us to be an HBCU? Can we still uphold our mission but enact it in a different way?" One administrator described: "There were people involved in that [decision] who felt...that this was going away from what we wanted to do" (2-1). The role of access for this access-driven institution is still being debated. Regardless, however, the clear institutional mission and history as an HBCU with a strong social justice function guides this institution and its members in very deep, meaningful and thoughtful ways.

Mission focus and system alignment: Challenges for HBCUs. An added layer of complexity exists for Magnolia State University due to the fact that it is one of many in a large, diverse, public system. An administrator admits that the institution has somewhat of an advantage due to peers within the system: "I think one of the advantages for us in the [system] is that we have five HBCUs within the system…I think that gives us a bit of a caucus, if you will. It gives us sort of a block" (2-5). However, the administrator also discusses the challenge of being in a large, diverse

system and the sense of being judged on common metrics that may not be applicable to all institutions: “You need to build that different standard because of the population that we are serving. Not that we are serving the minority population but we are serving an adult population and we serving a military population” (2-1).

Mission focus and financial context: Implications for institutional decisions. Recent strains on university budgets felt both institution-wide as well as system-wide have impacted the ways in which Magnolia State University views itself and makes decisions for the future. An administrator shared that recent financial constraints have given attention and focus to institutional needs:

> I think that everything we have done should have been done regardless of the budgetary climate. My sense – more than a sense, it’s pretty much a conviction, [is] that the budget crisis creates an awareness that helps give leverage to some of these efforts…[T]here’s much greater awareness…I think that the budget climate has created an environment in which people are much more receptive to some of the changes we made. (2-5)

Another administrator provides an example of the way in which financial constraints have provided a focus on institutional mission:

> Probably it is more vigilant what we do now because of the budget situation…[Y]ou see these financial constrains in the horizon and it affects your vision…[Y]ou can't do this one [decision], you can't do that one, so this just narrows the vision. (2-3)

The above examples give light to some of the struggles that University leaders feel – on one hand a financial crisis is a "difficult thing to waste," and on the other hand just the existence of that crisis impacts and narrows your ability to fulfill your mission. The particularly strong mission of the HBCU adds an additional layer of complexity for institutions facing these difficult financial constraints. The strong identity and sense of self that seems to help in terms of focus might mean that change is sometimes more difficult. When asked to reflect on the idea whether institutions with strong histories and identities are able to focus more easily or whether it makes changes more difficult, an administrator stated: "That is a great conclusion. You are absolutely right, makes it less flexible for sure" (2-3). The same participant expressed concerns about the University's ability to adapt but acknowledged there is something about changes in the institutional culture that may put it ahead of its peers in this regard:

> I don't really know…whether we have the opportunity to adapt ourselves to the changes in the market…One of the major problems that keeps coming into play are the financial constraints…But since I have been here the institution has gone a long way and if you compare it to other HBCU's I believe you would leave with this feeling that this is beginning to adjust itself to the market condition more than other HBCU's. Which is definitely positive, even this requires a culture change. (2-3)

Conversations with faculty and administrators revealed that the specific history, mission and identity of this HBCU often attract individuals for those very reasons. While this identity is very important to the members of the campus community and while it very

explicitly guides the ways in which the University operates, it may make change for the institution more difficult.

Cultural interpretation of the mission: Commitment to the community. A final component to note about the University's mission statement is its service to the region. Unlike the other two institutions examined in this chapter, regionalism is less of a motivating factor for both administrators and faculty members than the population served. On the one hand, the mission statement describes a comprehensive regional university that serves the region of the state and works to "transform." Similarly, an administrator shared the deliberate attempts at both including the region in the mission statement as well as the operationalizing of that mission through service to specific populations of the community: "So we were very conscious and intentional about trying to connect the mission statement to the region…to be very deliberative about coming up with a mission statement that clarified what was…characteristic about this university…" (2-5). Participants, however, also identified an institutional struggle for legitimacy among the public, and did not describe a community that is a vocal stakeholder in University decisions but rather consumers of the opportunities that are offered by and through the institution. Administrators and faculty do not describe a community, other than alumni, that is particularly demanding of the institution or engaged in its decisions, but rather describe the overall sense of responsibility they feel to the region due to the institutional history and population of students served. As a master's-granting regional institution, the evidence of service to the region in the stated mission is necessary and important; however, this commitment to the community is due

primarily to the history of the institution and the population it was originally founded to serve, rather than a strong sense of regionalism.

Poplar State University: Within-Case Analysis

Poplar State University is a rural university – situated in an unincorporated area, in fact – that feels intense pressure to be responsive to the surrounding community. One dean described it as "the University has a large footprint" while another dean agreed that "the University casts a long shadow." Yet a third dean described that everyone in the region considers the institution to be "their" university. The isolation of the rural campus heightens the institution's need to serve the region in which it is situated.

The University's identity is tied almost entirely to this regional commitment; decisions however have notably been tied to particular individuals and leaders rather than to the stated mission itself. History and mission have not always determined what the institution has done; the previous chancellor of the campus made determinations based on what he thought was trendy and would garner attention. The lack of a strong identity outside of the sense of regionalism made it easy for administration to steer the institution in times of both financial comfort and financial stress. Administrators and key institutional actors found it difficult to separate the way decisions are made from the individual leaders themselves. The previous chancellor who had been in his role for over a decade stifled collaborative decision making and ran a very autocratic institution. When asked to discuss how decisions get made at the institution currently, participants said "it remains to be seen."

Members of the institution clearly see themselves as part of a primarily teaching university and members of a community that is known for being very friendly and collegial. While there is some attention paid to whether people are "from" the region and subsequently understand cultural subtleties, the concept of "insider" versus "outsider" is subsidiary to other components of institutional culture. The rural isolation of the campus is described as a place that attracts not just outdoor enthusiasts, but also students who want a close-knit, family atmosphere. Similarly, as institutional growth and financial constraints create pressure for the University to grow and change, faculty's primary concern is still for their students, a telling aspect of this relationally focused community.

Institutional mission: Serving the needs of the region. University leaders and key institutional actors reveal aspects of clarity around institutional mission and the University's sense of regionalism. The institutional mission statement (Poplar State University, 2012b) expresses the commitment to enhancing the local region. What is clear is that the institution exists to serve its rural region; that relationship is explicit in the ways in which leaders and institutional actors initially describe the University. One participant commented:

> We are not trying to be all things to all people, but we know what our niche is…As an institution, what makes us tick? If you came here it would be an appreciation of our [regional] culture, our background, our diversity, and just that link with our expanded community. (6-3)

Another example of the ways in which participants describe the University is the focus placed on its description as a regional comprehensive institution. One administrator described, "[We are] a quintessential regional university; we serve a wide range of students…[T]he vast majority [of our students] come from [this region]" (6-6). The descriptor of 'regional, comprehensive university' is echoed and expanded upon in the following example provided by a participant whose interpretation focuses on the service to the region:

> When we say regional comprehensive,…my understanding is to provide services to the region:…the resource needs, community outreach, service learning and things along those lines. It is very different than a Research 1 [university] in the sense that most of the departments…educational goal is not to nurture Ph.D.'s who can perform fundamental research but to nurture those talents who can get out…and immediately contribute back to the community. (6-7)

Poplar State University has a clear identity as a regional institution that exists to serve its surrounding communities in numerous ways. Further analysis of the University's commitment to its rural region, including examples of the ways in which this commitment is deeply held by members of the academic community, is discussed later in this chapter.

Institutional history and mission: Regional universities as cultural institutions. Poplar State University was founded like many regional universities as a normal school and a student-focused institution committed to serve its rural community. Notably, it was often called the "Experiment" or the "Idea" and became a model for

regional institutions in the state (Source, 1989; Poplar State University, 2012c). This "Experiment" as an isolated, rural university, is reflected in many of the ways in which members of the academic community interpret the institutional mission through a lens of "place." Cultural interpretations of the mission reveal an institution where this sense of place contributes deeply to the identity of the University.

Institutional mission and decision making: Community stakeholders. Administrators and key institutional actors described a renewed, deliberate inclusion of community members in decision making, particularly in terms of academic programming and institutional revisioning: "I think the University is really trying to make an effort to really interact more with the community, reach out to the community, have the community be more involved in the University and the University functions and decision making" (6-1). In an effort to engage community members in strategic planning and decision making, the new chancellor reached out to communities to serve on planning boards and to provide feedback on the institution's performance:

> [The chancellor] made over 20 visits to different communities in [the area] hosting forums…At the same time, [the chancellor] established this…steering committee composed of 35 members. And we held community forums as well as on campus…And so we gathered a lot of feedback and reviewed our mission in light of that. (6-3)

What was once called the "Experiment" is now a significant entity in the region and as such the inclusion of the community in decision making has grown and is particularly salient with the new administration.

Institutional mission and changing priorities: The balance between institutional growth and identity. Poplar State University increased in enrollment from 6,500 to 9,000 over the course of about seven years (6-3; Poplar State University, 2012d). While the pace of growth has slowed, it is likely to continue modestly. An administrator also explained that this growth is intended to be very thoughtful and deliberate:

> I think that we see ourselves continuing to grow, but probably there will be some upward bounds to that growth. I think we're reaching kind of a point where campus residential students we're somewhat limited by our dorms, our cafeteria, so I see a lot of our future growth coming through distance programs…I think we'll be very limited and highly thoughtful about any doctoral-level programs…[W]e will continue to offer…graduate programs that seem to meet a need and that fit a nice niche for us [within the region]. (6-2)

These significant changes in the campus have contributed to some "old guard" versus "new guard" experiences among faculty as each generation has seen and experienced a different type of institution. The increase in campus size has led to changes in campus atmosphere and noticeable changes in the student demographic as described by one participant:

> [You started to see] noticeable changes…[Y]ou started to see more and more students from outside of this region. You started to see more 18 year olds on campus, you started to see more middle class students coming to school and the dynamics of the University is much more different nowadays. (6-7)

Regardless of changes in size, members of the institution still very clearly see the University as a place that emphasizes teaching; as described by one administrator: "the teaching forms the heart and then the others support it" (6-3). Others describe that the ability to work closely with students is what attracts faculty members to the institution:

> People come here because they like to teach or they love to teach. It's not a research institution, so I think teaching people generally come here because they may like research, but people that seem to be the happiest are those that really like interacting with students, really like to teach and really like the relationship with students and faculty. (6-5)

The emphasis on teaching and attention to students continues to be grounded in the strategic needs of the region, as echoed by a participant's description of the recent strategic planning efforts:

> I think our most recent [strategic] plan really did a great job of setting forth strategic priorities for what we want to emphasize as a campus. There were six areas that we decided were really focal because they met both the needs of the region as well as some of our internal strengths...But I think the programs here will continue to be characterized by strong faculty-student interaction and a real focus on excellence that we want to produce graduates who have the underlying flexible skills to be successful citizens, employees, community members. (6-2)

In addition to viewing the institution primarily as a teaching university, there is a clearly stated mission of engagement in a broad sense that is part of the strong sense of

regionalism. One participant described that the faculty member who "believes in the teacher-scholar model" (6-6) will be most successful. This engagement is defined broadly, both in terms of engaging with the community as well as engaging in the teacher/scholarship relationship with students (Poplar State University, 2013):

> It will sound trite, but I think we have finally, finally truly embraced our mission as an institution that values student learning and applied student learning and community relationships. [In] [t]he other ones [previous mission statements] really there was less of an emphasis in our previous mission on engagement. And we said but that's who we are. Why is that not reflected? (6-3)

Not only is the institution's commitment to engagement explicit in its mission statement and teaching-scholarship activities, but it is so pervasive that reappointment, promotion and tenure documents were recently revised to include engagement opportunities:

> I very much like the focus on students. They're really at the center of decision making here. And it's a culture that really privileges teaching and is really clear about who we want to be as an institution that we're very supportive of the teacher-scholar model blend…And that's actually written into most of the collegiate review documents that we have here toward promotion and tenure…I like the sense of community that I found here, both community on campus as well as a real partnership with the external community. (6-2)

An accelerated speed of growth has caused members of Poplar State University's campus community to question the direction of the institution and its ability to continue

toward what it sees as a primarily teaching institution committed to engagement within the region.

Mission focus and system alignment: Challenges for regional universities. Finally, an added layer of complexity exists for Poplar State University due to the fact that it is one of many in a large, diverse, public system. The administration discusses the struggle of institutional uniqueness:

> I think intentions generally are pretty honorable, but I do think there is a gap between the expectations of [the system administration] and then the individual universities. There tends to be an approach to one-size-fits-all and we're such different institutions. I mean, I understand why you have to have common metrics to assess. But our missions really are pretty different. (6-3)

The remote location of the University also has implications for the institution's interactions with peer institutions within the system as well as with the legislature, further contributing to the sense of isolation: "We are at a [considerable] distance from those things [state legislature] and I think that affects the University and how it goes about its business" (6-4). As a member of a diverse and large public state system, the remoteness of Poplar State University's location accentuates the sense of isolation from the other institutions in the system as well as from the state legislature and system administration that governs it.

Mission focus and financial context: Implications for institutional decisions. The sense of financial constraints is described as a significant burden for this institution.

The combination of enrollment growth and simultaneous budget cuts have resulted in larger class sizes and more substantial workloads for faculty:

> Huge growth and trying to manage that without the resources has been a real strain; the faculty are really good about pitching in and doing what they can but I think we are sort of reaching the limit…we are about tapped out…we have been teaching more, teaching larger classes, I feel like we are spread really thin. (6-1)

Participants described how budget cuts have cut at the heart of the teaching and engagement missions of the institution, contributing to faculty fatigue and concern for their ability to deliver on their promise to students:

> I think one of the biggest challenges I've seen here is how the budget cuts threaten the culture. You know, budget cuts are hard anyplace, but it's been really interesting to me that [people]…don't like the fact that they haven't gotten raises…and that they've had cutbacks in travel…but what they talk about the most is increased class sizes. One of the things we've had to do without adding faculty positions with growth is…to increase class sizes, in some cases increase teaching loads. And that has struck at the very heart of our identity. (6-2)

There is a sense, however, that this lack of resources can serve to help decision makers focus institutional priorities. An administrator bluntly stated: "At least we have shown everybody that we don't have any money and I think there is a benefit to that" (6-6). The strain on financial resources can provide a mechanism through which campus community members can focus on their new reality as described by a participant:

> Yeah, absolutely [difficult fiscal climate forces people to support institutional priorities]…people look more consciously at the mission, and at a minimum at least a better percentage of people realize that than before…[I]t actually made the faculty and the staff aware that in different budgetary situations sometimes you have to support the institution's priorities. You have to nurture those programs that are doing really well and at the same time you have to make a hard decision. (6-7)

The relationship of the institution to external, regional stakeholders is an important factor for this rural institution. With a mission driven extensively from outside the organization and a location that is particularly isolated and rural, the institution must serve the region in which it is situated.

University of the Oaks: Within-Case Analysis

At the University of the Oaks, decisions are made within the context of a clear understanding of the institutional history and its role as a regional institution serving a rural part of the state. The University's role as a campus within a diverse multi-campus public system also provides a context for understanding decision making at this unique institution. Like Magnolia State, it is historically committed to serving a specific group of students; like Poplar State, its regional identity is equally strong.

The University is described as so much a part of the community that some participants say it "belongs" to the region. This is likely due to its location in a very rural, economically disadvantaged area of the state and its history as being founded to serve the region's American Indians. The predominant tribe of the surrounding region

is an enormous stakeholder and has a significant amount of power and influence. Great attention is also paid to physical manifestations of institutional culture, particularly campus buildings associated with the founding of the institution. University leaders must balance their accountability to the people of the region with other institutional priorities and goals. This adherence to external stakeholders and to the rural region that the University is located within is also evident in campus decisions, as will be described later in this chapter in the example titled *Institutional mission and decision making: An example of institutional decision making and the evolution of the creation of a new school*.

Extreme institutional growth such as the doubling of campus enrollment in ten years and a subsequent increasing emphasis on research expectations for faculty have changed the climate on campus and the relationship between the "old guard" and the "new guard." In addition, recent turnover of institutional leaders has caused some concern among faculty who have historically been very strong in decision making processes.

Institutional mission: Serving the needs of the region. University leaders and key institutional actors reveal aspects of clarity around the institutional mission but also describe some examples of a lack of clarity. What is clear is that the institution exists to serve its region; as one participant described: "This University in many ways just belongs to this region" (4-6). That relationship is explicit and is often the initial way that most leaders and key institutional actors describe the institution. One participant described:

> What does the community mean to the University? It's a place for us to fulfill that regional service part…it is a place where the University can feel that it is making an impact on local community and this is a region [that]…will benefit from that type of thing. (4-1)

Commitments to the region and to honoring the institutional history influence the ways in which participants describe the University's mission:

> It's [the mission statement] all the things that you would expect of a regional – engagement, taking our expertise into these communities, having an obligation to the region as well to the students who are on our campus, and it also speaks to the unique history and heritage of [the institution] dating back to its Indian roots. (4-5)

When an administrator was asked if faculty on campus could articulate the mission of the institution, he stated: "Yeah, they'd know a bumper sticker. Like most faculty I don't think they could quote from it [the mission], but I think that they get regional engagement; engagement opportunities is a big part of what we do" (4-5). The institutional mission and core values statements (University of the Oaks, 2012a) express the commitment to the history of the University and to serving the local region. Another example of institutional service to the region is through the development of academic programs:

> I think in better budgetary times we would probably be looking at the creation of a…school…of health sciences…And as we begin to think about health sciences

> with the profound needs of this area…I think it's coming, and I think we'd probably would be there right now were it not for the budget. (4-5)

This example illustrates how discussions regarding academic program development consider the needs of the surrounding region. The institution's regional service mission is particularly salient due to its geographic isolation and location in a rural part of the state.

Institutional history and mission: American Indian-serving institutions as cultural institutions. The close ties between the University and the region are in part due to the history of the institution, which was founded to educate American Indian students in the late 1800s (University of the Oaks, 2012b). One participant describes the University as a "source of pride" and the "face of the tribe" (4-1) for members of the community. One key institutional actor noted that the University "…can never lose that identity" (4-6). Commitment to the preservation of the cultural heritage is a particularly strong component of the institutional culture: "It's [American Indian history] a huge part of our identity and our history and it's really a huge part of who we are today in a way that the numbers don't indicate" (4-5). The institutional history is particularly unique in scope; to have a regional, master's granting institution that is 125 years old is unusual for this sector of institution.

***Cultural interpretation of the mission: Institution as family*.** Like Poplar State, the University of the Oaks exists in a rural region that contributes to a family-type atmosphere of security and safety; like Magnolia State, members of the institution also consider their role as nurturers to look out for a large proportion of non-traditional, first

generation students. When asked to reflect on the types of students served by the institution, leaders spoke about the University's commitment to access for students in the surrounding rural area. The student body is described by faculty and administrators as being comprised of many non-traditional, first generation students; the institution is located in one of the poorest counties in the state:

> The…[faculty] to me who do best here understand that we live in a very high poverty region of the state…[S]tudents are going to have tremendous financial and social needs. They will be excellent students academically…but they often will come with tremendous family responsibilities. (4-6)

Perhaps partially due to the institution serving a large proportion of non-traditional, first generation college students, many describe the University as a "family:" "I think it [the thing that people hold on to] is community, I think it is feeling like this is a family; like that we care about each other" (4-4). The University's sense of family is reinforced within the moderate campus enrollment of 6,000 and within the rural, isolated location that attracts many students from the region:

> I've always thought schools like this…perform a real valuable function for students who come out of smaller high schools…Even though academically in many cases they are extraordinarily well prepared, just the social shock of all of a sudden going on to a campus that has 25,000-30,000 students, they're just not ready for it. And I think here it's just a nice transition…it's not intimidating. (4-5)

There is a sense that the rural location provides a safe haven for students, an increased sense of comfort and security that is particularly desirable for some. The notion that the campus is a "family" helps perpetuate the feeling of community.

Cultural interpretation of the mission: Commitment to the region. There is a particularly unique relationship between the external community stakeholders – members of the most prominent local tribe – and the institution; a relationship that some suggest may be partially explained by the fact that the tribe is on a quest to become a fully-recognized tribe by the federal government but has not yet been awarded that status:

> Because the [people of the tribe] don't have full federal recognition, then their identity as a tribe is tied inextricably to the University…So their recognition, if you will, comes through [the University]… It's hard to explain the role that this University plays in their worldview and in their imagination. (4-5)

The association of the institution with the state public university system and the prominent and visible role that it holds within the state also provides a certain amount of exposure for the institution in the minds of some members of the community: "The [University] is the most visible sort of manifestation of the [tribal] identity here. Not necessarily the *best* representation but it is the most visible because it is part of the [state public university system]" (4-1). There are significant ties to the region, including many members of the community who have attended the institution. Regardless of the impetus for the community's interest in the institution, the people of the region, and the tribe in particular, remain the most powerful stakeholders. An

example of the strong sense of commitment and interest that members of the community have in the University is described by one participant as a close emotional connection: "You can never forget where you came from. You can never forget the history. And so people do feel uncomfortable at times and somewhat threatened if they believe that the University is moving in directions away from the heritage" (4-6). The emotional connection that exists between members of the community and the institution results in a sense of the institution being watched over and looked out for, but also can result in a challenge for institutional leaders in striking the appropriate balance when changes need to be made:

> They [the tribe] feel a real ownership, a protectiveness of the University. And that's good and bad, quite honestly. The support that they give this University is heartwarming. I mean, you see tears in their eyes, they graduated from the place…The flip side of it, because of that protectiveness of the University, they can sometimes be a little intrusive in the affairs of the University… but it's not an altogether bad thing. They care. (4-5)

***Cultural interpretation of the mission: Physical manifestations of culture*.** The institution pays particular attention to physical manifestations of culture, including campus landmarks that are identified clearly for both internal and external members of the campus community. When the announcement was made to create a new school within the University, the announcement was made from the steps of the iconic building that is reflected in campus literature as the oldest building and is described on the institutional website as the most recognizable symbol of the campus. The

announcement of the creation of the new school also coincided with the institution's 125th anniversary, another homage to the institutional history that is further examined later in this chapter.

A faculty member described that the chancellor is trying to establish more traditions across campus (4-2), but there are physical manifestations that already exist very explicitly including the *Alma Mater*, the mascot, and the aforementioned iconic building. The significance of the iconic building and the mascot is described by an administrator:

> If anybody is trying to take [the building] out of our persona, forget it! The community would shut the place down because [the building] is the symbol that was the – it wasn't the original building but it's pretty much one of the original buildings that was here and that was it – that was their building, that was it…[Also the desire to keep the mascot name] was a community saying, no we want to hold on to this history, we want to hold on to this heritage and that was great example of partnership that we were able to move forward and retain that part of the identity. (4-6)

The institution dedicates a specific section of its website (University of the Oaks, 2012c, 2012d) easily accessible from the home page, to these physical manifestations of culture. The site explains the history of particular buildings and monuments on campus and also provides the historical context and significance for campus naming of buildings and locations and the people who helped to make the institution what it is. An

administrator again stresses the importance of the names attributed to particular campus landmarks and buildings:

> The community is very proud of the way the campus looks; they like the newer buildings as long as [the main iconic building] doesn't change...As long as names aren't removed from buildings…[and] that we keep our main administrative building [name]. So it's a fine balance, but there are absolutely some things you would not want to eliminate and would not want to change. (4-6)

Explanations of the mascot, school colors, and important campus songs are also described on the institutional website. These explicit references to campus culture underscore the importance of institutional history to this particular university.

Institutional mission and decision making: Balancing community, cultural identity and institutional interests. To a greater extent than Magnolia State and Poplar State, the University of the Oaks experiences a tug between regional commitments and their historical, cultural identity. As the University has experienced tremendous growth in recent years, there is also a need to remain attentive to their cultural heritage. Faculty members view decisions as primarily being "top-down," led by the chancellor and high-level administration who are particularly sensitive to local community stakeholders: "They [some decisions] are not necessarily under the purview of the faculty, but the administration wants it to look as if they are paying attention to us, but you still feel like a lot of these decisions get made top down" (4-4). While deans do not describe the decision making process as being "top-down," they do agree on the

clear vision and goals of the chancellor and view the decision making as much more consultative and collaborative. The chancellor is viewed as having a strong view – his 'pillars:'

> Our current chancellor is very clear about his four pillars or tenets…He is great about this. He approaches the deans…we have fairly substantial conversations…he is very careful about what he does and he wants to make sure…that he gets it right…So that's probably another example of another way that things are done here where you have a lot of stuff coming up from the bottom…(4-1)

Turnover of institutional leaders, including a new provost and chancellor within the last three years, has led to some skepticism about administrative decisions and some tension around the roles and responsibilities of faculty versus administration as described by one participant:

> Fairly new provost over here…a fairly new dean…we have had a lot of turnover which I think is largely just accidental but it probably looks a little suspicious to people…We've got a new sheriff in town and they are trying to change things up and people often are not comfortable to change, and as I said we have a lot of people who have been here for a long time. (4-1)

Perceptions of decisions as being made top-down are not necessarily unique at universities; however what seems particularly important at this institution are the ways in which growth at both the undergraduate and graduate levels combined with administrative turnover has resulted in a certain level of skepticism and shift in the ways

in which faculty view their institution and its culture. Particular attention to key community stakeholders also plays an important role in decision making at the University of the Oaks.

Institutional mission and decision making: Community stakeholders. The close relationship between the community and the institution is evident in the ways the community stakeholders are considered during decision making processes. There is a clear consensus that members of the tribe are key stakeholders and that the institution therefore needs to strike a balance between the community priorities and other institutional goals:

> When there is so much of the history and identity remaining,…big changes are very much scrutinized, and they can't be made in isolation from the community. I think that happens in lots of places; you are probably right to know there are layers of intensity here. So sometimes you have to really think with people and make sure you bring people along when the decisions are being made. You are saying we aren't abandoning the heritage but we have to keep moving forward in time; we have to stay current, we have to stay relevant. (4-6)

Paying particular attention to the historical component of the institutional mission may also make it easier to focus decisions and can serve to guide decision makers at times, as well:

> [The community provides] support; I don't mean financial, I mean moral support. They are our strongest backers and so when something comes up and we need public or community support they are right there…I won't say it

> hinders anything – they are not slowing us down or anything like that. But it might be fair to say that we – I hate to use this word – but maybe cater to them, because we respect and love them for their history and all that…I don't know of any evidence in the 11 years that I have been here working [that] they have caused something not to happen or a radical shift in some direction. (4-3)

In speaking with faculty and administrators it is clear that there must be a fine balance when attempting to meet community expectations regarding university goals. Some noted that the relationship between the institution and community stakeholders might cause a strain on the institution's ability to grow and change:

> I mean you want to have strong connections with your community but also they have the expectations and 'hey that is not the way we do things here'…Now sure it is going to be a problem sometimes if you do something that feels drastically different:…if you wanted to go a particular direction that felt a little different, when you have community that feels such strong ties in the institution then I don't envy this chancellor. (4-1)

Institutional mission and decision making: An example of institutional decision making and the evolution of the creation of a new school. All participants reflected on the recent decision by institutional leaders to establish a new school. An examination of this decision and the process (real and perceived) that accompanied it offers an illustrative example of the intersections of institutional culture and decision making at the institution and the University's strong commitment to their history and region as well as the mechanisms for making decisions. The following tells the

chronology of the decision through the stories of the leaders and key institutional actors themselves.

According to administrators, the development of the concept to create a new school dedicated to American Indian studies was conceptualized by the chancellor upon arrival and following meetings with members of the community. A participant described: "I think he really appreciated what was unique and beautiful about this place" (4-5) and eventually the concept came to fruition: "We've made a public announcement to that effect…[W]hen we kicked off the 125th anniversary…we stood on the steps of…the historic building on campus and had a press conference and told the world that we're going to do this thing" (4-5). Perceptions of the decision across the institution were generally positive; a participant described that it was thought it "should be good for the University" (4-3). For many members of the campus and local community, the creation of a new school dedicated to American Indian studies in particular was thought to be a logical move for the institution due to its history:

> I can see the chancellor deciding we need some sort of uniqueness and we have this already built in uniqueness on this campus right? Why not capitalize on that? Why not use it as a powerful positive thing rather than saying well that is in the past of here we go forward, never to look back again. (4-4)

The intersection of the history and the symbolic nature of the anniversary of the institution's founding presented the perfect opportunity for the creation of this new school: "…the history, the culture, and the anniversary celebration – everything came together" (4-1).

Due to this consideration of institutional history, mission and community stakeholders of particular importance to the University, the perceived reaction of community members was supportive:

> I would say that I think the idea [creation of a school] has been greeted very warmly by the local community…I think anything we do that underscores that part of our identity and heritage here is going to resonate nicely there. And with the folks in the American Indian Studies department here, of course, it gives visibility to what they do that most academicians would welcome. (4-5)

Participants described that the impetus for the creation of the school was in part to be very explicit about the commitment to the institutional history and to send a "good message" to the local community (4-5): "I think that the community is pretty is pretty powerful in terms of what this University does. I think that whole American Indian studies thing is really meant as a gesture to the community as well" (4-2).

Any negative reactions to the creation of the school were perceived to be primarily due to the timing of the decision coinciding with the economic downturn and declining state funding for the institution. An administrator described that although the timing of the budget crisis was not ideal; the goals of the project outweighed any possible strains felt by the funding struggles:

> So that's an ambitious project for us, made more ambitious by how difficult the budget has been. Ever since I've been here, and a year or two before, but I think it's one of those things – was it Martin Luther King who said that some people say not now, but what they really mean is never; you've got to be careful. If you

> say this is important, our identity and our heritage is important, there are some things you shouldn't wait on. You've just got to find a way to do it. (4-5)

The clear, explicit adherence to institutional history and mission in the creation of the new school provides a concrete example of the important University context. Not only was the concept of the creation of the new school explicitly mission driven, but the announcement was made on the steps of an iconic building and coincided with the institution's 125th birthday; the clear institutional mission as a regional university that serves its rural community as well as honors its history clearly led decision makers. The fact that the creation of the new school privileged cultural, historical identity over regional identity provides an example of the balancing act felt by institutional decision makers.

Institutional mission and changing priorities: The balance between institutional growth and identity. The University of the Oaks grew significantly in size during the 2000's: it doubled the size of its total enrollment from 3,000 to over 6,000 in 10 years (University of the Oaks, 2012e). While the pace of growth has slowed, the chief academic officer explained that graduate programs will be the next area of growth for the institution. Partially due to this overall growth and to the increasing emphasis on graduate education, there is an increasing dichotomy between the research mission of the University and its historical teaching mission. Members of the institution still very clearly see the University as a place that emphasizes teaching, as described by one participant:

> Those who want to teach [succeed as faculty members here]…But certainly if a faculty member comes here, they should understand walking in the door that you're going to be asked to teach more than you would at [a land-grant, research institution]. The flip side of that, when you're teaching that much, the research expectations are more modest here…So in terms of that balance of teaching, research, service that all schools try to sort out, are we primarily a teaching school? Yeah. And unashamedly so. (4-5)

The changes in institutional priorities, growth, and expanded research mission have led to changes in faculty composition and to a very bimodal faculty. The "new guard" and "old guard" have different understandings of the level of importance for their role as a researcher; one participant described: "It really is a junior faculty, senior faculty split" (4-2). For example, a new option for faculty is being rolled out where faculty can choose a 3/4 teaching load instead of the standard 4/4 load that dominated faculty culture for so long. There is a dichotomy between the new and established faculty who each knew a different University due to its extreme growth over the last 10 years:

> We have grown so much, we have a lot of new faculty, and that alone probably looks very different to the people who have been here for a while…And so people who have been here since the 70's or even 80's are used to a certain kind of institution that I think probably didn't grow that much and now you are seeing this huge influx of people;…it does result I think in something of a little bit of a divide. (4-1)

The current slogan, “Personal Touch” may more accurately reflect an earlier version of the institution, and now is felt by some to be an aspiration rather than a statement of reality. One participant indicated, “…it is a promise that we can’t keep” (4-4). Another participant described that there is a “change in the culture” from a small campus where everyone knew one another (4-2). Participants describe that this tension between teaching and research is very palpable.

Mission focus and system alignment: Challenges for regional universities. Finally, an additional layer of complexity exists for the institution due to its role as one of many in a diverse public system. Administrators discuss the struggle of not being understood as a smaller institution with a very specific mission when compared to other system institutions:

> I think sometimes we feel beat about the head and neck when they talk about issues like retention and graduation…[Y]ou take [our] students (54% of whom come from this very impoverished area – poorest in the state) and see what you do swimming against those socioeconomic currents…I think sometimes at the system level that’s a little lost. (4-5)

Conclusion

Magnolia State University, Poplar State University and the University of the Oaks provide examples of how decision making in universities is embedded within a historical and cultural context and the ways in which decision makers need to balance historical realities with regional responsibilities. Through examination of these three institutions we can see evidence of institutional historical and cultural factors that can

impact the use of mission in decision making at public, masters-granting universities. Chapter 5 will further examine data across all six cases to consider the ways in which themes transcend across individual institutions.

CHAPTER 5: CROSS-CASE DATA ANALYSIS

This second chapter on data analysis presents the cross-case results of the study, including the characteristics of explicit institutional mission stated in the formal mission statement and identified by institutional leaders, the types of decisions identified as being mission driven by leaders and key institutional actors, the cultural interpretations of mission identified by participants, and the system and financial context that contributes to decisions. While participants gave examples of several types of decisions, examples of decisions that were made and were described as being driven by mission fall into four categories: academic college development, academic program development, changes to institutional standards or processes, and changes to the institution's liberal or general education curriculum. Through examination of these decisions, the participants revealed the subsequent elements of history and culture that provide context for understanding decision making at public master's granting universities.

Institutional Mission: Overall Characteristics

In the interviews for this study, participants were first asked to describe the institution in their own words and whether they consider their description in line with the formal, written mission statement. Appendix D describes the elements of institutional mission that are explicitly stated in the formal, written mission statement, and the ways in which institutional leaders and key actors describe elements of their institution's mission. Table 5.1 summarizes these stated aspects of institutional mission and the extent to which there was agreement with the ways in which participants

described their institution and their institution's mission, and the stated mission statement itself. Characteristics of institutional missions that were present in at least two of the six institutions studied are included for analysis.

Table 5.1: Summed Index: Characteristics of Institutional Mission

	Regional institution/ Part of a multi-campus system	Teaching	Research/ Scholarship	Service	Access/ History as minority-serving	Active/ Engaged student learning	Agree-ment of response with mission
Cypress State University	X	X	X	X	X	X	Very High
University of the Palmettos	(X)	X	X	X	n/a	X	High
Poplar State University	(X)	X	X	X	n/a	X	High
University of the Oaks	(X)	X	X	X	X	/X/	Mod/ High
Maple State University	/X/	X	X	X	n/a	(X)	Mod
Magnolia State University	/X/	X	/X/	X	X	n/a	Mod

X = characteristic described in formal mission statement and described by several[2] informants
(X) = characteristic described by several informants but not in formal mission statement
/X/ = characteristic described in formal mission statement but not by informants
n/a = not applicable to institution

[2] One-half or more institutional participants

The six institutional characteristics that were that were most frequently cited by participants as aspects of their institutional mission and/or were included within the institutions' stated mission statements are: regional institution/part of multi-campus system, teaching, research/scholarship, service, access/history as a minority-serving institution, and active or engaged student learning. All of the six institutional mission statements explicitly state the obvious aspects of teaching, research and service as components of their missions, as well as their role as a regional institution and/or part of a multi-campus state public system. Additionally, the three institutions in the study that were founded as minority-serving institutions include components of access in their stated mission statements. The most unique aspect of stated institutional mission present in four of the six mission statements was an explicit commitment to active and/or engaged student learning.

The aspects of teaching, research and service that were consistently stated as components of each of the six institutions' missions were echoed by a preponderance of participants in five of the six institutions, as well. However, participants at one institution, Magnolia State University, did not describe research as a primary institutional function, despite that it is explicitly described in the formal mission statement. For the three institutions that were founded as minority-serving institutions, the access component of their mission was also echoed by informants' descriptions at those three institutions. The two aspects of institutional mission that had the least congruence between stated mission statement and the ways in which informants describe their institutional mission were the institution's role as a regional institution

and/or part of a multi-campus system, and the institution's mission as a place for active or engaged student learning. For all institutions, informants described the majority of the aspects of stated institutional mission, with only one institution (Cypress State University) having complete congruence between the two.

Institutional History and Mission: Cultural Interpretations

During interviews, participants were asked: "What role did the values, traditions, and commonly-held assumptions of the institution play in your decision making processes? Were there institutional factors that particularly helped or hindered decisions?" Participants' responses regarding aspects of institutional culture generally fell into six themes: institutional history, community relationship, physical manifestations, sense of family, insider versus outsider, and location and place. Tables 5.2 and 5.3 summarize all institutional culture themes across the six cases.

Institutional history and how the campus was founded are significant and central to the identity of the universities. Participants at all institutions studied noted the fact that their institution was founded to serve the region was an important component of the university's current identity, a criterion that might be anticipated based on these institutions' roles as regional, master's granting institutions. One participant described it as: "…where we are has a lot to do with who we are" (1-3). For the three institutions in the study that were founded as minority-serving institutions, that particular aspect of institutional history is even more a central component of institutional identity. One informant noted: "It's a huge part of our identity and our history and it's really a huge part of who we are today" (4-5). The institutional identity as having been founded to

serve a particular population is very salient for these three minority-serving institutions. While the institutional history as a regional institution was indicated by participants at all institutions studied, the extent of its importance varies across universities; it exists in all six but is most prevalent in the two rural institutions: University of the Oaks and Poplar State University (see Table 5.2).

Table 5.2: Summary Table: Institutional History and Mission: Cultural Interpretations

Type of Concern/Item	Prominent	Present/Less Prominent
Institutional History		
HBCU/Minority-Serving Institution	Magnolia, Oaks, Cypress [all minority-serving institutions]	
Having been founded to serve the region is an important component of current identity	Oaks, Poplar [two most rural institutions]	Maple, Magnolia, Palmettos, Cypress
Regionalism/Commitment to the Community		
Community is important stakeholder	Oaks, Poplar [two most rural institutions]	Maple, Magnolia, Palmettos, Cypress
Relationship between community and institution impacts decision making	Oaks, Poplar [two most rural institutions]	

Cultural interpretation of the mission: Commitment to the community.

Similar to the regional history component described by all institutions but most salient in the two rural institutions (University of the Oaks and Poplar State University), participants at all sites identified that the community is an important stakeholder; however, the rural institutions consider the community stakeholders to be more

important in university decision making. A participant at University of the Oaks described the close relationship between the University and the community: "[The community provides] support, I don't mean financial, I mean moral support. They are our strongest backers and so when something comes up and we need public or community support they are right there" (4-3). An informant at Cypress State University described the sense that educating students impacted their communities in an important way: "Obviously our students [are stakeholders], their families and, I think to some degree, their communities – I mean the educating we do of our students impacts communities in ways it would not have at [another] institution" (7-5). Finally, a participant from University of the Palmettos described a common theme of the institution's role in serving the economic, cultural and social needs of the region:

> As a regional campus I think almost by definition we have to take very seriously our responsibility to a local and regional set of stakeholders because…there is an expectation that they would do things that enhance quality of life certainly for the entire state but more particularly for the region that they serve directly. (5-2)

In addition to simply being a primary stakeholder of the institution, participants at the two most rural, isolated institutions described that the relationship between the community and university impacts institutional decision making, whether it be for good or for bad. Participants from University of the Oaks described a sense that the close relationship with the community could result in challenges to institutional decision making: "I mean you want to have strong connections with your community but also they have the expectations and 'hey that is not the way we do things here'" (4-1).

While informants at University of the Oaks already feel a close relationship with the community that manifests itself in leaders' decision making, a participant from Poplar State University described an institutional desire to have the community *more* involved in the decisions of the institution: "I think the University is really trying to make an effort to really interact more with the community, reach out to the community, have the community be more involved in the University and the University functions and decision making" (6-1). Appendix E provides additional illustrations of the ways in which participants described their institutions' relationship with the community. For some institutions, particularly for the three minority-serving institutions, there is a tension between the institutional history and the sense of regionalism; this tension will be discussed further in Chapter 6.

Cultural interpretation of the mission: Physical manifestations of culture. One category of indicators related to institutional culture identified by participants at three of the six institutions was that of physical manifestations of culture. Physical manifestations of culture include aspects such as campus landmarks, historical figures, symbols, or artifacts that can provide a glimpse into the institution's values (Clark, 1970; Deal & Kennedy, 2000; Koprowski, 1983; Zucker, 1988). Participants at two campuses described the importance of landmarks on campus, particularly specific buildings that represent the founding of the campus, and the stated institutional mission that is presented to all faculty members. Historical figures, such as those memorialized on buildings across campus, or symbols such as songs, colors, and mascots, also were identified by two institutions as being significant: "As long as names aren't removed

from buildings…[and] that we keep our main administrative building [name]" (4-6). Table 5.3 summarizes the physical manifestations as well as the additional institutional culture themes described further in the following section.

Table 5.3: Summary Table: Institutional Mission: Cultural Interpretations

Type of Concern/Item	Sites at Which Item Indicated
Physical Manifestations	
Campus landmarks	Magnolia, Oaks
Historical figures	Oaks, Palmettos
Symbols, artifacts (mascot, songs, colors)	Oaks, Palmettos
Institution as Family	
Institution is defined by community and personal relationships	Maple, Magnolia, Oaks, Palmettos, Poplar, Cypress [all]
Institutional members have a nurturing role in their relationship with students	Magnolia, Oaks, Cypress [all minority-serving institutions]
Insider vs. Outsider	
Old vs. New guard: Different populations of faculty have differing expectations and understandings of the institution	Maple, Magnolia, Oaks, Palmettos, Poplar, Cypress [all]
Faculty and administration "from" the region and/or the institution	Maple, Poplar, Cypress
Location and Place	
Geographic isolation enhances commitment to community	Maple, Oaks, Palmettos, Poplar [all 'isolated' institutions]
Recreation opportunities contribute to quality of life	Maple, Palmettos, Poplar
Sense of place establishes strong sense of identity and belonging	Palmettos, Poplar

Cultural interpretation of the mission: Institution as family. A component of institutional culture described by participants at all institutions is the pervasive sense of community and relational nature of their universities. This sense of community was described frequently as "family:" "I think it [the thing that people hold on to] is community, I think it is feeling like this is a family; like that we care about each other" (4-4). A participant at Maple State University described the pervasive sense of family among important members of the campus community, including alumni and trustees:

> I did the presentation for the strategic plan with the Board of Trustees, the Foundation Board, and the Alumni Council and when I said "What words come to mind when you think of [Maple State University]"…they said "family..." That was the first word that came out of their mouth. Family. (1-2)

In addition to participants at all six institutions in the study describing aspects of family within their institutions, informants at the three historically minority-serving universities took that sense of family to another level. Participants at the three minority-serving institutions described not only a "family" relationship across campus but also a sense that faculty and staff nurture their students: "Something that it has remained I think in terms of the cultural makeup of the campus has been a more family-oriented, more caring nurturing feel" (7-5). This nurturing component was described significantly among participants at the three historically minority-serving institutions, who often described a calling or a conscious desire to work at such an institution.

Cultural interpretation of the mission: Insider vs. outsider. Another aspect of institutional culture that came out during interviews with participants is the notion of

"insider" or "outsider" at an institution. Participants at all six institutions studied described a "new guard" versus "old guard" when describing the faculty. A participant from University of the Oaks described: "It is really is a junior faculty, senior faculty split" (4-2). Many institutions have experienced significant growth over the last ten years, resulting in newer faculty members who may have different expectations for the institution (see *Institutional mission and changing priorities: An example of institutional decision making*):

> Folks will emphasize the pluses that in so many ways that this is a better quality, more capable more effective institution now that it was then. On the other hand, people will talk about how it was nice in those days to know everybody in [on] campus; we will never quite have that again. (5-2)

For all the institutions studied, participants described some aspect of two different sets of faculty members, those who knew the way the institution "used to be," and those who know it now.

Another aspect of "outsider" that was identified quite significantly among informants in half of the institutions was whether or not members of the institution were "from" the region. For these three institutions, whether or not institutional members are literally from the area provided a sense of legitimacy among some members of the university. A participant from Cypress State University who is not from the area described a dichotomy between a faculty and staff who were from the region and an administration that was not:

> Here, everyone's from [the region] except senior administration. We're all from someplace else. And right now. And we're all from places that just did it differently. None of us are from HBCUs, [and] even though a lot of us went to HBCUs, none of us have worked in that tradition. (7-1)

The participant from Cypress State University described that the lack of being from the area and not understanding the cultural norms of the region led to initial challenges:

> I'm [from another region of the country], my friends were all saying you go down there with that fast-talking…stuff, people will be looking at you like you're crazy. And they were absolutely right because one of the first pieces of pushback I got was people saying why do you have to move so fast? (7-1)

Similarly, a participant from Poplar State University described the discontent that some institutional members had with a former "outsider" administrator compared with a new "insider:"

> I don't think it was ever a problem, but just that he is not from around here, he is not a people person and he doesn't fish and hunt, he doesn't play golf and that kind of stuff. While the current one as far as I know doesn't do any of those things that I mentioned there…he is a people person and he is from [the state]. (6-6)

Cultural interpretation of the mission: Location and place. Related to institutional members being "from" the region, for those four universities in which participants described the institution as being isolated, informants talked about how the isolation contributes to a need to be particularly attentive to the community: "It's not

just the town but it's kind of the region that is supported by [Maple State University]…so I think that is a really strong contributing factor" (1-5). The sense of location and place for the isolated institutions provides a particularly strong sense of identity but also responsibility, as described by a participant from University of the Palmettos:

> There is nothing for two hours in any direction, certainly no real university. I think that with [University of the Palmettos] it is pretty essential. People know on some level what is going on around the University, people ask you about it in the community. I think there is a strong sense of connection partly again because there aren't a lot of other institutions. So I think people look to the University for some of the kinds of things; for cultural resources. (5-7)

For three of the four self-described "isolated" institutions, recreation opportunities were also described significantly as contributing to the recruitment of students, faculty and staff, and to improving the quality of life, and two of the three institutions described that their isolated location helps to establish a strong sense of identity and belonging among members. For example, an informant from Poplar State University described their location as contributing to a sense of security: "It seems like it fits together this notion of security but being in a rural area being very kind of tucked away and very self-contained and everything" (6-1) and another participant from the same institution described the isolation similarly: "It is also about a sense of place and [Poplar State University] is distinctive in part …because of its rural isolation…it generates a sense of identity both among the faculty and among the students. A sense

of belonging" (6-6). A participant at University of the Palmettos summed it up well by stressing that while students *like* the institution they *love* the region: "They [students] *love* [the town] and they *love* being here. They *like* [University of the Palmettos]" (5-7). Appendix E provides additional illustrations of community relationship, physical manifestations, institutional history, and notions of place, insider versus outsider, and institution as family that were identified by participants.

Institutional Mission and Decision Making

To facilitate the discussion of decision making at each institution, all participants were asked to describe a recent decision (within the last two years) that was made on campus that was related to the academic mission of the institution. They were then asked to "unpack" that decision. Participants subsequently described from their perspective how the decision was conceptualized, discussed, and carried out (or not). If key institutional actors chose to describe a decision different from the decision example provided by the chief academic officer (CAO), the key institutional actors were then asked to also reflect on the CAO's decision example to the best of their ability, as well.

While participants gave examples of several types of decisions, examples of decisions that were made and were ultimately described as being mission driven by the participants fall into four categories: academic college development, academic program development, changes to institutional standards or processes, and changes to the institution's liberal or general education curriculum. Participants, both CAOs and other key institutional actors, described these four types of decisions as having a root in being mission driven. For example, a participant described the development and creation of

new academic programs as "aligned with the mission" (1-4). Similarly, a participant who reflected on a decision that was made to make changes to institutional academic standards described an explicit attention to mission:

> The first thing they did is to take us back to what the mission is…Before any of the changes to the curriculum, before any of the changes in admission, we went back so everyone can remember okay are we doing what we said we will do? (2-2)

Only at one institution did all participants provide the same decision example, that of the revisioning of the general education curriculum at Cypress State University. As an informant at Cypress State University described:

> This whole decision was mission driven; there is no doubt in my mind and the provost is a very mission oriented person…I mean everything is tied to a strategic plan in our mission, and we have been told pretty regularly that everything that we do has got to be tied to our strategic plan, and we have actually done a good job with that. (7-3)

During interviews, participants were asked to reflect upon the particular decision described by the CAO as having been mission driven. Appendix F provides additional illustrations and reflections from participants on the use of mission to guide decision making, and Table 5.4 summarizes the types of decisions that were described as having used mission and the extent to which other key institutional actors agreed with the CAO that the particular decision was indeed mission driven. For three institutions, there was high to moderately-high agreement with the CAO that mission was considered in the

Table 5.4: Summed Index: Use of Mission in Decision Making by CAOs and Key Institutional Actors

	Academic College Development	Academic Program Development	Changes to Institutional Standards/ Processes	Changes to General/ Liberal Education	Participant/ CAO Agreement on Mission as Driver
Poplar State University		X			High
Magnolia State University			(X)		Mod/High
University of the Oaks	(X)				Mod/High
Maple State University				/X/	Mod
Cypress State University				/X/	Mod
University of the Palmettos			X*		Low

X = decision described as mission driven by CAO and all key institutional actors
(X) = decision described as mission driven by CAO and several[3] key institutional actors
/X/ = decision described as mission driven by CAO and few[4] key institutional actors
X* = decision described as mission driven by CAO but not by key institutional actors (process of decision example provided was not widely known)

particular academic decision. For two institutions, there was moderate agreement, with a few key institutional actors in agreement with the CAO's conclusion that the decision was mission driven. At one institution, there was not sufficient knowledge of the

[3] More than half of participants within the institution
[4] Half or less than half of participants within the institution

decision itself for key institutional actors to make a determination whether they thought mission was considered.

For those institutions where the decision was described as mission driven by only a few key institutional actors, most believed that the CAO and/or upper administration had considered mission in the decision example given, although there may be differences of opinion across campus as to whether the decision was appropriate. For example, a participant at Maple State University stated that the particular leader responsible for changes to their general education curriculum was indeed considering mission, although there was not strong support for the decision:

> Let me say that vice provost that led this thing…that got it through, it was quality undergraduate education that drove it. He really believed that this was going to be better; honestly he believed that and that is how he convinced our provost at the time. (1-1)

There were also other perceived drivers indicated as contributing factors to the decision, such as the desire for upper administration to "put us on the map" or for someone to "leave their mark."

While four examples of types of decisions in which mission was a driver in decision making were described across the six institutions studied, mission did not consistently drive any particular category of decision at a majority of institutions. At the two institutions where there was a similar decision examined, the extent to which mission was a driver in the decision was inconsistent; the only agreement was for the

two institutions that described changes to their liberal education curriculum as only being moderately mission driven (see Table 5.4).

Finally, during the process of describing a decision and how it played out on a particular campus, participants at all institutions revealed two specific internal factors that contributed to changes to the existing campus culture: the role of longevity or turnover of institutional leaders and the effects of institutional growth and changing institutional priorities on the faculty and campus culture. Table 5.5 provides a summary of the factors associated with leaders and decision making as well as changing priorities that have impacted institutional culture.

Table 5.5: Summary Table: Institutional Mission: Decision Making and Changing Priorities

Type of Concern/Item	Sites at Which Item Indicated
Leadership	
Excessive longevity and/or frequent turnover of institutional leaders contributes to tension in administrative and faculty relationship	Maple, Magnolia, Oaks, Palmettos, Poplar, Cypress [all]
Changing Institutional Priorities	
Growth of student body population and emphasis on research result in tension and differing expectations	Maple, Magnolia, Oaks, Palmettos, Poplar, Cypress [all]

There was most certainly a sense among participants at all institutions that leaders can either stay too long or not long enough and that longevity or lack thereof can impact the level of trust between faculty and administration. For example, a participant described a tension in the faculty and administration relationship as a result of a long-standing chancellor:

> It [relationship between faculty and administration] was one of no trust, a climate of fear…And frankly it created a climate, almost a generational climate among the faculty in that our chancellor, our previous chancellor was here for 16 years so he was the only chancellor the majority of our faculty has ever known. (6-6)

On the other hand, informants described the atmosphere that frequent administrator turnover can have on faculty morale. One informant stated:

> Fairly new provost over here…a fairly new dean…we have had a lot of turnover which I think is largely just accidental but it probably looks a little suspicious to people…We've got a new sheriff in town and they are trying to change things up and people often are not comfortable [with] change, and as I said we have a lot of people who have been here for a long time. (4-1)

While there was some discussion among participants about the role of turnover in the perceived effectiveness of institutional leaders, further discussion regarding the ability for these institutional leaders to facilitate decision making and change processes within their university's historical context will be discussed in Chapter 6.

Institutional Mission and Changing Priorities

The second internal factor that informants identified as causing changes to the existing campus culture is changes to institutional priorities, in particular, growth of the student body population and the rise of expectations for faculty research. Participants at all institutions described extreme growth in the student body and/or increased demands on the research enterprise, both of which were described as resulting in a campus

environment different from that which was experienced by faculty who arrived at the institution previously. For example, one informant described that the institutional growth results in varying realities: “We have grown so much, we have a lot of new faculty, and that alone probably looks very different to the people who have been here for a while…” (4-1). Similarly, another participant described the changes in institutional priorities in terms of research expectations contributes to changes in the campus atmosphere:

> We have a big cultural shift that is taking place and I think that it is meeting a lot of resistance for good reason; and that is shifting from a cultural way where teaching was a primary task, a primary mission, to moving more towards the…scholarship model where faculty members are really held accountable for a significant amount of scholarship. (7-3)

Appendices H and I provide additional illustrations and summaries of these two specific internal factors.

Mission Focus: System and Financial Context

During interviews, participants were asked to describe who they considered to be the major institutional stakeholders and what relationship those stakeholders had to decision making at the institution. In addition to the obvious stakeholders identified such as students, faculty, staff, alumni, and trustees, participants discussed extensively the stakeholders at the system-level and the financial implications of being a part of a large, public university system. Appendix G provides additional illustrations from

participants' views on the system and financial context, and Table 5.6 summarizes this content below.

Table 5.6: Summary Table: Mission Focus: System and Financial Context

Type of Concern/Item	Sites at Which Item Indicated
Financial Context	
Lack of resources provides institutional focus	Maple, Magnolia, Palmettos, Poplar, Cypress
Lack of resources impacts institutional culture	Maple, Magnolia, Poplar
Within-System Context	Magnolia, Oaks, Palmettos, Poplar, Cypress
Challenges to mission differentiation/ Diversity of institutions	Oaks, Palmettos, Poplar, Cypress
Disconnect between system administration and campuses	

An external factor that participants cited as associated with decision making was that of being a campus within a multi-campus system. Participants at five of the six institutions stated that being part of a diverse multi-campus system was challenging; despite the fact that each institution views itself as unique and different, there is a sense that the system administration does not see or value that difference. One participant stated "And trying to make everything so consistent sometimes I think doesn't allow each campus the flexibility to serve its mission and its students in the best way they can" (6-2) while another also views themselves as "different:" "I think right now we're different than [sic] a lot of the schools in the system" (7-1). Finally, a third participant noted the need for recognition of the varying institutional missions: "You need to build that different standard because of the population that we are serving. Not that we are

serving the minority population but we are serving an adult population and we serving a military population" (2-1).

Finally, participants were asked to what extent budgetary constraints played a role in the decisions identified and how these decisions might have played out differently under different financial contexts. Participants at five of the six institutions described that a difficult fiscal climate helped to provide institutional focus. One participant joked, "At least we have shown everybody that we don't have any money and I think there is a benefit to that" (6-6), while another participant at the same institution agreed that "[Difficult fiscal climate forces people to support institutional priorities]…people look more consciously at the mission" (6-7). Participants at half of the institutions studied described that not only does having fewer resources help provide institutional focus, but they also noted that it can negatively impact certain aspects of institutional culture. One participant described that the lack of resources has contributed to increases in class sizes that strikes at the heart of what the institution is all about: "It is at the core of identity and culture" (6-2). Another informant described the strain on personal relationships and sense of community that can result from fiscal constraints: "I think it [financial pressures] sort of increasingly created an environment where the tensions between faculty and administration were exacerbated overall" (1-3). The historical and cultural contextual realities provide an understanding for how financial constraints are viewed and interpreted at master's granting universities.

The cross-case examination of all six institutions studied reveals elements of history and culture that provide context for understanding decision making at public

master's granting universities. Subsequent themes identified in this chapter including institutional identity, history and regionalism will be discussed in greater detail in the following final chapter.

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION

Summary

This study examines how aspects of institutional culture set the stage for how and why an institution functions as it does and impacts decisions that are made. Six public, master's granting institutions within a singular state public system of higher education were examined through interviews with 36 chief academic officers, deans, department chairs, faculty senate presidents, and faculty members. Through use of a cultural lens, the connections between explicit and implicit institutional mission and culture were explored. Four research questions guided the work of this study:

1) What is the relationship between institutional culture and decision making?
2) How do academic leaders in public master's level higher education institutions make decisions?
3) To what degree is institutional mission embedded in decision making and for what types of decisions?
4) How are decisions perceived by other key institutional actors such as deans and faculty?

The results of this study suggest that institutional culture provides an important and critical backdrop for interpreting institutional mission as well as understanding the extent to which mission drives decision making for university leaders. In discussing mission statements among this sector of institutions, a distinction must be made between the state system's regional mission and the local missions of each institution. As discussed more extensively in the sections that follow, these two aspects of

institutional mission can at times be complementary and at other times competing. The following section will summarize the results found in regards to each research question; the larger implications for consideration and opportunities for future research are discussed later in this chapter.

Question 1: What is the relationship between institutional culture and decision making? The purpose of this study was to explore via a cultural lens how academic leaders make decisions and the mechanisms by which leaders ground their enactments of the missions. The results of this study suggest that institutional culture provides an important backdrop for interpreting institutional mission; in many cases it is difficult for institutions to separate the two. Based on the results, three primary, interconnected elements of institutional cultural can impact the use of mission in decision making at public, masters-granting universities: the presence (or lack thereof) of a strong institutional identity, the history of the institution, and the relationship of the institution to its surrounding area and regional stakeholders, or its sense of regionalism. A strong relationship between institutional culture and decision making was present in all institutions studied, although culture is understandably interpreted differently in each.

The results of the study suggest that institutional identity, a component of culture, is particularly salient in the use of mission in decision making, particularly for historically minority-serving institutions; this is consistent with Gasman et al. (2007) who identified mission statements as a reflection of the values of HBCUs. The strong institutional identity and historical commitment to providing access to higher education

was particularly strong in the HBCUs and strong to a lesser extent in the American Indian serving institution.

Results also indicate that the relationship of the institution to external, regional stakeholders is an important factor for all institutions studied but has particular importance in decision making for rural institutions who consider their universities' roles in the region as a primary part of their identity. Rural institutions internalized their role in the region to a greater extent and saw their commitment to regional stakeholders as a key component to decision making. Part of the importance of geographic place among the institutions studied was also evident through physical manifestations of culture. Aspects such as particular buildings, building names, and mascots were evident in three institutions studied and were of particular importance for institution serving an American Indian population. This affirms the limited existing work on place in college campuses (Chapman, 2006; Kenney et al., 2005) that notes that physical places help to establish, express, and reinforce institutional mission and objectives. Chapman (2006) notes that for regional universities, iconic buildings can serve as a unifier among students and can send a message about the university's identity.

Finally, the study affirms the earlier work of Schein (1985, 2004) that any interpretation of mission must be understood in a historical context; the intersection of history, culture and mission were critical in all of the institutions in this study. The results of the study confirm that for institutional mission to be an important factor in decision making, it must be more than a written statement, it must be a living document

imbedded within the culture of the institution. This is congruent with the findings of Dill (1997) as well as Hartley (2002); Hartley's (2002) concept that: "what matters is not what a mission says but what it means" (p. 121) is particularly relevant to understanding the relationship between institutional culture and decision making. Implications of the complicated intersection between institutional culture, identity, history, and mission will be discussed later in this chapter.

Questions 2 and 3: How do academic leaders in public master's level higher education institutions make decisions? To what degree is institutional mission embedded in decision making and for what types of decisions? The results of this study suggest that institutional mission guides, but does not fully reflect, the decision making process in universities. To some extent institutional missions serve as a guide for decision making by clarifying competing goals and prioritizing among these goals; this is consistent with a number of researchers (Clark, 1983; Davies, 1986; Lang & Lopers-Sweetman, 1991); and affirms the work of Nowlin (2009) and Scott (2006) who concluded that establishing a mission statement can help to guide institutions by providing a distinct purpose and direction as well as setting guidelines and structure to allow for institutional evaluation. There was some agreement with previous research (Birnbaum, 1988a; Davies, 1986; Fjortoft & Smart, 1994), but not overwhelmingly so, that adhering strictly to academic mission may impede an institution's ability to make swift changes and respond to changes in the environment. The study also illuminated that mission can be written or oral, implicit or explicit. The results of this study also suggest that, in addition to the use of institutional mission, academic leaders in public,

master's granting institutions experience a variety of underlying considerations used in decision making such as desires of stakeholders and historical implications, consistent with the work of Eckel (2002b). The process of making decisions for university leaders is complicated and contextual. While this study concluded that the use of institutional mission to guide decision making is indeed useful in some instances, it does not indicate that consideration of mission is used consistently in particular types of decisions over others, consistent with some research (Dill, 1997; Dominick, 1990).

Mission and financial constraints. Financial constraints can play a role in institutional decision making by providing a focus and ensuring accountability, but increasing budgetary concerns can also impact institutional culture more broadly. This study affirms the body of research that indicates having a clear, defined, strong organizational mission can serve as an asset during difficult times and institutions with clear missions are better able to deal with internal and external pressures (Berg et al., 2003; Cowan, 1993; Leslie & Fretwell, 1996; Parker, 1986; Taylor & Koch, 1996). Vision and mission are clearly core components when conducting a change activity and as institutions face difficult times, concurrent with some existing literature (Kezar & Eckel, 2002a, 2002b; Leslie & Fretwell, 1996). However, this study also suggests that financial constraints can negatively impact certain aspects of institutional culture that strike at the heart of institutional identity, such as increased class sizes for a teaching institution, or escalating tension among faculty and administrators for a generally collegial institution. While the importance of cultural aspects of mission is profound for some institutions, also important to consider among institutions under financial

constraints is an understanding of internal politics; this reinforces one of Bolman and Deal's (1997) primary elements that characterize the political frame: the allocation of scarce resources. The results of this study hint that increasing financial constraints, by escalating tensions and threatening institutional identity, may mean internal politics will continue to be salient; this is consistent with Bolman and Deal (1997).

Question 4: How are decisions perceived by other key institutional actors such as deans and faculty? Participants, both CAOs and other key institutional actors, consistently described four types of decisions as having a root in being mission driven: academic college development, academic program development, changes to institutional standards or processes, and changes to the institution's liberal or general education curriculum. Decisions were more often cited as "mission driven" by CAOs than by other key institutional actors, but agreement between these two groups was moderate to moderately-high overall, with one institution exhibiting complete agreement between CAOs and key institutional actors about the degree to which a particular decision was guided by mission. Even where differences among groups existed over the extent to which decisions were driven by mission, there was often consensus that mission was considered. The findings of this study affirm earlier work by Nowlin (2009) that participants believe that decisions are influenced by organizational mission.

Implications

What is relevant yet missing from the current research on organizational mission and institutional culture examined in Chapter 2, and what this study was designed to

examine, is the intersection of these areas and how this intersection can help to explain the process of decision making for administrators in public master's granting institutions in particular. In addition, according to Gasman et al. (2007) and Gasman (n.d.) in her review of recent literature on HBCUs, most of the current research on black colleges and universities focuses on students and achievement. Although other areas have been explored including history, law, and faculty issues, this study contributes to the lack of research concerning mission and decision making at this particular subset of institutions. Similarly, little empirical research has been conducted to determine how university administrators and middle managers perceive their institution's mission statement, or how mission differentiation among constituent institutions in public higher education systems impacts planning and decision making. The results of this study raise several implications for practice including considerations of historical context and regionalism and the ways in which we can understand how administrators at public master's granting institutions make decisions within these contexts.

The use of mission statements in decision making among administrators has an inherently cultural component; mission statements are interpreted within the context of the historical and current realities that institutional leaders face. According to March et al. (1993) and Simon (1993), the making of decisions itself can indeed be tied to identity. In the context of mission statements, this can be described as "sensemaking" in that the meaning may be reinterpreted as new decisions are presented (Weick et al., 2005). As institutional leaders make decisions they must consider the historical

commitments of the university as well as everyday realities and must find a balance between the two.

The tale of two missions. Two important kinds of institutional mission were revealed among the six institutions studied: the regional mission as a part of the state system and the local mission of the institution. These two missions may be complementary, or even the same, or may be competing. The understanding of institutional mission is very culturally embedded, particularly in the oral manifestations of institutional mission. Within the HBCUs studied, there is a particularly strong tension between these two missions; for these institutions, their roles as HBCUs trumps that of their roles as regional institutions. Another example of the ways in which these two missions can intersect is exemplified in the prevailing concept of the institution as family. While the concept of family was widespread across institutions, the ways in which it was enacted varied. For the historically minority-serving institutions in the study, the institution as family meant that faculty members and other university leaders played a nurturing role in students' lives. For these three institutions, the caring, nurturing nature of the university is evident in that the university serves the families of their students as well as the students themselves. Alternatively, at some of the most rural and isolated institutions, their notion of institution as family was tied to their sense of regionalism. Instead of a sense of "family" rooted in historical mission as in the historically minority-serving institutions, the rural universities consider their role as family because they serve the students of the region; there is a sense that the rural location provides an increased sense of comfort and security and that fact that the

campus is a "family" helps perpetuate the feeling of personal relationships and community. The notion of the university as family may also be a concept specific to the region; suggestions for further research at the end of this chapter will suggest an examination of public master's-granting institutions in various regions of the country.

Institutional identity and history matters. The results of this study indicate that the historical component of an institution is particularly important in decision making. The extent of this strong historical component was not anticipated but is prevalent throughout the institutions studied. As previously mentioned, institutions really operate within identities that can be historical and/or regional in nature. Cultural interpretations of institutional mission therefore exist within these contexts and form the framework within which university administrators must function when they make decisions. For all institutions, their identity is tied to a certain extent to their history. For some, that history is explicitly tied to a sense of regionalism. For others, particularly the historically minority-serving institutions described above, their history is partially tied to the region, but more so tied to their role to provide access.

Institutional history and identity is being threatened to some degree by several factors at the universities studied. For HBCUs, there is a prevailing question and tension over how to be an HBCU in the post-desegregation era. Another aspect that is posed to potentially threaten the identity of these teaching institutions is the increasing growth in many cases of their research agendas and a struggle over the role and level of priority that will be given to faculty research. In this sense, institutions are already noticing differing expectations between new faculty members arriving and those who

have been at the institution for years. This struggle between the old guard and the new guard points to a potential way in which today's master's granting institutions are experiencing shifts that may impact institutional identity and culture.

From a methodological standpoint, it is important to remember that constraints were placed on the state in which the six institutions studied are located; this study examines six institutions in a particular place with a particular regional history. That being said, the results of this study remind us that indeed every institution has a history, but every state also has a unique history. While there may be commonalities across states, those commonalities may not be as important to consider as the specific state contexts in which institutions are situated and the degree to which history affects institutional culture. Regional and state history is as important as institutional history in terms of understanding the contextual constraints that today's administrators operate within.

Similarly, constraints were also placed on the institutions studied in terms of all being a part of one public university system. The results of this study indicate that being a part of such a system also matters. Not only did members of all the institutions in the study express tension over the inability of one system to account for individual institutional missions and differences, but this particular system as one that includes both predominately white institutions and historically minority-serving institutions operates as a legacy of a segregated system. Taking into account all these considerations, it is notable that we are seeing a real shift take place among public regional institutions as they are slowly changing. The faculty and administrators who

ushered these institutions through tumultuous desegregation efforts and/or through the post-Baby Boom growth and establishment are retiring. New faculty and administrators who arrive at these complex institutions are coming in without the historical knowledge or understanding of the institution that may impact their ability to move the institutions forward. This legacy provides an additional layer of complexity and a deeper history that hasn't been explored here for both the individual institutions as well as the larger system in which they operate.

Finally, the results of this study provide implications for theory and an understanding of the contextual nature of mission for established institutions in particular. Of the six institutions studied, five were founded between 1867-1899; the sixth institution, University of the Palmettos, was founded in 1947. The results of this study suggest that mission is deeply embedded in institutional culture and history, but most institutions in this study are old enough to *have* such an established history and sense of identity. This suggests that for younger institutions the interconnected nature of culture, history and mission may be less intertwined.

Adherence to regionalism matters…for some. The results of this study also indicate that the relationship of some but not all institutions to external, regional stakeholders is an important factor. As regional institutions, each was obviously founded to serve a particular region of the state, and this is present in all; this is the required, legal definition that is part of their formation. But for some institutions, it is a real, core feature of who they consider themselves to be. So while all institutions studied necessarily have a "regional" component to their missions (either explicitly

indicated as a “regional” campus or through their “service” to the region), the extent to which that is an important part of institutional identity varies. In particular, this strong sense of regionalism and loyalty to the surrounding area is most significant in those very rural institutions. The part that the rural institution plays in its region is important to its identity and is considered explicitly and implicitly in decision making. For example, the isolation of Poplar State University’s rural campus heightens the institution’s need to serve the region in which it is situated.

Regionalism and loyalty to the area are also perpetuated through an “insider versus outsider” mentality. For some universities, institutional values are reinforced as those individuals who fit in to the culture are rewarded. For one-half of the institutions studied, those institutional members from the area possessed a sense of legitimacy among some members of the university. For example, participants at Cypress State University described that not being from the region led to a lack of understanding about the norms of how things get accomplished. This notion of “outsiderness” suggests again that mission is deeper than words, but rather is tied to identity.

A word on leadership and institutional culture. Leadership did not stand out in these institutions and was only particularly salient among those institutions that had experienced extreme turnover in recent years and, as such, described a sense of uncertainty. This lack of emphasis on leadership within the results of this study does not mean that it is not important, but it is notable that in these institutions culture defined what the leaders themselves were able to do. This was seen in Maple State University and Poplar State University in particular, in which the leader’s ability to be

effective has been and continue to be constrained by the culture. Even in the example of Poplar State, in which history and mission have not always determined what the institution has done and the previous chancellor made determinations based on what he thought would garner attention, the ability to be successful and garner the support of campus and the community was constrained by the institutional culture.

Many contemporary conceptions of leadership theory, particularly as it results to organizational change, assume that leaders are indeed the most important factor in implementing the change. While there continue to be tensions surrounding what leadership style is most effective (Bennis, 2000; Conger, 2000; Dunphy, 2000; Gastil, 1997), the ideas still center on the concept of the leader first and foremost. The findings of this study, on the other hand, suggest that while culture is not necessarily an iron cage, it is indeed a limiting factor for leaders in their ability to make change. Another example of this phenomenon can be seen in the recent coverage of prestigious, non-regional institutions: to move the institution, you need to fit in. It has been noted that culture is one of the least "malleable" aspects of organization and can be a barrier to change (Bolman & Deal, 1997; Deal & Kennedy, 2000; Schein, 2004).

Limitations

While several steps were taken in an attempt to increase the validity and reliability of this study, limitations do exist. The primary limitation of this study is the dependence on participants, often what might be described as elite participants, to remember and reveal information and the personal bias associated with the methods chosen. Not only may individuals' memories be flawed, but also participants bring

their own personal biases to their interpretations of the situations as they happened. In particular, the study highlights the memories and interpretations of a select, privileged group of high-level administrators, who due to the nature of their positions, are likely to be more polished and reserved in their conversations, as well as more positive in their portrayal of faculty-administration relationships on their campus.

It can also be difficult to prevent personal bias by qualitative researchers: as humans we have our own particular views of the world that can impact our ability to be objective; Merriam (1998) emphasizes the importance of being attentive to the biases that can exist within qualitative research, including its subjective nature. The collection of data through document analysis is also limiting because documents are not created for the purpose of research and, therefore, can be incomplete or inaccurate.

Directions for Future Research

Future research related to this study may include examinations at the level of institutional type, at the system level, and within individual state contexts. At the level of institutional type, among regional universities committed to being "stewards of place," how is this mission balanced among the other missions of teaching students and conducting research? There is also a need to examine mission-related activities at historically minority-serving institutions, including HBCUs and American-Indian serving institutions. What does it mean to be an HBCU in desegregated America? For American-Indian serving institutions, particularly those without tribal affiliation, how are they working to serve a particularly underserved population?

An additional area of research that should be considered is an examination of master's-granting public institutions in different regional contexts within the U.S. The design of this study provided constraints by examining six institutions that are part of a singular public state system, the context of which varies from the realities felt by similar institutions in other parts of the country. While this study focused on institutions within a state system that includes HBCUs and exists within that particular historical context, other states are seeing increasing numbers of historically underrepresented student populations without the historical context that is seen in states with a history of HBCUs. How mission intersects with culture in institutions that are now serving a large population of historically underrepresented students within different state contexts is worth examining.

The results of this study also point to a large need to examine mission differentiation and decision making for universities that are a part of public higher education systems. Results revealed that members of the institutions studied lacked a clear sense of place within the larger system and many members expressed concern for what they saw as a lack of desire among system-level administrators and board members to acknowledge and understand the various institutions' unique missions.

Additionally, financial constraints play a role in institutional decision making, but the particular ways in which budget intersects with mission and decision making within a cultural context is an area of consideration. While the results of this study confirm that for institutions under financial stress mission can provide a particular sense of focus, results also propose that institutional identity as a whole can be impacted by

such financial challenges. Additional research should examine under what circumstances budgetary constraints can impact aspects of institutional identity; doing so would help to provide further clarity on the relationship between mission and decision making for institutions during difficult financial times.

Finally, some of the most interesting opportunities for future work that can be drawn from this study are related to the cultural interpretation of mission. The extent of historical and regional importance in decision making suggests that individuals have a deeper, emotional connection with institutional mission. One unanticipated discovery to explore further is the notion of institution as family and whether that construct is present among particular types of institutions and within particular regions of the country. Our current understanding of mission does not fully consider the role this emotional connection can have in institutional change, particularly in the conceptualizations of mission that universities have borrowed from the corporate world.

The cultural analysis employed in this study reveals that underlying forces such as institutional history, relationship with the surrounding region, and institutional values contribute to individuals' behaviors within the institution. Culture provides a critical background for interpreting mission in universities. The results of this study offer further explanation on the utility of mission in decision making for public master's granting institutions. It is this research, and in the analysis of this institutional type in particular, that works to improve institutional policy and practice.

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APPENDIX A
Preliminary Interview Protocol: Chief Academic Officers

Introduction:

I am a doctoral student at the University of Minnesota in the Educational Policy and Administration Department. For my dissertation I am studying institutional decision making during difficult financial times at master's degree granting institutions. In particular I am interested in your experiences making decisions in your role as Chief Academic Officer at [institution]. The benefits for participation in this study include the opportunity to share your expertise and experiences and the possibility of being able to inform future research. You will also be provided the results of the study and as such will be able to learn from this and other institutions. There are no known risks associated with participation in this study.

Assurance of Confidentiality:

Your name or college will not be identified in the study. The information that you share will be recorded, with your permission. I will carefully maintain the confidentiality of your individual responses according to the standards for the protection of human subjects established by the University of Minnesota. Your interview will not be shared with anyone with the exception of my faculty advisor, Professor Karen Seashore. Pseudonyms will be used for all participants in the preparation of the research report, and the name of your college will also be given a pseudonym. Please note that in addition to my role as a student at the University of Minnesota I am also an employee in

Academic Affairs at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. Your identity will remain confidential within my professional work context, as well.

Preliminary Demographic Information:

1. How long have you been affiliated with [name of institution]?
2. How long have you served as Chief Academic Officer at [name of institution]?
3. How long have you been affiliated with the university system (if different)?

Interview Questions:

1. What is unique about this institution? What makes it tick? In what ways is this institution similar or different from others both within the system and outside the system? Does your description reflect the mission of the institution?
2. Please tell me about the most important decision you have made within the last two years – that was enacted – that had significant implications related to the academic core of the institution. Was there also a decision that was *not* acted upon or one that you wanted to make but couldn't? Tell me about that decision.
3. Who had influence on this decision? Who were the players? What role did the mission of the institution play in your decision-making process? Did you explicitly or implicitly consider mission when making this decision?
4. What role did the values, traditions, and commonly-held assumptions of the institution play in your decision-making process? Were there institutional factors that particularly helped or hindered your decision?

5. To what extent did budgetary constraints play a role in this decision? How might have this decision played out differently in a different financial context?
6. Is there anything else you would like to add?
7. Can you identify and/or share with me any relevant documents that could illuminate: 1) the decision we have been discussing, and 2) the history and mission of the institution? Examples might include meeting minutes, emails, or reports.

APPENDIX B
Preliminary Interview Protocol: Deans and Faculty

Introduction:

I am a doctoral student at the University of Minnesota in the Educational Policy and Administration Department. For my dissertation I am studying institutional decision making during difficult financial times at master's degree granting institutions. In particular I am interested in your experiences with the decision to [decision here]. The benefits for participation in this study include the opportunity to share your expertise and experiences and the possibility of being able to inform future research. You will also be provided the results of the study and as such will be able to learn from this and other institutions. There are no known risks associated with participation in this study.

Assurance of Confidentiality:

Your name or college will not be identified in the study. The information that you share will be recorded, with your permission. I will carefully maintain the confidentiality of your individual responses according to the standards for the protection of human subjects established by the University of Minnesota. Your interview will not be shared with anyone with the exception of my faculty advisor, Professor Karen Seashore. Pseudonyms will be used for all participants in the preparation of the research report, and the name of your college will also be given a pseudonym. Please note that in addition to my role as a student at the University of Minnesota I am also an employee in

Academic Affairs at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. Your identity will remain confidential within my professional work context, as well.

Preliminary Demographic Information:

1. How long have you been affiliated with [name of institution]?
2. How long have you served as [current role] at [name of institution]?
3. How long have you been affiliated with the university system (if different)?

Interview Questions:

1. What is unique about this institution? What makes it tick? In what ways is this institution similar or different from others both within the system and outside the system? Does your description reflect the mission of the institution?
2. [Name of Chief Academic Officer] shared with me the decision to [explain decision]. How were you involved in this decision or how did you hear about the decision? Tell me a bit about your involvement and your reaction to this decision.
3. In your opinion, who had influence on this decision? Who were the players? What role did the mission of the institution play in your decision-making process described?
4. In your opinion, what role did the values, traditions, and commonly-held assumptions of the institution play in the decision?
5. Is there anything else you would like to add?

6. Can you identify and/or share with me any relevant documents that could illuminate: 1) the decision we have been discussing, and 2) the history and mission of the institution? Examples might include meeting minutes, emails, or reports.

APPENDIX C
Documents by Institution

Institution	Institutional Documents Reviewed
Cypress State University	*About CSU (Cypress State University, 2012a)
	General Education Program Overview (Cypress State University, 2013)
	*Our Mission (Cypress State University, 2012b)
	*Our Vision (Cypress State University, 2012c)
	University Fact Book 2012-2013 (Cypress State University, Office of Institutional Assessment and Research, 2012)
Magnolia State University	Fact Book Fall 2012 (Magnolia State University, Office of Institutional Research, 2012)
	*Institutional Mission (Magnolia State University, 2012a)
	*Magnolia State University History (Magnolia State University, 2012b)
	*Six Reasons to Choose Magnolia State University (Magnolia State University, 2013)
Maple State University	*About Maple (Maple State University, 2012a)
	Biography of Dean (Maple State University, 2013)
	Maple State University Responds to Findings of Low Morale (Author, nd)
	*History (Maple State University, 2012b)
	Faculty Survey (Maple State University, Faculty Senate Welfare and Morale Committee, 2013)
	Petition: Tenured Faculty Call for Accountability for Administrative Failures (Maple State University, Faculty Senate, 2013)

	Statement from Chancellor to be Released to Maple State University Faculty (Newspaper, nd)
	University Fact Book (Maple State University, Institutional Research, Assessment and Planning, 2012)
	Vote on Provost Divides MSU Faculty (Paper, nd)
Poplar State University	Engagement at Poplar State University (Poplar State University, 2013)
	*Heritage and History (Poplar State University, 2012c)
	Poplar State University Alumni Magazine (Poplar State University, 2012a)
	Poplar State University 2012 Fact Book (Poplar State University, 2012d)
	*Poplar State University Mission Statement (Poplar State University, 2012b)
	*The Story of Poplar State University [video] (Source, 1989)
University of the Oaks	*History of University of the Oaks (University of the Oaks, 2012b)
	*Landmarks and Points of Interest (University of the Oaks, 2012c)
	*University of the Oaks Mission Statement (University of the Oaks, 2012a)
	*University of the Oaks Traditions (University of the Oaks, 2012d)
	2012-2013 Fact Book (University of the Oaks, 2012e)
University of the Palmettos	*About UOP (University of the Palmettos, 2012a)
	Degrees Conferred (University of the Palmettos, 2012b)

Planning Documents (University of the Palmettos, 2013a)

*Points of Pride (University of the Palmettos, 2013b)

Strategic Plan 2010-2015 (University of the Palmettos, Academic Affairs Division, 2010)

*University of the Palmettos History and Traditions (University of the Palmettos, 2013c)

*used extensively in case examination

APPENDIX D
Meta-Matrix: Characteristics of Institutional Mission

	Regional institution/Part of a multi-campus system	Teaching	Research/ Scholarship	Service	Access/History as a minority-serving institution	Active/Engaged student learning
Maple State University						
Stated Mission Statement	X	X	X	X		
Institutional Leader Responses		This balance between teaching and research, teaching scholars for our faculty, engaging our students in our activities outside of the classroom. (1-1) I would say that we are still a teaching institution, like we are still teaching oriented. I think that people would say that we are	This balance between teaching and research, teaching scholars for our faculty, engaging our students in our activities outside of the classroom. (1-1) We do our research; we are not just a teaching institution. 20 years ago teaching…was all that mattered. Now we are	It has evolved its mission considerably since then but still our commitment to the region, I think is really profound. (1-3) Our mission statement says that we are a vibrant center for artistic expression in the…county and surrounding region. So we state that and I don't know if other		I would call it an institution that believes in a transformational experience, so our students are encouraged to do things other than just go to class, so it's an activist campus – our students are engaged in all sorts of service activities in the region. (1-2) This balance between teaching

		dedicated to undergraduate education. (1-5)	recruiting people in and saying, "You need to do teaching and you need to do research and we need to fit." (1-1)	music units will do the same if they are in a larger area, do they have that feeling of responsibility? And I think we do, we are all connected pretty directly to what that means. (1-4)	and research, teaching scholars for our faculty, engaging our students in our activities outside of the classroom. (1-1)
Magnolia State University					
Stated Mission Statement	X	X	X	X	X
Institutional Leader Responses		The faculty member who does really well here is somebody who enjoys and finds it personally fulfilling to teach, but then also to become engaged with students over and beyond the classroom. (2-5)		So we were very conscious and intentional about trying to connect the mission statement to the region. (2-5)	I think what is unique is our history and mission…So basically this institution came into being to provide teachers to enable the children of former slaves to be able to

					make the best of their newly-found political freedom. (2-5) Like a lot of HBCUs it is geared towards giving people an option to go to college…I think there is a stronger mission of social justice. (2-1)	
University of the Oaks						
Stated Mission Statement		X	X	X	X	X
Institutional Leader Responses	We are a strong regional university. (4-2) Well first obviously it's one of the regional campuses that serves,	Are we primarily a teaching school? Yeah. And unashamedly so. (4-5)	When you're teaching that much, the research expectations are more modest here [than they would be at a land-grant, research institution]. (4-5)	This University in many ways just belongs to this region. (4-6) It is a place where the University can feel that it is making an impact	It [the mission statement]…also speaks to the unique history and heritage of [the institution] dating back to its Indian roots. (4-5)	

	specifically serves the community in this area. (4-2)			on local community and this is a region [that]…will benefit from that type of thing. (4-1)	My sense of it [the mission] is to serve the region -- that's most important -- and to preserve our cultural heritage -- this began as an Indian normal school. (4-2)	
University of the Palmettos						
Stated Mission Statement		X	X	X		X
Institutional Leader Responses	I think that as a master's level institution…the emphasis is on student success. (5-5) As a regional campus I think almost by definition we have to take very	Our mission statement certainly includes the teaching, research, community engagement pieces. (5-1) You can look at our mission statement you will find…prominent	Our mission statement certainly includes the teaching, research, community engagement pieces. (5-1) It is the kind of place where teaching and research are pretty	Our mission statement certainly includes the teaching, research, community engagement pieces. (5-1) [We] are very well connected; the University has a whole host of		I think because the faculty do it, one of the first things they'll mention [about the mission statement] will be especially undergraduate involvement in faculty scholarship. (5-5)

	seriously our responsibility to a local and regional set of stakeholders because…there is an expectation that they would do things that enhance quality of life certainly for the entire state but more particularly for the region that they serve directly. (5-2)	lines…about the integration of teaching in research. (5-2)	closely integrated and have to be for the working faculty and it is a place that in other words values both teaching and research. (5-7)	different engagements and activities both from the point of view of service as well as contracting relationships with corporations for students to do internships. (5-4)	
Poplar State University					
Stated Mission Statement		X	X	X	X
Institutional Leader Responses	I would say [we are] a quintessential regional university. (6-6) This institution is a regional comprehensive university. (6-7)	[We] talk about teaching being at the center of our enterprise, and that scholarship and service are important, not just internally, but to our region. (6-3)	Our mission is to improve individual lives and enhance economic and community development in our region, state and nation through engaged learning opportunities in	If you came here it would be an appreciation of our [regional] culture, our background, our diversity, and just that link with our expanded community. (6-3)	Our mission is to improve individual lives and enhance economic and community development in our region, state and nation through engaged

		If I heard once…I heard a hundred times – "I was intentional about coming to a regional comprehensive university, aside from the location, I wanted to be at a university where teaching was emphasized." (6-3)	our academic programs, education and outreach, research, and creative activities. (6-3)	Our mission is to improve individual lives and enhance economic and community development in our region, state and nation through engaged learning opportunities in our academic programs, education and outreach, research, and creative activities. (6-3)		learning opportunities in our academic programs, education and outreach, research, and creative activities. (6-3) We have finally, finally truly embraced our mission as an institution that values student learning and applied student learning and community relationships. (6-3)
Cypress State University						
Stated Mission Statement	X	X	X	X	X	X
Institutional Leader Responses	It is a historically black institution, it is part of the	I don't think our mission had changed and if you	I don't think our mission had changed and if you	I don't think our mission had changed and if you	A couple things that [we] remained true	Well so their slogan is…enter to learn, depart to

[state] system, it is mostly undergraduate. (7-2) The difference here is both it being a public school and an HBCU. (7-1)	really look at the core, I mean really the mission of…teaching, scholarship and service. (7-2) Historically we have been a teacher's college, our roots are in teacher education, and we've gone on to add other kinds of professional training. (7-1)	really look at the core, I mean really the mission of…teaching, scholarship and service. (7-2) I would say the teaching load is very high but we do get to do our research and we are going toward more of a research intensive university. (7-4)	really look at the core, I mean really the mission of…teaching, scholarship and service. (7-2)	to is our historical mission as a historically black college; so even as we usher in and embrace diversity we have a historical mission and continues to be our mission. (7-1) The focus on serving a group of students; our mission initially was to serve a group of students who didn't have any other options. That has changed now, [we are] serving a group of students who have all kinds	serve. And so that really hones in [on] what the mission is. (7-4) We want to be able to produce learners who can go out and make an impact in their professions and in their communities so we still have a focus…our motto is enter to learn, depart to serve. (7-1)

of options but understanding that because a lot of them still come from first generation families within that mission we've got to make sure that we're educating the whole student. (7-2)

APPENDIX E
Clustered Summary Table: Institutional History and Mission: Cultural Interpretations

Type of Concern/Item	Sites at Which Item Mentioned	Illustrations
<u>Commitment to the Community</u>		
Community is important stakeholder	Maple, Magnolia, Oaks, Palmettos, Poplar, Cypress [all]	[The community provides] support, I don't mean financial, I mean moral support. They are our strongest backers and so when something comes up and we need public or community support they are right there. (4-3) We have to find creative ways to make sure that all stakeholder groups, but especially the tribe, is included. (4-5) We are very close with [the community], so they have a vested interest. (6-6) It's not just the town but it's kind of the region that is supported by [Maple State University]…so I think that is a really strong contributing factor. (1-5) Obviously our students [are stakeholders], their families, and I think to some degree their communities. I mean the educating we do of our students impacts communities in ways it would not have at [another] institution. (7-5)
Relationship between community and	Oaks, Poplar [two most rural]	As a regional campus I think almost by definition we have to

institution impacts decision-making	take very seriously our responsibility to a local and regional set of stakeholders because…there is an expectation that they would do things that enhance quality of life certainly for the entire state but more particularly for the region that they serve directly. (5-2) They [the tribe] feel a real ownership, a protectiveness of the University. And that's good and bad, quite honestly. The support that they give this University is heartwarming. I mean, you see tears in their eyes, they graduated from the place…The flip side of it, because of that protectiveness of the University, they can sometimes be a little intrusive in the affairs of the University… but it's not an altogether bad thing. They care. (4-5) I mean you want to have strong connections with your community but also they have the expectations and 'hey that is not the way we do things here.' (4-1) I think the University is really trying to make an effort to really interact more with the community, reach out to the community, have the community be more involved in the University and the University functions and decision making. (6-1)

Physical Manifestations		
Campus landmarks	Magnolia, Oaks	If anybody is trying to take [the building] out of our persona, forget it! (4-6) Every faculty member has got the mission statement posted in their offices…I always think that you have the mission at the back of your mind always, that you want to offer quality education, I want to be at the service of the community and I want the faculty to produce quality research. So what will you do in order to see that every time that you make a decision you refer to your mission statement. (2-5) Every person who interviews for a position we give them one of these [written mission statement] just so they know if you are coming here this is going to be your guide. (2-2)
Historical figures	Oaks, Palmettos	As long as names aren't removed from buildings…[and] that we keep our main administrative building [name]. (4-6)
Symbols, artifacts (mascot, songs, colors)	Oaks, Palmettos	[Also the desire to keep the mascot name] was a community saying, no we want to hold on to this history, we want to hold on to this heritage and that was great example of partnership that we were able to move forward and retain that part of the identity. (4-6)
Institutional History		
HBCU/Minority-	Magnolia, Oaks, Cypress	It's [American Indian history] a

Serving Institution	[all minority-serving]	huge part of our identity and our history and it's really a huge part of who we are today. (4-5) To this day we provide opportunities for higher education to a number of individuals that might not be able to achieve that – populations that are underserved. (2-5) A couple things that [we] remained true to is our historical mission as a historically black college; so even as we usher in and embrace diversity we have a historical mission and continues to be our mission. (7-1)
Having been founded to serve the region is an important component of current identity	Maple, Magnolia, Oaks, Palmettos, Poplar, Cypress [all]	Where we are has a lot to do with who we are; this University was established…back in the late 19th century and I often tell people that it is not an accident that we are in [this region], they wanted to serve…people in [this region]. (1-3) We are an institution, not just in the [region] but of the [region]…And I think that is part of our identity, that despite some mechanics earlier about not always being as conversant with the communities as we need to be, I don't want to ignore that. But I do think that we have the unique role as the university that has at the very least a regional identity and reputation; but still our identity is tied up [in] where we are here…our [rural] setting. And we have this emerging reputation of

being one of the top programs for studying sustainability. (1-3)

Given our name, I think [Maple State University] is a terrific name, it says where we are and where we are from, but to a lot of people [the name and region] represents the 1930's depression and so there is an image that we must be really struggling. (1-4)

It's [the mission statement] all the things that you would expect of a regional – engagement, taking our expertise into these communities, having an obligation to the region as well to the students who are on our campus, and it also speaks to the unique history and heritage of [the institution] dating back to its Indian roots. (4-5)

We have for so long been ashamed I think of our roots and in [this part of the state] I think there's a perception, "What are they doing out there?"...So I think what makes us tick is a renewed sense of pride in our institution. We've done some great things over the last 10 years. (6-3)

The focus on serving a group of students; our mission initially was to serve a group of students who didn't have any other options. That has changed now, [we are] serving a group of students who have all kinds of options but understanding that because a lot of them still come from first generation families within that mission we've got to

		make sure that we're educating the whole student. (7-2) For many years it was the little red school house. It started as a community college and it evolved into a four year. And then slowly began to pick up masters and graduate-level programs. But there are enough people around here and the leadership, for example, the [former] Provost who's still on faculty here has been on faculty here for probably 38 years. And so they all remember the little red school house. (5-5)
<u>Institution as Family</u>		
Institution is defined by community and personal relationships	Maple, Magnolia, Oaks, Palmettos, Poplar, Cypress [all]	I think it [the thing that people hold on to] is community, I think it is feeling like this is a family; like that we care about each other. (4-4) We have this motto -- personal touch -- we really were able to have that very personal relationship. (4-4) I would say it is very friendly, friendly faculty, friendly students, sort of like our department I would describe -- and I have heard other people describe it -- sort of like a family. I mean it is very close knit, close knit group of people that we get along well, like each other, and it is just a very, it is a friendly place to be, friendly department. I think friendly place to be, friendly university. I think a lot of students like that as well. (6-1)

It is very much [a relational place]. And people just couldn't have been more welcoming and supportive of me. I find it a very collegial environment. (6-2)

When we help a student become successful and graduate from this University we not only transform that person's life, we have increased the life expectancy of their children and we have transformed their children's lives. (2-1)

Very close-knit kind of culture, friendly for all the people. (2-3)

I think one of the other reasons that you run into a different culture here, is that it's been a very relational campus. So, you need something done and you know so-and-so works in that office, she might not be the person who does that job, but she knows you so she gets that done. So we're missing a lot of policies, processes and procedures and there are these huge gaps. So new people coming in can't get things done very well because they don't know it. (1-2)

When I first got here…students didn't say they graduated in May, they would say "I have to leave in May." And I thought that was a pretty amazing type of conversation. (1-2)

I did the presentation for the strategic plan with the Board of Trustees, the Foundation Board,

		and the Alumni Council and when I said "What words come to mind when you think of [Maple State University]"…they said "family..." That was the first word that came out of their mouth. Family. (1-2) [What about the HBCU experience speaks to you?] I think it is a community. (7-4) …if there was a continuum of person ability-ness, people are perhaps a little more accessible here than you might expect more from a larger machine. (5-6) …people are generally and genuinely happy to be here and feel like this is a good place to be. (5-1)
Institutional members have a nurturing role in their relationship with students	Magnolia, Oaks, Cypress [all minority-serving institutions]	I made a very conscious decision…my wife and I…because here is where we feel like you really can make a difference in people's lives. (2-1) One of the things I would say to anyone about this institution is that there is a strong sense of family, in the sense of family is one that can provide a type of support that not only do students need in order to be successful but [also] that employees need…that will help them to do their job effectively. (2-2) Something that it has remained I think in terms of the cultural makeup of the campus has been a more family-oriented, more caring nurturing feel. (7-5)

		Here it is so much more, the relationships are so much closer, they are so much more caring so you the faculty that want to be here are here because they want to do some good for the student[s] and also because we have a small institution, relatively small class sizes, opportunities for a lot more personal interaction, not a lot of the pressures that you see at the bigger institution. (7-3) I think it [the thing that people hold on to] is community, I think it is feeling like this is a family like that we care about each other. (4-4)
<u>Insider vs. Outsider</u>		
Old vs. New guard: Different populations of faculty have differing expectations and understandings of the institution	Maple, Magnolia, Oaks, Palmettos, Poplar, Cypress [all]	It is really is a junior faculty, senior faculty split. (4-2) There were some pockets from the old generations when you talk to the young African-American faculty they see it differently. They talk about more open door kind of policy...that generation is almost retiring. (2-3) Yeah, I think right now we certainly do have pockets of faculty who are not supportive of anything that is going on…But as I say, I think the number of those individuals around is smaller, fewer than what it was five years ago, and will be fewer in five years. (2-5) So I think, it is clear when I talk to

my colleagues who have been here since the 70's, their experience when they were in a different building and some of them will say it was kind of nice because there was a smaller number of us and we all saw each other every day. There was even more of a family feeling than we have. (1-4)

I don't think is so much white and black faculty, I think it is old [and young faculty]. And because we have white faculty that have been here forever that have really invested in our students and making the institution successful. But again if you [come into] this model shaped by your experience with students in a certain period, and I suspect that is where a lot of HBCU's are at, that tension is everywhere. (7-2)

I think the whole HBCU aspect, I mean you have some faculty members that are just really, really adamant about that aspect of our mission and you know we are here to serve [the] African American population and that is where we should be, and when the administration talks about what we need to diversify, we need to recruit more Hispanics, we can reach out to other minorities but we need to get more bodies in here and there is a lot of statistics that are presented to us through the changing demographics of our student population but there are still folks that are extremely hard and fast about it [serving African

		American students] that is our tradition. (7-3) Folks will emphasize the pluses that in so many ways…this is a better quality, more capable, more effective institution now that it was then. On the other hand, people will talk about how it was nice in those days to know everybody in [sic] campus; we will never quite have that again; how you know sometimes there is this little bit of sadness when you walk into say a general faculty meeting where everyone is invited. You look around and you realize most of the people there you know personally, so many of them you couldn't even call their name if you had to. So you know there are losses involved with that evolution. (5-2) …the faculty who were hired in the early 2000's had been tenured and promoted and brought new energy to faculty governance. Then I think we have seen faculty governance take on [a] new life and the faculty begin [sic] to move forward on different things…So I think it is changing for reasons of demographic shifts of the faculty. (6-6)
Faculty and administration "from" the region and/or the institution	Maple, Poplar, Cypress	I was born in [a neighboring state]…I actually liked the people and I liked the mission, so it was a good place. (6-4) The interesting things about it [the "Maple State Family"] is that the point of tension about it is to say

when does someone become a member of that family and when does someone as a member of that family have the ability to make mistakes and be embraced by the community rather than rejected by the community? When are you a family member? We are not completely clear on that, we are family, you can't do it that way but wait a minute, I'm part of this family. (1-4)

We really did grow our own for quite a while…[the founders] maintained the control from 1899 until the mid 50' s, so that is why I say it was really paternalistic. It was really unique. They were in charge and then I guess they kind of handpicked the successor, chancellor, but the chancellors came from outside until [recently]. So they were all outside hires, on the other hand the rest of the administration was heavily homegrown. In fact our provost now was the first outside hire [in that position]. (1-1)

I think that combination of "You haven't been here long enough to know this, you've never experienced the faculty ranks at [Maple State University]" and you are excessively heavy handed and opinionated of these matters without paying adequate attention to what the current faculty believe; it led to some issues. (1-3)

I'm [from another region of the country], my friends were all

saying you go down there with that fast-talking…stuff, people will be looking at you like you're crazy. And they were absolutely right because one of the first pieces of pushback I got was people saying why do you have to move so fast? (7-1)

Here, everyone's from [the region] except senior administration. We're all from someplace else. And right now. And we're all from places that just did it differently. None of us are from HBCUs, [and] even though a lot of us went to HBCUs, none of us have worked in that tradition. (7-1)

I think there was [with the previous] chancellor…some divisiveness… I don't think it was ever a problem, but just that he is not from around here, he is not a people person and he doesn't fish and hunt, he doesn't play golf and that kind of stuff. While the current one as far as I know doesn't do any of those things that I mentioned there…he is a people person and he is from [the state]. And people don't talk about that too much because I don't think the former chancellor there were any conflicts really with the community, but often with talking got out into the community. But he would like to have seen a minimal on campus that kind of stuff and a lot of people spending because they want that. (6-6)

Location and Place

Geographic isolation enhances commitment to community	Maple, Oaks, Palmettos, Poplar [all the 'isolated' campuses]	Because of the nature of the work and the jobs that are available to people in the region, namely farming, manufacturing jobs that do not require any high level of education, I would say the expectation from the community to the University is really minimal verses the University actually has [a] much more important task of…raising the awareness of the importance of education of this community. So it's more of a one way education rather than mutual not to mention the other way around. (6-7) I think our new strategic plan for example makes a big deal of continuing this legacy of service to the region, serving as a conduit for positive change for economic development and the other things that [Poplar State University] really care[s] about. (6-6) It's not just the town but it's kind of the region that is supported by [Maple State University]…so I think that is a really strong contributing factor. (1-5) The University is undeniably an economic driver for this community and provider of a quality of life that comes with…the visual [and] performing arts, and then undeniably athletics. (1-5) There is nothing for two hours in any direction, certainly no real

		university. I think that with [University of the Palmettos] it is pretty essential. People know on some level what is going on around the University, people ask you about it in the community. I think there is a strong sense of connection partly again because there aren't a lot of other institutions. So I think people look to the University for some of the kinds of things; for cultural resources. (5-7)
Recreation opportunities contribute to quality of life	Maple, Palmettos, Poplar	I have colleagues who have come to this area for the music…I can name several people who came for that. We have people who come to this area because they are whitewater enthusiasts, because they are cyclists and people come here to hike, the more casual kinds of things as well as the more adventurous people. (6-4) I find a lot of faculty members that either have a strong commitment to the environment, or just are the kind of people that are drawn to an environment which provides them access to hiking and biking and canoeing and [a] very active kind of outdoor lifestyle. (6-2) It has evolved its mission considerably since then but still our commitment to the region, I think is really profound. And for our students I think the fact that we are here in [this area] in a beautiful…setting with all sorts of…recreation opportunities has all to do with their decision to come

		here. (1-3) You know I didn't come here to be unbalanced like I have lived most of my life. I came here to be a little more balanced, and I need to achieve that. (5-3)
Sense of place establishes strong sense of identity and belonging	Palmettos, Poplar	It is also about a sense of place and [Poplar State University] is distinctive in part…because of its rural isolation…it generates a sense of identity both among the faculty and among the students. A sense of belonging. (6-6) It seems like it fits together, this notion of security but being in a rural area; being very kind of tucked away and very self-contained and everything. (6-1) They [students] love [the town] and they love being here, they like [University of the Palmettos]. (5-7) It is [a coastal] university; it's influenced by the sand and sea and to the ocean and big ways. (5-6) One of the things that's interested me has been the dynamic that comes with our setting. So the coastal university comes with the coast. And so that's been…an interesting dynamic to me that we're a fine institution, I think for a place for where students come because they want to interact closely with faculty, but there's also a sense, I think, of the campus community and the greater community and what it can offer

students. (5-1)

APPENDIX F
Clustered Summary Table: Use of Mission in Institutional Decision Making

Type of Decision	Which Site Mentioned	Illustration
Academic College Development	Oaks	I think that the [creation of a new college] is our way of saying…we're never going to lose sight of what this school was here to do in the first place and why it started. And I think that's a good message to send. (4-5)
Academic Program Development	Maple, Poplar	All of the programs that we are looking at in some way are aligned with the mission. But I think more important is that sense of if they are going to go forward they need to align with the mission. (1-4)
Changes to Institutional Standards/Processes	Magnolia, Palmettos	It goes back to our sense of mission and our history and the students we serve; we felt a special obligation not to burden them with loan debt if they're not moving toward degree completion. (2-5)
Changes to General/Liberal Education	Maple, Cypress	The mission, I would say our vision to have a high quality educational experience…This balance between teaching and research, teaching scholars for our faculty, engaging our students in our activities outside of the classroom. Providing the best courses that we can to transform our students into viable citizens, so this development of Gen Ed was consistent with that vision. (1-1)

APPENDIX G
Clustered Summary Table: Mission Focus: System and Financial Context

Type of Concern/Item	Sites at Which Item Mentioned	Illustrations
<u>Financial Context</u>		
Lack of resources provides institutional focus	Maple, Magnolia, Palmettos, Poplar, Cypress	[Difficult fiscal climate forces people to support institutional priorities]…people look more consciously at the mission. (6-7) At least we have shown everybody that we don't have any money and I think there is a benefit to that. (6-6) My sense – more than a sense, it's pretty much a conviction, [is] that the budget crisis creates an awareness that helps give leverage to some of these efforts…[T]here's much greater awareness…I think that the budget climate has created an environment in which people are much more receptive to some of the changes we made. (2-5) We have an internal informal level of doing more with less…and we heard there was a history of provost[s] and chancellors who saw a great value in announcing to the community the number of dollars they gave back to the system at the end of the budget cycle…That sense of we didn't need it and we still created this fine university, we did that long enough and if that is really true, and this is just the folk wisdom on campus, and if that is really true you start to generate an expectation from leadership…that you don't need as much and you can do just as fine; in fact we do. (1-4)

		I think being under financial crisis helped us. Because one of the things we continue to argue, we continue to argue to this day, a part of operating strategically is that you have to really make sure that when resources are scarce that you're allocating your dollars to the highest priorities. (7-1) We can't do everything that we are expected to do. We have never been able to, we don't have the resources...but in a way that is freeing because you do what you can do and everything you do is useful. (5-7)
Lack of resources impacts institutional culture	Maple, Magnolia, Poplar	I think one of the biggest challenges I've seen here is how the budget cuts threaten the culture. You know, budget cuts are hard anyplace, but it's been really interesting to me that [people]…don't like the fact that they haven't gotten raises…and that they've had cutbacks in travel…but what they talk about the most is increased class sizes. One of the things we've had to do without adding faculty positions with growth is…to increase class sizes, in some cases increase teaching loads. And that has struck at the very heart of our identity. (6-2) Probably it is more vigilant what we do now because of the budget situation. It might have affected making a decision if you are not financially constrained, so you may probably...yeah it definitely affects the way that you make decisions…you see these financial constrains in the horizon and it affects your vision. You always wanted to see as deep as possible in the horizon but again you have to pass...this is not definitely healthy. So you can't do this one, you

		can't do that one, so this just narrows the vision. (2-3) I think it [financial pressures] sort of increasingly created an environment where the tensions between faculty and administration were exacerbated overall. (1-3)
<u>Within-System Context</u>		
Challenges to mission differentiation/Diversity of institutions	Magnolia, Oaks, Palmettos, Poplar, Cypress	Because you have an incredible range of minority-serving institutions, more rural institutions like ours, different sizes, different missions…and one size really doesn't fit all…And trying to make everything so consistent sometimes I think doesn't allow each campus the flexibility to serve its mission and its students in the best way they can. (6-2) You need to build that different standard because of the population that we are serving. Not that we are serving the minority population but we are serving an adult population and we reserving a military population. (2-1) I think right now we're different than a lot of the schools in the system. (7-1) I think there is a sense that we are a bit of a red headed step child in the system. (5-7)
Disconnect between system administration and campuses	Oaks, Palmettos, Poplar, Cypress	I do think there is a gap between the expectations of [the system administration] and then the individual universities. (6-3) It can be challenging in that you have [many] campuses, they're all diverse, they all have different missions, yet there's some sense within the system and

within the state that there needs to be some high level of commonality among us. And achieving that is almost impossible given the diversity of our missions. Yet we are pushed to think about it. So it calls for an interesting set of dynamics. (7-1)

I think institutionally our administration is in a different place and I think too the faculty here are maybe more flexible. But also maybe feel a bit more vulnerable and maybe a little less empowered relative to the system as a whole. (5-7)

APPENDIX H
Clustered Summary Table: Institutional Mission and Decision Making

Type of Concern/Item	Sites at Which Item Mentioned	Illustrations
<u>Leadership</u>		
Excessive longevity and/or frequent turnover of institutional leaders contributes to tension in administrative and faculty relationship	Maple, Magnolia, Oaks, Palmettos, Poplar, Cypress [all]	Our history has been we have got really good people in positions and at least at the top levels of leadership, that has some great benefits and some negatives sides too, as well. That has changed, in my opinion, pretty dramatically in the last five years. The speed of change, the speed of turnover and positions, [this] is our third provost, our interim provost in four and one-half years, dean of arts and sciences turned over four or five times in the seven year period, so we have sort of joined [the] modern world and now we are growing. But it is not to say that there aren't elements of that that remain. (1-3) It is hard to differentiate what happens based on who is in charge, what personality is there and so on. Actually, I have gone through three chancellors and five provosts since I have been have been a dean. Actually there are four provosts. And we have had a lot of different chancellors. And so that creates different atmosphere. (2-1) Fairly new provost over here…a fairly new dean…we have had a lot of turnover which I think is largely just accidental but it probably looks a little suspicious to people…We've got a new sheriff in town and they are trying to change things up and people often are not comfortable to change, and as I said we have a lot of

	people who have been here for a long time. (4-1) There is just a lot of uncertainty, and…you got the change of leadership at the chancellor's level, provost level, new dean…and now we got a new governor…Everybody['s] all concerned. (5-3) They [administrators] change more often than socks. (5-6) It [relationship between faculty and administration] was one of no trust, a climate of fear…And frankly it created a climate, almost a generational climate among the faculty in that our chancellor, our previous chancellor was here for 16 years so he was the only chancellor the majority of our faculty has ever known. (6-6) During my time here we have had three chancellors, probably three provosts [in eight years]. Yeah and each one has really changed…the spirit of the school…it changed with the administration. It doesn't stay the same. (7-4)

APPENDIX I
Clustered Summary Table: Institutional Mission and Changing Priorities

Type of Concern/Item	Sites at Which Item Mentioned	Illustrations
<u>Changing Institutional Priorities</u>		
Growth of student body population and emphasis on research result in tension and differing expectations	Maple, Magnolia, Oaks, Palmettos, Poplar, Cypress [all]	Many of them [older faculty] have transitioned with the University from when we were…[a] state teacher's college…and I know many of them who transitioned with the University to where we are now. We consider ourselves a balanced teaching with research expectations in this institution…So there is [sic] a bunch of the folks that are still here from years gone by that have done that and then there is [sic] a smaller number who resist. They are still here, they are tenured faculty members and they just want it to be the way it was. (1-1) I've heard that there is some unease among some faculty about some change but I don't see that…it is clear when I talk to my colleagues who have been here since the 70's…and some of them will say it was kind of nice because there was a smaller number of us and we all saw each other every day. There was even more of a family feeling than we have. (1-4) If it's something we really want to do, maybe the institution needs to grow its mission and it's not an

impossibility. But at the same time, you have to think are we truly equipped to be effective and to have quality if we grow for everything that looks good? (2-2)

We have grown so much, we have a lot of new faculty, and that alone probably looks very different to the people who have been here for a while…And so people who have been here since the 70's or even 80's are used to a certain kind of institution that I think probably didn't grow that much and now you are seeing this huge influx of people;…it does result I think in something of a little bit of a divide. (4-1)

I think at this point we are down to really kind of a handful of faculty members who came here and were tenured as assistant professors during a time when there was really was not a research expectation. And they are still assistant professors [and] to this day they are not research active. Many of them teach four courses a semester because they are not involved in the research agenda…And certainly if you talk to each one of them individually I am very sure that you will pick out [a] sense among some of them that…they feel kind of disfranchised that the world has changed in a lot of ways that they had no control over; that they feel like the priority of the place are really not anything that includes them in the same way that it used

	to…But it has been a while; it's not as if the nature of faculty world…changed five years ago;…it has been a long transition. (5-2)
	A lot of faculty really don't want things to change…And so as the campus grows, your culture changes and folks who have been here a long time, and by and large people come and they stay, we don't have a lot of attrition of our faculty or students per se, but they don't want it to change. (6-3)
	We have a big cultural shift that is taking place and I think that it is meeting a lot of resistance for good reason; and that is shifting from a cultural way where teaching was a primary task, a primary mission, to moving more towards the…scholarship model where faculty members are really held accountable for a significant amount of scholarship. (7-3)

APPENDIX J
Institutional Review Board Approval

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Twin Cities Campus *Human Research Protection Program*

Office of the Vice President for Research
D528 Mayo Memorial Building
420 Delaware Street S.E.
MMC820
Minneapolis, MN 55455
Office: 612-626-565-J
Fax: 612-626-6061
E-mail: irb@umn.edu or ibc@umn.edu
Website: http://research.umn.edu/subjects

07/09/2012

Leslie R Zenk
Sr VP for Acad Affairs
MorH
100 Church St SE
Minneapolis, MN 55455

RE: "Institutional Decision Making and the Mission of the University"
IRB Code Number: **1206P15521**

Dear Leslie Zenk:

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) received your response to its stipulations. Since this information satisfies the federal criteria for approval at 45CFR46.111 and the requirements set by the IRB, final approval for the project is noted in our files. Upon receipt of this letter, you may begin your research.

IRB approval of this study includes the consent form received July 9, 2012.

The IRB would like to stress that subjects who go through the consent process are considered enrolled participants and are counted toward the total number of subjects, even if they have no further participation in the study. Please keep this in mind when calculating the number of subjects you request. This study is currently approved for 80 subjects. If you desire an increase in the number of approved subjects, you will need to make a formal request to the IRB.

For your records and for grant certification purposes, the approval date for the referenced project is June 15, 2012 and the Assurance of Compliance number is FWA00000312 (Fairview Health Systems Research FWA00000325, Gillette Children's Specialty Healthcare FWA00004003). Research projects are subject to continuing review and renewal; approval will expire one year from that date. You will receive a report form two months before the expiration date. If you would like us to send certification of approval to a funding agency, please tell us the name and address of your contact person at the agency.

As Principal Investigator of this project, you are required by federal regulations to inform IRB of any proposed changes in your research that will affect human subjects. Changes should not be initiated until written IRB approval is received. Unanticipated problems or serious unexpected adverse events should be reported to the IRB as they occur.

The IRB wishes you success with this research. If you have questions, please call the IRB office at 612-626-5654.

Sincerely,

Christina Dobrovolny
CIP Research
Compliance Supervisor
CD/ks

CC: Karen Seashore