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Introduction

Traditionally, institutions of higher education were built to withstand sudden change and to "support an enduring mission" (Kezar, 2018), making second-order or deep change difficult. A Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) can serve as a driver for meaningful cultural change that affects university faculty and, ultimately, students. As the student body increasingly diversifies, universities must respond to changing demographics and support growth in diversity of faculty. Attracting, retaining, and promoting faculty of color is a well-documented challenge in higher education (Bonilla-Silva, 2015; Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017; Zambrana, 2018). Additionally, resources must be available to assist all faculty in gaining expertise in culturally responsive teaching. Many aspects of practice that can facilitate a more equitable landscape are within the realm of influence of teaching and learning centers.

Watson (2018) suggests that CTLs should be seen as advocates, central to the ways the institution functions, connected to the university's mission, and the home of initiatives that foster innovation. Because CTL directors move through both micro- (individual faculty) and macro- (institutional-level) contexts, they may utilize bottom-up strategies, while also strategically exerting broader influence characterized by positions of leadership authority (Grupp & Little, 2019; Kezar, 2018). Grupp and Little (2019) describe this unique position as a lever for change, "at times, educational developers function as the lever who must find the right fulcrum, and at times serve as a fulcrum...by facilitating change through influence or collaboration rather than leading it from the front" (para 5).

Adams State University (ASU) engaged in a deliberative change campaign, using a framework of equity-mindedness (Malcom-Piqueux & Bensimon, 2017), aimed at supporting diverse faculty and efforts to ensure our faculty reflects the diversity of our students, in particular due to our federal designation as a Hispanic-serving Institution (HSI). Additional emphasis was placed on supporting White faculty in becoming better allies and advocates for faculty of color and to become better equipped to meet the needs of a diverse student body. Adams State is a small, rural, regional state university with a diverse student population in the most impoverished area of Colorado. In Fall 2019, the undergraduate student population identified as 37% Latinx, 8% African American, 31%

first generation college students, and 46% Pell grant eligible. In light of the national trend of the student population steadily diversifying while the academy remains largely White (National Center for Education Statistics, 2018), it is critical to address ways to promote equity-minded principles and practices in higher education settings, Minority-serving or not.

Malcom-Piqueux and Bensimon (2017) argue that systemic barriers can be met with adopting an equity-minded approach to our practice. In this article we describe efforts to effect cultural change at many levels of the faculty life cycle to support diversity and inclusion efforts and cultivate a coalition of equity-minded practitioners drawing on principles from Adrianna Kezar's work on institutional change. We describe the principles of equity-mindedness, the process of leading change efforts on campus, and integrating equitable practice into the faculty development cycle including: 1) hiring, 2) orientation, 3) yearly programming, and 4) evaluation.

Theoretical Grounding

Equity-Mindedness. Inequality is a feature of higher education and Malcom-Piqueux and Bensimon (2017) suggest that institutions of higher education should examine policies and practices that contribute to inequitable outcomes. Developing an equity mindset is an active, asset-based process which infuses equity and inclusion into all aspects of the academy, including classroom pedagogy, campus policies and procedures, and faculty development. Equity-minded leaders and practitioners call attention to and take responsibility for institutional barriers to equity (USC Center for Urban Education, n.d.). Rather than viewing inequitable outcomes for African American, Latinx, Native American, Pacific Islander, Southeast Asian, first-generation, and low-income students as an "unfortunate, but unavoidable phenomenon" we instead actively seek to understand the root of equity gaps and the necessary actions to rectify them (Malcom-Piqueux & Bensimon, 2017, p. 6).

Although the primary focus of the five principles of equity-mindedness (Malcom-Piqueux & Bensimon, 2017) is on student outcomes, these principles are relevant for academic administrators leading campus-wide change and for a comprehensive approach to faculty development. The five principles include: 1) race consciousness in a positive sense, 2) a focus on the systemic nature of inequity, 3) understanding that inequity is rooted in practice and institutions can effect change, 4) using best practice as an avenue to equity, and 5) recognizing that equity requires action (Malcom-Piqueux & Bensimon, 2017). Moreover, this has been formalized into a process via the Center for Urban Education through the Equity Scorecard™ (USC Center for Urban Education, n.d.). While Adams State did not complete the Equity Scorecard™, we have made intentional efforts to infuse equity-mindedness into our faculty development practices. These efforts may benefit historically-marginalized faculty, as well as ultimately diminishing achievement gaps for African American, Latinx, Native American, Pacific Islander, Southeast Asian, first-generation, and low-income students.

In addition to equity-minded principles, we have drawn from the work of HSI scholar Gina Garcia, who writes prolifically on the duty of HSIs to examine systemic bias at all levels of the institution. Her work on decolonizing higher education provides an alternative narrative about what it means for an organization to be Hispanic-serving and challenges the White normative structures in place in institutions of higher education (Garcia, Núñez, & Sansone, 2019; Garcia, 2018; Garcia & Natividad, 2018). She emphasizes key areas to examine which include: inequitable outcomes and experiences

for Latinx students and faculty, the mission and purpose of the university, governance, membership, and incentive structures (with regard to promotion and tenure).

Organizational Change Theory. In order to integrate equity-mindedness into the faculty development cycle, deep cultural change needs to occur. Kezar (2018) summarizes cultural change as an "alteration of values, beliefs, myths, and rituals" that involves a collective reexamination of identities and understandings (known as *sensemaking*, p. 57). Faculty development, typically led by CTLs, is a critical lever for sensemaking because these opportunities bring people across campus together to gain new knowledge. Sensemaking is especially critical to incorporating equity-mindedness in institutional practices as it forces people to re-evaluate old ways of doing things and requires an awareness of biases and barriers.

Organizational change theorists point out that collective leadership teams are more effective at creating change as opposed to top-down approaches (Bensimon & Neumann, 1993; Kezar, 2011). *Shared leadership* (Pearce & Conger, 2003) is a specific type of collective leadership that includes membership across a broad spectrum of campus - from students to upper administration. Using both a top-down and bottom-up approach is most effective because it has a broader impact across campus, increases buy-in, and has power to enact campus-wide change. As CTL directors have access to all levels of individuals in an institution, they are well positioned to help facilitate shared leadership. Kezar (2018) summarizes shared leadership strategies for change leaders in creating second-order change, many of which were employed by the change agents at Adams State. These include: professional development, the importance of timing, garnering resources, creating coalitions, securing membership on key committees, hiring like-minded people, and relating change to the educational mission of the institution.

The ultimate goal of change efforts is institutionalization. Theories describing institutionalizing change point to a similar three stage process: mobilization (preparing for change), implementation (introducing change), followed by institutionalization (change is now part of the way of doing business) (Curry, 1991). Using ASU as a model, we share our efforts to engage in these changes processes with the goal of integrating equity-minded principles into the university's culture writ large.

Creating Coalition to Mobilize Change. Kezar (2018) stresses the importance of collective sensemaking as a starting place for deep cultural change in institutions of higher education. We embarked on the process of change by focusing Title V grant-funded faculty development efforts around the work done by the National Coalition of Equity in Education, such as the Principles of Equity (Weissglass, 1997), and using the common communication of constructivist listening (Weissglass, 1990). The hallmark of using these constructivist communication structures is that they facilitate both the cognitive and affective processing necessary to work through bias, discrimination, and oppression so that meaningful change is possible. These structures give people space to make sense of and talk about their own experiences without being interrupted or challenged.

In addition to sensemaking and the re-evaluation of prior knowledge, having a common communication structure and building a critical mass of adopters for an innovation is critical (Rogers, 2003). This was done, over the course of 20 years, by offering summer faculty development retreats (and, later, an equivalent on-line equity course) designed to build awareness

of personal and institutional biases with the goal of transformational educational and policy change, consistent with Malcom-Piqueux and Bensimon (2017). As the percentage of faculty and staff who had participated increased, interest in exploring privilege, power, and equity issues grew. By the fall of 2017, a full 30% of university employees had attended a retreat.

After 10 years of these equity retreats, a grassroots faculty development initiative began to form spearheaded by a coalition of faculty and staff, in particular those individuals dedicated to equity-mindedness. A Faculty Development Committee (FDC) was formed by volunteers. Several years later, a Faculty Development Fellow was established to demonstrate increased institutional commitment to this work. A Title V grant (2015-2020) included an institutionalized CTL Director position and stipulated that the Center for Teaching, Innovation, and Research (CTIR) be created as a grant deliverable. A parallel process occurred for an Equity Advocates group (Community for Inclusion, Equity, and Leadership Opportunities, CIELO), with an analogous director. As many members were the same, these two committees worked closely with each other to help move along the innovations on campus.

Though we do not suggest it should take a 20-year process to build capacity for the integration of equity practices across the faculty development cycle, we cannot overstate the importance of foundational work and building a common framework and language. As Kezar (2018) states, the timing of initiation of change is critical. Taking the progressive approach of the infusion of equity practices, however, can be met with resistance and denial. Ultimately, having shared learning experiences and a common language facilitated change efforts.

Implementing Equity-Mindedness Across the Faculty Development Cycle

Hiring Practices. Malcom-Piqueux and Bensimon's (2017) second principle of equity-mindedness suggests institutions should "reflect an awareness of and responsiveness to the systemic nature of racial/ethnic inequities" (p.7). It is well-documented in the faculty hiring literature that racially minoritized faculty experience systemic barriers to entrance in the academy (Bonilla-Silva, 2015) and the hiring process in particular tends to reproduce Whiteness (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017). For example, minoritized faculty are routinely on the receiving end of cognitive errors, undertrained hiring committee members, and bias (see Moody, 2012 for a review).

Thus, a critical step essential to institutional change with an equity-minded lens is to review and address hiring practice. As an HSI, we are especially concerned by the misalignment of faculty and student demographics. Even though our faculty is slowly becoming more diverse - from 84% that identity as White in 2015 to 78% White in 2019, this is not keeping pace with our students. In 2019, only 39% of undergraduate students identified as White. Also concerning is clear evidence that our applicants are more diverse than our hires. Some gains have been made in attracting more Latinx applicants even though White applicant percentages remained the same. The average make-up of tenure track applicants for 2018/2019 was 63% White, 14% Asian, 14% Latinx, 6% African American, and 2% Native American. Comparatively, the five year 2012-2017 average for applicants was 64% White, 25% Asian, 5% Latinx, and 5% African American. New hires remain largely White as can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1
Ethnicity/Race of New Faculty Hires at Adams State University

	2010/2011	2012/2013	2014/2015	2016/2017	2018/2019
White	9	19	25	33	35
Hispanic	1	4	4	7	3
Asian/PI	1	0	1	0	4
Non-resident	0	1	2	0	2
Black	0	0	1	0	1
% White	82	79	76	83	78

Beginning in 2014, a committee, including FDC members and the CTIR director, has been focusing on increasing the number of diverse applicants and hires by utilizing outside consultants and researching best practices from other institutions. Smith, Turner, Osei-Kofi, and Richards (2004) found that among 689 searches examined, hiring African American, Latinx, Native American, Pacific Islander, or Southeast Asian faculty is more likely when adjustments are made to job descriptions and/or the search process is augmented by an institutional intervention aimed at increasing diversity. With this in mind, thirty faculty underwent extensive training in hiring processes. Two of these trained to be trainers and developed implicit bias training for the rest of the search committee members. This has since been institutionalized in the form of prepackaged implicit bias and diversity online training through EVERFI's (online training platform) harassment and inclusion package. By 2020, 64 faculty and staff have completed this yearly training and are willing to serve as diversity advocates. Adam State's Office of Equal Opportunity now applies the practice that every search committee have a trained diversity advocate to look out for group processes that may perpetuate bias or allow committee members to fall victim to cognitive errors like raising the bar, psychoanalyzing, self-fulfilling prophecies, and "good fit/bad fit" (reviewed in Moody, 2012).

Job advertisements, search rubrics, and interview questions have been changed to reflect best practices in increasing faculty diversity and have been made available to search chairs through the Office of Equal Opportunity. Many of the changes reflect a conscious effort to shift away from deficit language. For example, instead of using the traditional wording of "women and minorities are encouraged to apply", advertisements have been changed to state:

> The university is dedicated to fostering inclusive excellence, the recognition that the university's success depends on valuing, engaging, and including the rich diversity of students, staff, faculty, and administrators. Given the university's mission and student body composition, the department is actively seeking qualified applicants who have experiences, skills, and/or personal attributes that reflect perspectives that can further broaden ASU students' educational experience. We will give preference to qualified applicants with experience in ethnically diverse settings, who possess varied language skills, who have a record of research that supports diverse

communities, or a record of teaching a student population that included historically underrepresented groups and other at-risk populations.

Mirroring advertisement wording, additional criteria have been added to the faculty candidate rubrics, which may vary slightly by specific departments. Some examples of these are: “Evidence of valuing equity, treating cultural and linguistic diversity as assets, and promoting inclusiveness”, “Varied language skills”, and “Evidence of commitment to the University’s mission of inclusion and equity such as mentoring, pedagogy, activism, recruitment, research on issues related to diversity; evidence of valuing equity, treating cultural diversity as assets”.

Because a comprehensive approach to equity-mindedness demands institutionalization, we have made efforts to integrate these commitments into documents including the academic master plan. For example, one of the goals in the institution’s academic master plan includes increasing the number of trained diversity advocates and requiring them on each search committee, continuing to seek out best practices for hiring, and requiring implicit bias training for all search committee members. Even though there has not yet been an increase in the diversity of faculty, this has increased the potential of hiring like-minded people, one of the strategies that Kezar (2018) lists as moving along change.

New Faculty Orientation. While conscientious hiring practices may diversify faculty, or at least attract equity-minded practitioners, a commitment to equity-mindedness should not end with the hiring process. Ongoing support through New Faculty Orientation (NFO) and beyond, is critical, as noted by Delgado-Romero, Manlove, Manlove, and Hernadez (2007), “the entire methodology and philosophy of the schools must change to serve populations of students and faculty that have not previously had access to academia” (p. 46).

NFO is a frequently missed opportunity to immerse incoming faculty into the campus culture, instill campus values, facilitate new faculty success, and introduce change agendas. According to Scott, Lemus, Knotts, and Oh (2016), NFO can be a valuable tool for welcoming faculty into the university culture, noting the importance of “shift[ing] the focus from simply delivering information to facilitating an experience” (p. 20). All institutions, but in particular, Minority-and Hispanic-serving institutions have an obligation to embed equity-minded competencies into the orientation experience.

With this obligation in mind, we set about intentionally creating a community of educators. We have made significant changes to how we welcome new faculty and introduce them to the institutional culture and best practices of teaching. To that end, we have integrated equity-based communication tools into the NFO experience in addition to communicating our values as an institution. Specifically, each year we include sessions on the topics “What it means to be an HSI” and “How culture matters in learning and teaching”.

From 2013 – 2019, 72 tenure-track and visiting faculty participated in the redesigned NFO experience. Seven years of NFO evaluation data has informed the evolution of the experience over time with regard to the content as well as the delivery. Faculty have consistently indicated, with average scores in excess of four (on a scale of 1(low)-5(high)), that we have been meeting the core goals of NFO (shown in Table 2). Moreover, explicit programming about the demographics of the

student body and orientation to equity-based communication structures which have been included since the redesign, have yielded similarly positive ratings.

Table 2
New Faculty Orientation Quantitative Evaluation Data

Four goals of NFO	**2019 (n = 11)**	**2018 (n=16)**	**2017 (n=15)**	**2016 (n=12)**
NFO helped me to feel welcome:	4.9	4.6	4.6	5
NFO helped me make new connections:	4.8	4.5	4.6	4.8
NFO helped prepare me for the first day of school:	4.3	4.4	4.3	4.4
NFO provided me with a foundation for my work at Adams State University:	4.8	4.5	4.7	4.7
Equity-focused sessions			**Average Evaluation Ratings: 1-Low, 5-High**	
2019, This is us: Welcome to Colorado's first Hispanic-Serving Institution			4.7	
2018, This is us: Welcome to Colorado's first HIS.			4.6	
2017, What does it mean to teach at an HSI?			4.5	
2016, What does it mean to teach at an HSI?			4.7	
2015, CIELO/Working at an HSI			4.3	
2014, CIELO Inclusive Excellence Workshop			4.2	
2013, CIELO Communication Workshop			3.8	

Note. CIELO stands for Community of Inclusion, Equity and Leadership Opportunities, the Equity Advocates Group

Qualitative feedback in the form of responses to open-ended evaluation comments (see Table 3 for a sample) suggests that faculty participants are able to make meaningful connections between the constructivist listening approach and recommendations for classroom practice, including the integration of active learning techniques. The orientation is a two-day event, held the week before classes begin. Though it can be an intense experience, evaluation data suggest that it is a valuable one. Beyond orientation, yearly programming is meant to build upon the foundation provided in these crucial early days.

Table 3

New Faculty Orientation Selected Qualitative Feedback, 2013-2019

"…a very important statement about ASU's values regarding classroom instruction and community."
"I didn't know much about HSIs so that was important to know"
"What I took away from today: ASU is an HSI; think about how to adjust courses and student/faculty interactions accordingly; We want the faculty to value diversity, integrity, and equity."
"I am grateful to understand where [our] learners are coming from and how to help them in the classroom."
"The best thing about these workshops is the presenters 'practice what they preach.'"
"I'm convinced that forming connections is a crucial part of student and teacher success, and these active learning techniques provide opportunities for participants to make those connections."
"I enjoyed the energy of all the facilitators – I came away from this feeling more connected and enthusiastic about being ASU faculty!"
"I have been to several faculty orientations at a number of institutions and this was the best I have ever attended. It is a really hard balance to provide something that is "enough" vs. too much or too little. I enjoyed the interactive aspect of the two-day experience and there was a lot of good information."

Academic Year Faculty Development Programming. Ongoing academic year faculty development programming is a common model utilized by CTLs which may or may not support equity-mindedness and collective sensemaking. Because Kezar (2018) notes professional development as a critical driver of change, a CTL's academic year programming can be an important contributor to collective sensemaking and the promotion of equity-mindedness. These programs and workshops provide the opportunity for continuing education on best practice to all faculty, another of the principles of equity-mindedness identified by Malcom-Piqueux and Bensimon (2017). Beyond orientation and equity retreats, we have offered workshops, luncheons and other programming, as an avenue of continued support for critical self-evaluation. Additionally, academic year faculty development assists in the goal of historically marginalized faculty's successful transition into the academy as there is evidence that first year faculty of color benefit from ongoing formal and informal supports (Cole, McGowan, & Zerquera, 2017).

Using evidence to guide practice is consistent with academics' way of being, except, at times, with regard to teaching and classroom practice. While graduate teaching assistant training experiences are becoming more common, many professors remain experts in their discipline rather than both content *and* practice experts. Both new and seasoned instructors may default to a reliance on their own educational experiences as a model for their classrooms rather than guidance from research-

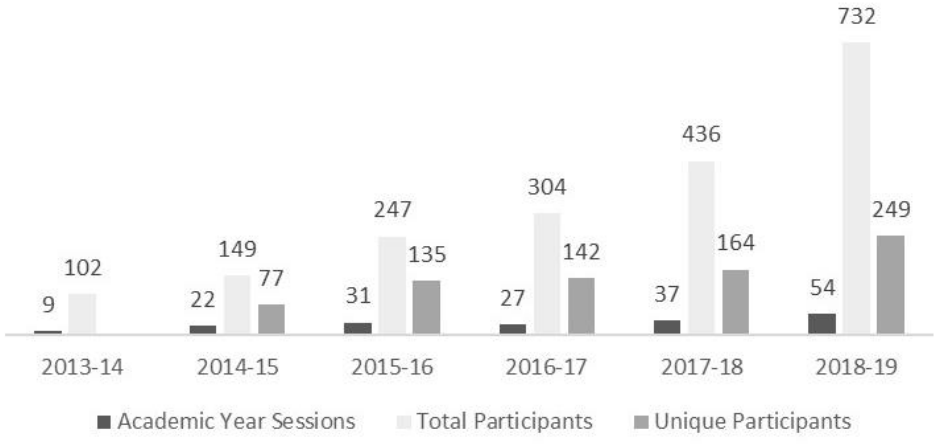
informed pedagogical practices. Moreover, faculty from the dominant culture bring unconscious cultural norms to the classroom context, including their interpretations of epistemology, the role of the teacher, and student success (see Chavez & Longerbeam, 2016 for a review). A comprehensive faculty development program provides support and education for engaging in research-informed practices, including a recognition of inequitable practices within the classroom.

Prior to the convening of the FDC, in-house options for refining teaching practice were scant. Growth in offerings and attendance since the creation of CTIR are shown in Figure 1. The FDC has endeavored to maintain this commitment to equity-mindedness through collaboration with the Equity Advocates to infuse equity practices into faculty development. Drawing from resources including Weimer's (2013) *Learner-Centered Teaching*, *McKeachie's Teaching Tips* (Svininki & McKeachie, 2014), Chavez and Longerbeam's (2016) *Teaching Across Cultural Strengths*, Schwartz and Gurung's (2012) *Evidence-based Teaching for Higher Education*, among others, we have developed programming to address both best practice and equity-mindedness principles. Currently, the FDC works with campus-wide constituents to provide both "nuts and bolts" (i.e. preparing an evaluation dossier, familiarization with Google applications) and programming specific to teaching and learning, with a focus on diverse learners.

To maintain the momentum for change catalyzed by the Title V-funded equity retreats, academic year programming includes a highly attended "Kindred Spirits" luncheon series that encourages continued self-examination of difference, bias, and privilege/oppression. From 2012 to 2019, eighty-seven luncheons were hosted by CTIR with attendance reaching 156 unique participants (approximately 45% of faculty and staff) in the 2018/2019 academic year.

Academic year mentoring programming has also increased, encouraging faculty and staff participants to consider equity issues related to both classroom practice and faculty roles and expectations (for example, service demands for women as compared to men; imposter phenomenon). Adam State's mentoring program is an area we are committed to growing, in part, due to the critical role mentoring plays in the retention of diverse faculty (Edwards, Beverly, & Alexander-Snow, 2011; Diggs, Garrison-Wade, Estrada, & Galindo, 2009).

Figure 1
Faculty Development Attendance Data from 2013-2019



Evaluation. In order to address the systemic nature of inequity, equity-minded practitioners must also interrogate the university's incentive structures (Garcia, 2018), part of which are evaluation practices. The final area of the faculty development cycle, evaluation, is rife with inequity. Thus, we have made a concerted effort to embed equity-minded values into faculty evaluation processes. As educators, we recognize that assessments need to align with what we are teaching. In the same vein, in order to institutionalize the values of equity-mindedness across the academic disciplines, they need to be reflected in the faculty evaluation process. If it is not stated in the institution's evaluation processes, it is not truly valued. Having these factors included supports the work of faculty who draw from experience and knowledge in equity and inclusion.

In addition to embedding equity values into evaluations, we are striving to address systemic inequities inherent in the evaluation process itself that foster bias and affect the pipeline of minoritized faculty. Consistent with Malcom-Piqueux and Bensimon's (2017) recommendations, this is critical for addressing a systemic problem that affects historically marginalized faculty. It is well documented in the literature that systemic institutional sexism and racism is widespread in the evaluation of faculty. Student evaluations of teaching generally favor males and disadvantage women (Boring, Ottoboni, & Stark, MacNell, 2016; MacNell, Driscoll, & Hunt, 2015; Mitchell & Martin, 2018) and minoritized faculty (Huston, 2006; Lazos, 2016).

There are other metrics of success in the academy, beyond student evaluations, that are subject to bias. With regard to scholarly productivity, males are far more likely to be in first or last author positions with reviewers overwhelmingly preferring male-sounding names (West, Jacquet, King, Correll, & Bergstrom, 2013). When considering service, women more often bear the load of committee work (what is referred to as institutional house-keeping) and mentoring of students, with minoritized faculty expected to represent, mentor, and advise minoritized students (Gasser & Shaffer, 2014; Turner, Gonzalez, & Lau, 2011). Biased student evaluations of teaching, publication bias, and inequitable teaching and service loads all contribute to what has been dubbed the "leaky pipeline" (Blickenstaff, 2005; Gasser & Shaffer, 2014; González Ramos, Navarette Cortés, & Cabrera Moreno, 2015).

Systemic problems, as Malcom-Piqueux and Bensimon (2017) suggest, require systemic solutions. As such, we have undertaken a re-examination of the evaluation, retention, and promotion practices in order to reduce bias against historically marginalized faculty. The evaluation process for faculty has been carefully examined by members from the FDC, the Equity Advocates group, and the National Science Foundation (NSF) ADVANCE grant steering committee. As a result, a Faculty Senate sub-committee has been revising the faculty handbook to include equity principles, in particular, to address the evaluation of faculty performance. They have proposed wording to the faculty evaluations (see Table 4) that fall under four general topics: 1) Addition of language related to diversity and equity-mindedness; 2) Removal of language that may lead to evaluation bias; 3) Addition of language related to life-long learning of best teaching practices; 4) Addition of language related to assessment and learning outcomes. In all three of the criteria [teaching (60%), scholarly and creative work (20%), and service (20%)], an increased focus has been placed on actions that signal valuing diversity and promoting equity. Additionally, equity-based principles have been proposed to include into the code of conduct for faculty as shown in Table 5.

Table 4

Proposed Wording Changes to the Three Sections of Yearly Faculty Evaluations

Area of Evaluation	Proposed Language Additions	Proposed Language Removal
Teaching Effectiveness	"Conscientious attention to diverse cultural assets" "Review and revise instructional strategies *to engage in current best practices"* "Engagement in professional development related to teaching"	"Resolves interpersonal conflict appropriately
Scholarly and/or Creative Work	"Engage in professional development related to scholarly and/or creative work." "Scholarly and/or creative activities – may include Scholarship of Teaching and Learning"	"Contributes positively to departmental goals" "Respectful interactions with colleagues" "Willingness to accept duties as appropriate" "Resolves interpersonal conflict appropriately"
Professional Service	"Advocates for non-discriminatory behavior or actions in compliance with the ASU non-discrimination policy	"Respectful interactions with colleagues" "Resolves interpersonal conflict appropriately"

Table 5
Proposed Additions to Standards of Professional Conduct

Conduct Area	Proposed Language Additions
Academic responsibilities	"Engage in developing and improving their knowledge of pedagogy and andragogy."
Responsibilities to Students	"Engage in student advising and mentoring within the context of one's discipline as well as to support students' pursuit of personal, civic, and academic goals" "Demonstrate awareness of the diverse backgrounds and assets of others." "Engage in best practices for supporting the success of historically underserved students."
Responsibilities to Colleagues.	"Demonstrate awareness of the diverse backgrounds and assets of others." "Comply with anti-discrimination policies, all university-wide compliance requirements, and advocate for remedies when these policies are violated."

To add an additional layer of accountability, evaluation recommendations were proposed for the academic master plan. Examples of initiatives are: 1) Evaluation materials specifically value engaging in professional development including engaged pedagogy, advocacy, and equity-mindedness for faculty; 2) having an outside equity advocate (voting or nonvoting) on all retention, promotion, and tenure committees; 3) launch redesigned faculty evaluations including equity, inclusion; 4) Faculty Handbook revisions completed; 5) and the institutionalization of full-time Chief Diversity & Equity Officer. Although these changes may not typically be in the purview of a CTL, academic administrators can combine efforts with these mid-level change agents. Meaningful institutional changes were made through the CTIR and other academic leaders by securing membership of equity-mindedness coalition members on key campus-wide committees. The CTIR Director leveraged influence by virtue of positionality as a faculty-administrator and a collaborative relationship with the Equity Advocates group to ensure this happened. These institutional-level accomplishments have helped move implementation efforts to institutionalization.

Institutionalizing Equity Practices

Institutionalization indicates that change has been embraced and integrated into the organizational culture; seen as a *normative,* no longer an innovation (Kezar, 2018). Change becomes *routinized* (Rogers, 2003), in which the innovation becomes part of the fabric and routines of the institution. In order to maintain and build upon the momentum, we realized the need for meaningful institutionalization in order to preserve these changes. Thus, we began to strategically change language, policies, and procedures to routinize equity-mindedness at all levels. According to the five principles of equity-mindedness, equity needs to be a part of policy discussions from the micro-level

of classroom practice to the macro-level of institutional policy and procedure, up to and including the mission (Malcom-Piqueux & Bensimon, 2017).

The mission and vision are signifiers of the core values and culture of an institution. As noted by Kezar (2018), resistance to change can be mitigated if the change aligns with the institution's mission and vision. Moreover, a mission that represents a university's status as an HSI and dedication to serving this population is noted by Garcia (2018) as critical to decentering Whiteness and instead centering the experience of the students we serve. To this end, coalition members rewrote the University's mission and vision in 2014 to include more direct language related to the support of diverse students and in 2020 the mission was replaced with a purpose statement that explicitly includes Adams State's HSI status (see Table 6). The evolution of the mission/purpose statement has helped usher policy changes and place equity-minded initiatives into strategic plans because they directly tie back to the mission of the institution. We have placed faculty development, increasing faculty diversity, and reexamining retention and promotion policies in both the institutional strategic plan and the most recent draft of the academic master plan.

Table 6
Mission and Vision Revisions

	Mission/Purpose*	Vision
Adopted in 2010	Adams State University dedicates its resources to provide opportunity and access for all students. The College is an innovative leader that recognizes the inherent educational value of diversity. It is a catalyst for the educational, cultural, and economic interests of rural Colorado, the surrounding region, and the global Community.	Building opportunities for everyone to learn and succeed.
Adopted in 2014	Adams State University's mission is to educate, serve, and inspire our diverse populations in the pursuit of their lifelong dreams and ambitions.	To become the university community of choice for diverse, historically underserved groups, and all who value quality education and inclusivity.
Adopted in 2020	Adams State University's driving purpose is to provide equitable access to education for all. We promote successful and engaged lives by caring for, connection with, and challenging our students, campus, and community. As Colorado's premier Hispanic Serving Institution, Adams State University draws on its rural location in the San Luis Valley, to served and empower all students, especially those from historically underserved populations.	To become the university community of choice for diverse, historically underserved groups, and all who value quality education and inclusivity.

*In 2020, the mission was changed to a purpose statement

These practices have become institutionalized through the establishment of key support positions and groups. For example, the FDC, Equity Advocates, the CTIR Director, and a Diversity Liaison which were established, in part, through a Title V grant. Committing to these positions, and providing an avenue for collaboration among these roles, was a strategic move.

While it is impossible to claim causality, during the early years of implementation, we noticed a steady decrease in graduation gaps for Latinx students (Table 7). Unfortunately, this gap increased in the years leading up to the 2020 global pandemic, during a time when there has been instability at the institution, described next. While we haven't met our goals, it is worth remembering Malcom-Piqueux and Bensimon's (2017) fifth principle, a call to equity-minded practitioners to take action to reduce inequity. They specifically mention raising awareness of outcome gaps and understanding the connection between systemic inequity and inequitable outcomes. Systemic inequities that hinder faculty of color also hinder students of color. To that end, we have kept student achievement gaps, in addition to faculty metrics, at the forefront of change efforts.

Table 7
Six -Year Graduation Rates for First Time Full Time Students at ASU

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
White Students	34%	33%	32%	32%	44%
Latinx Students	26%	24%	39%	25%	24%
African American Students	27%	15%	19%	18%	24%

Success in the Face of Obstacles - Two Steps Forward, One Step Back

In the past several years we have encountered obstacles to change in the form of institutional instability and an administrative focus on crisis management rather than innovation. Many original coalition members have transitioned out of the university resulting in fewer change agents dedicated to innovation. This required a step back into the mobilization stage of change rather than focusing on implementation and institutionalization.

As is true with many small regional colleges and universities, the past five years have been challenging with decreasing student enrollment and state financial support. Additionally, we were placed on probationary status from the Higher Learning Commission. The issues were corrected and the probationary state was lifted a year later; however, this contributed to negative publicity for the institution and may have augmented declines in enrollment.

In 2017, it was determined that in order for the institution to remain fiscally solvent, the university must undergo a reduction of force. A year-long "right sizing" campaign began. Only a few tenure track faculty were eliminated, but with additional early retirements and faculty leaving for other

positions, approximately 22% of tenure/tenure-track faculty left. During this time, we experienced frequent change-over at the top levels of administration; within four years, Adams State had four presidents and five senior academic administrators. Institutional instability coupled with frequent leadership changes made changing practice and policy even more difficult.

Despite these challenges, we have made gains with respect to institutionalization and seen some glimmers of success. In 2017, the historical graduation gaps between Latinx students and White students disappeared. The gap reappeared the next year, during the right-sizing campaign. With the deteriorated campus condition, we take our 2017 success as a promising sign that we were making meaningful changes that affected inequitable outcomes. Additionally, equity-minded language has become commonplace on campus. The 2025 ASU strategic plan has "Advocate for Equity and Inclusion" as one of the five pillars - something that would have been unheard of 10 years ago. In 2020, the campus reworded the mission into a purpose statement that explicitly states Adams State's HSI status. Moving forward, the institutionalized changes to hiring language and New Faculty Orientation will be critical to help rebuild change efforts and ensure the continuity of equity-minded practices at ASU.

During times of institutional instability, CTLs become even more critical agents of change. Faculty development is essential in the mobilization phase and CTL directors can have a large influence over the implementation and institutionalization of change. In the future, we expect to experience cycles through the change process, moving between mobilization, implementation, and institutionalization as the institution continues to evolve (Curry, 1991). While we expect change to be ongoing, we have learned some valuable lessons.

Recommendations for Practice

Even though we are falling short of our goals, real progress has been made at Adams State in embedding equity-mindedness into the institutional identity and faculty development cycle. We also recognize that ASU is a small institution with perhaps fewer administrative structures to navigate and fewer silos to break down. Additionally, during this process the university has encountered financial shortfalls and has had to rely on grants to initiate and sustain efforts for change. The following are some key take-aways for institutions wanting to increase focus on equity-mindedness in their faculty development cycle.

Build a grassroots coalition. Coalition building is imperative for deep, cultural change (Kezar, 2018). Fortunately, CTIR leadership is in a unique position to facilitate collective sensemaking and cultivate cross-institutional collaborations. The CTIR Director, advised by the FDC board, intentionally provided educational opportunities to faculty and staff which facilitated the recognition of systemic inequity present on our own campus. As recommended by equity principle two—awareness that there is a systemic nature to inequity, and principle three— recognizing that inequity is a problem of practice, we have always been inclusive with regard to who is invited to participate in these efforts. There are often as many staff as faculty and we have included students' voices when appropriate. By building excitement in the middle, there have been enough volunteers to ripple out onto campus-wide committees, thereby influencing many aspects of campus governance. It should be noted that creating a coalition can be cost neutral, especially with a CTL or FDC to guide efforts.

Grow your own. Once a coalition has been formed, new members should be invited in as they arrive on campus. As many institutions already offer a NFO experience, another low cost avenue to maintain momentum is to leverage already-existing programming so that institutional values of equity-mindedness are embedded. In orientation, we have embraced many of the principles of equity-mindedness, but in particular the first—being affirmatively race-conscious, and the fourth—relying on evidence to guide practice. On the first day of NFO we begin by highlighting what it means to be an HSI, the university's mission and vision, how to use the constructivist communication structures, and how to get involved in inclusion efforts on campus. Many of these new faculty quickly become active in equity-mindedness efforts on campus because they see that it is valued across multiple levels.

Leverage outside resources. Low to no-cost efforts are a great way to begin this work, however, to sustain meaningful change, resources must be allocated accordingly. As an institution with limited and stretched resources, being awarded grants was critical to change efforts. We have been fortunate to have received numerous Title V grants, two Title III STEM grants, and an NSF ADVANCE grant in the last twenty years. For the past eight years, Adams State's sole grant writer has been a critical member of the coalition and instrumental to ensuring cohesiveness amongst the grants. We have also been strategic in finding ways to get the institution to provide funding to complement the work of the grants and to ensure institutionalization of these efforts. Some positions in these grants, including the CTIR Director, are slated to be institutionalized.

Commit institutional resources. This work took off when the institution started investing its own funds into the faculty development and the equity/inclusion work. Both CTIR and Equity Advocates have their own institutional budgets and the director positions are partially funded by the institution. Coalition members spent years making budget proposals to get institutional funding for these groups. As the coalition grew, a small but reasonable institutional budget was allocated to each group. These budget amounts have been maintained even as the institution has been cutting costs in other areas. This institutional funding has provided more flexibility with how money can be spent and we are able to make purchases that would be unallowable from a grant, such as CTIR promotional items.

Embed equity. Equity work is often perceived as an add-on to faculty development. We have purposefully endeavored to get away from that model and instead embed it in programming, NFO, and evaluation. When one considers all five of the principles of equity mindedness and the fact that in higher education inequity is pervasive, it becomes clear that solving these difficult problems cannot be an add-on and instead must be infused in all the work we do. As time has moved on, the two grassroots groups for faculty education and equity/inclusion, FDC and Equity Advocates, have worked in sync and the committees related to them have many individuals who overlap. As equity and inclusion events are really faculty development, we have started marketing them under CTIR and including them in the faculty and staff faculty development calendar. This work has become so commonly interlinked that it is no longer viewed as separate grassroots groups.

Branding. Picking a memorable name and labeling everything related to it with that name, regardless of funding sources has made a large difference on campus. CTIR promotional items (bags, pens, chapsticks, t-shirts, etc) are given out at NFO and major faculty development events. Everything related to faculty development has been marketed under the CTIR brand. Now CTIR is a

well-known entity on campus which will hopefully contribute to its long-term survival. This helps send the message that we do not differentiate between faculty development and equity work.

Write it in. With regard to equity principle five which includes taking action to address systemic barriers, ensuring equity-minded practices are written into key university documents is of utmost importance. As we have recently experienced transitions at the top levels of administration, having equity wording in official documents and as part of the mission sends a clear message to future administrators of what we value at this institution. Having initiatives written into the strategic plan and academic master plan signals an institutional commitment as the Board of Trustees has to approve these plans. In effect, their approval of these documents indicates their support for these initiatives as well. By having equity-mindedness principles integrated into evaluation, we ensure that this work is valued. Finally, we have been making efforts to make sure it is clear in the online and social media presence that inclusion and equity-mindedness are valued at Adams State University. The key idea is to write it in, promote it, and disseminate it.

Conclusion

Using faculty development as a change lever, we undertook an intentional change campaign to address the systemic nature of inequity at Adams State University. Drawing from both change theories and equity-minded principles, we initiated change on a variety of fronts including the institutionalization of a CTL. Collective sensemaking and building a coalition is a time-consuming process, which conceivably could have been significantly reduced if a CTL had already been in place. Once in place, the CTIR took a lead in integrating equity-minded practice in the classroom, policy and procedures, and campus climate. To combat high faculty and staff turn-over, continued equity-mindedness coalition-building has become a focus of CTIR programming and initiatives. Shared leadership, including both grassroots energy and top down levers of authority, was instrumental to institutionalizing these changes. As CTL directors are often involved with both micro and macro contexts of the campus, they are in a unique position to help build a shared leadership coalition.

Malcom-Piqueux and Bensimon (2017) suggest that the five principles of equity mindedness can effectively reduce achievement gaps experienced by African American, Latinx, Native American, first generation, low income, and other minoritized students. It is incumbent upon all institutions of higher education, but particularly those who have federal designations of HSI or Minority-serving Institution (MSI), to consider the practices and policies that further contribute to systemic barriers. As academic leaders, we are able to influence both the culture of our campuses and policies that affect the faculty's success. Comprehensive faculty development programming inspired by consideration of these five principles 1) race consciousness in a positive sense, 2) a focus on the systemic nature of inequity, 3) understanding that inequity is rooted in practice and institutions can affect change, 4) using best practice as an avenue to equity, and 5) recognizing that equity requires action (Malcom-Piqueux & Bensimon, 2017) encourage us to keep equity work at the forefront of our practice.

Synergistic efforts between several campus groups and funding sources have helped us to seamlessly integrate equity-mindedness into all aspects of the faculty development cycle. This took a campus culture shift and it did not happen overnight, but rather through multiple Title V grant cycles and with the fierce dedication of faculty and staff. Using advances in discourse on equity-

minded practices in higher education and the lessons learned from institutions like Adams State, the time for this process may be greatly reduced. CTL Directors are uniquely situated in the middle, often positioned as both faculty and administration, with the ability to communicate with both, to initiate and guide change. We challenge other institutions and university administrators to consider the systemic nature of inequity and the ways in which CTLs and faculty developers can shepherd changes to improve outcomes for faculty and students.

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"People Don't Understand What Our Role Is, It Is Definitely Seen as an Inferior Job to an Academic": Perceptions on Relationships Between Professional Services and Academic Staff in the UK

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Introduction

There is limited research regarding the relationship between academic and professional services staff within higher education. There has recently been a surge in research coming from Australian academics, (Bossu and Brown, 2018; Szekeres and Heywood, 2018; Veles et al., 2019) but this has not been replicated within Britain. Much of what is available has been written from an academic perspective (Mcinnis, 1998; Allen-Collinson, 2006; Graham and Regan, 2016). Yet the traditional notion of the divide between professional services and academics has been prevalent for many years (Coe and Heitner, 2013).

Hobson et al. (2018) argue that academics feel professional services staff do not understand the pressures they face and can be critical of the role professional services undertake, and professional services feel that academic staff belittle their role from a perceived position of power. They state 'being a professional or an academic are both a role within a university, and an entrenched identity. These roles are also linked to strongly delineated and prescribed hierarchical relationships' (ibid:316). The silos in which both professional services and academics reside in have been around for several years. It appears that a lack of understanding about the roles they both undertake contributes to this challenging relationship.

This paper, taken from my doctoral work, examines the relationship between professional services staff and academic staff. I chose to utilize what Holland et al. (1998) call 'figured worlds' as a conceptual framework in which to investigate the sociocultural concepts of space, self-authoring, and identity in practice.

Context

Higher education has faced huge changes and threats in the last fifty years. The Robbins Committee report of 1963 looked at the expansion of higher education and reported that anyone who wanted to, should be able to attend university, regardless of their background or financial status (Robbins, 1963). While the report called for the expansion of higher education, its authors could not have imagined the size of this growth over the next forty years. At the time of the report's publication there were 216,000 higher education students; by 1990, this had risen to over a million (Nixon, 1996) and by 2018/2019 there were 2,383,970 (*Higher Education Statistics Agency*, 2018). The increase in student numbers and higher education institutions brought with it increased funding and therefore more regulations and reporting on public spending (Brown et al., 2018). The Dearing Report (1997) called for the introduction of tuition fees to cover the increase in student numbers.

The Future of Higher Education White Paper (2003) argued for more access for students from a widening participation background along with the elusive 50% target for participation in higher education for 18-30 year olds.

The introduction of tuition fees and the subsequent increases to the current level of £9,250 (as of September 2021) created a market economy, both for students, who began to see themselves as consumers, but also institutions who were bidding for public funding, and industry involvement (Henkel, 2010). It also meant that universities became partly responsible for their own survival. Henkel (ibid:5) writes, 'Higher education, now carrying new burdens of responsibility for their futures, was increasingly impelled into markets and quasi-markets: for more selective and conditional public funding, for new sources of income'. Higher education institutions now became quasi-businesses with paying customers. Readings (1996:22) in his seminal text *The University in Ruins* writes:

> Quality is not the ultimate issue, but excellence soon will be, because it is the recognition that the university is not just *like* a corporation; it is a corporation. Students in the University of Excellence are not *like* customers; they *are* customers. [author emphasis]

While Readings is writing mainly about North American and European higher education in the Nineties, this consumerism within higher education is now embedded within the UK system. Readings (ibid:38-39) goes on to say that the decision to allow polytechnics to rebrand as universities in the early Nineties was based on a business model for expanding a market:

> The decision was not primarily motivated by concern for the content of what is taught in the universities or polytechnics … the sudden redenomination of polytechnics as universities is best understood as an *administrative* move: the breaking down of a barrier to circulation and to market expansion. [author emphasis]

This expansion did come with a caveat on student numbers due to the limit in government funding, until of course the rise of tuition fees.

When the student number cap was lifted in 2015/2016, it enabled universities to recruit more students and created a buyers' market for students who were now able (to some extent) to have more choice over where they wanted to study. The rise of neoliberalism within higher education is too large a topic to cover within this paper, but it is important to recognize that by creating a marketized system this impacted on the structures, power dynamics and staff within institutions (Olssen and Peters, 2007). Murphy (2020:30) argues the underlying ideology was that 'competition, enabled via a marketized higher education context, would help drive up standards in universities, and deliver a more responsive and consumer orientated institution'. This, in turn, required a number of professional administrators to oversee a customer focused university.

Changes to roles in professional services began to occur: they no longer played a subsidiary role but became a major part of university life and its structure. Brown et al. (2018) explain the diversification and plurality of roles that began to emerge including, teaching and learning, quality

administrators, external relations, academic development, and research administrators to name a few. This diversification sat alongside an increase in both academic and professional services staff.

Theoretical Framework

> Holland et al. (1998:52) describe figured worlds as: *a socially and culturally constructed realm of interpretation in which particular characters and actors are recognized, significance is assigned to certain acts, and particular outcomes are valued over others*.

The culturally constructed world of academia is historical, and identities have been developed over a long period of time. However, I would suggest that these identities are constantly in flux due to the ever-changing nature of academia. Holland intimates identities have been established during the evolution of higher education, and argues 'In the world of academia, being verbally aggressive may be a sign of high status and position' (ibid:131). While this statement can be considered a generalisation, identities of both academic and professional services have developed organically as the system evolved. For Holland 'identities are enacted and produced, and individuals take up positions in accordance with the day-to-day and on-the-ground relations of power, deference, and entitlement, social affiliation and distance' (ibid:127). If the identities of professional services and academic staff are positioned in terms of power dynamics, is this why I perceive professional services to be both in a different figured world, but also below the academic figured world in terms of hierarchy?

Holland et al's. (1998) concept of figured worlds and identity-making can be used to try to explore the constructed world of higher education and the identities of those that reside in this space, they argue; 'People tell others who they are, but even more important, they tell themselves and then try to act as though they are who they say they are' (ibid:3).

Methods

I undertook semi-structured interviews with ten participants. Five professional services staff members and five academic staff. All staff work within an academic school within a university in the North West of England and were in different roles across the school. I used convenience sampling to access participants. Convenience sampling is defined as accessing those participants available and easily accessible to the researcher (Wragg, 2002; Cohen et al., 2011).

Interviews were transcribed manually and thematically analyzed. By coding and thematically analyzing the data I ensured I understood the themes in the data. As Braun and Clarke (2006:79) state 'thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns (themes) within data… it describes your data set in (rich) detail'.

I was also aware of the interpretation with which I analyzed each interview. The subject positionality is important in terms of the balance of language and power (Fairclough, 2001). Fairclough (ibid) highlights Foucault's work on socially constructed discourse which links into the figured world theory of positionality, that we are both the author and product of our words. Halliday (2002:51) states 'meaning cannot be reported in a way that is independent of the observer

because she or he has to understand what is being said and this implicates them in the subject of their research'. By acknowledging my choices and being aware of potential bias, I am limiting the impact this may have on the research.

There was an element of data triangulation in the choice of academic participants, in the sense that I wanted a variety of participants to gain a broader understanding of feelings about professional services. Data triangulation refers to using multiple methods, sources or data checking to ensure data validity (Carter et al., 2014; Miles and Huberman, 2014). Bryman, (2016:697) defines it as 'The use of more than one method or source of data … so that findings may be cross-checked'. Again, with the professional services staff, although I was limited by the number who responded to the request, I managed to get a diverse cross section from the school. By including both professional services staff and academic staff within my interviews, I am triangulating perspectives from different groups of university employees to tease out their figured worlds, which enables me as a researcher to see how they align or differ from each other's perspectives and my own. This gives a unique perspective and one that is rarely covered in the literature, where only one of the occupational groups is used as a research subject.

I was very conscious of being an insider researcher. The participants could perceive my research as already biased due to the fact I am a member of professional services and am undertaking interviews around the professional identity of professional services staff. Gibb's (2008) discusses reactivity and the influence the researcher, a question or even body language could have on a participant. He goes on to argue that participants may respond to questions 'based on how they want to see themselves' (ibid:695). In the case of this research, it could also be that participants answered questions based on how they wanted to be perceived by a member of professional services, or by someone they work alongside. Teusner (2016) states that with a clear methodology and clarity regarding how data is collected and analyzed, validity concerns can be alleviated.

Professional Services Perceptions on Relationships with Academics

Professional services staff have very different relationships with academic staff depending on whom they work with and in what capacity. The relationships are based on how they work together and how they communicate with each other.

Professional services staff who work with academics directly on student administration show similarities with the research by Szekeres (2004) and Allen-Collinson (2006) who state professional services staff feel invisible working within higher education. The relationships can be described as fractious and again, certain individuals and in some cases teams, are responsible for the difficulties that professional services staff feel. According to one participant relationships are individualistic and department specific:

> It's different with different individuals but more importantly with different groups of individuals, cause some teams are lovely and friendly and treat you like part of their team and obviously understand and appreciate what you do. Especially if they really hate doing admin and they're great and then certain other teams have got this superiority thing going on and they can be rude, and they can be awful. I think different individuals would not be like that if there wasn't a culture of it within that

> department because where there isn't a culture of it, they are pretty much all lovely.

The individualistic and context dependent fractious relations the interviewee describes are echoed by Allen-Collinson (2009:946) in her research who states, 'As with all occupational (and more general) social contexts, there are positive and negative dimensions to work relationships'. Mcinnis (1998) argues professional services staff felt academic staff attitudes were detrimental to their relationships and over 75% of those interviewed in his research, (both professional services and academic staff) felt the relationship between professional services and academic staff was negative. Although what Mcinnis (ibid) does not articulate is the individualistic relationship between professional services and academic staff, just that his participants felt the relationship was negative.

The idea that departments can behave in a certain way towards professional services staff is interesting. This links to what Holland et al. (1998) term 'self-authoring'. They argue, using Bakhtin, that the words we use are not just our own, 'the author, in everyday life as in artistic work, creates by orchestration, by arranging overheard elements, themes and forms' (ibid:171). This would indicate there is limited room within the departments the participant above is talking about, to self-author. The language the academic staff use when interacting with professional services staff seems to have been internalized. Bakhtin (1981:299) although discussing authors writes, 'The author does not speak in a given language … but he speaks, as it were, through a language, a language that has somehow more or less materialized, become objectivized, that he merely ventriloquates'. This shared language then permeates through to new academic staff members who then perpetuate the challenging relationship the department has with professional services staff, or at least the ones that the participant above works with.

The figured world of academia has its own discourse and part of this is an opinion on staff, whoever they are. It will not be shared by all who inhabit this world, but it is passed on through dialogue. New additions to this world are enveloped into it with shared resources and language (White et al., 2014). Bourdieu's notion of 'habitus' can be referenced here, the 'socialized body' (Bourdieu, 1998:81) he refers to is demonstrated. The sharing of language links to the localized figured world. Holland et al. (1998) reference Bourdieu's (1977) work on Algerian peasants to illustrate the localized figured world, positional identity and symbolic capital, where honor is given to those of a higher credence. Although higher education is far from Algerian peasants, it demonstrates the way in which localized figured worlds carry on traditions and how social positionality is important.

Perceptions on the Professional Services/Academic Divide

As noted in the introduction, the last twenty years has seen a rise in research evidence relating to a divide between professional services and academic staff (Mcinnis, 1998; Seyd, 2000; Szekeres, 2004; Whitchurch, 2006, 2010; Gray, 2015; Hobson et al., 2018). Mcinnis (1998:162) referenced the idea of professional services being the 'poor relation' and not worthy of research or scholarship. Wallace and Marchant (2011) in their research on gender, linked the divide to organizational theory, academics are the business and professional services are indirectly linked to the business. Wallace and Marchant (ibid) seem to be stating that professional services appear on the periphery of higher education and are therefore not seen as important. They are not a core part of the university and are perceived as less valuable.

The divide appears to be socially constructed, created through differing views and siloed working. It perpetuates itself through the continued idea that professional services are in the shadow of academic staff and not perceived as equals in terms of their contribution or value.

One respondent felt that professional services, contractually, were not given the same benefits as academic staff, thereby contributing to a divide between the two:

> On a basic level they get more annual leave then us, they're generally kind of better paid than us, that's like levels I suppose.

Academic staff have advantages that professional services staff do not. This is echoed by Whitchurch's (2010a:173) research:

> where professional staff and faculty work side by side in a department … staff without academic contracts may not have the same rights as their academic colleagues in relation to, for instance, intellectual property rights or study leave.

The lack of development for professional services staff was noted by two of the professional service interviewees:

> It is lacking here for professional services. Development is really, really, poor, it's really poor.

> If I was starting out now, then I think there would be a lack of the university's training.

However, one professional services member of staff argued the divide is narrowing:

> I think the divide between academic and admin isn't as great as it used to be, there was an absolute definite.

The idea that the culture of higher education perpetuates and continues the notion of a professional services/academic divide is a demonstration of the way figured worlds are formed. Holland et al. writes:

> People have the propensity to be drawn to, recruited for, and formed in these worlds, and to become active in and passionate about them. People's identities and agency are formed dialectically and dialogically in these "as if" worlds. (1998:49)

As staff within higher education get drawn into the cultures that exist and the identities created, it can be difficult to change perceived notions of the divide. Identities within these worlds become entrenched by those who reside in them. Although, given that improvements appear to be marginal, it is interesting to think what it would take to bridge the gap that some professional services and academic staff believe exist.

Academic staff had differing views on the divide between the two spheres, and even whether the divide exists. One academic participant stated that, while she personally does not think there is a divide between the two parties, she could see how this perception was possible.

> I do get the feeling that there is this historical divide and potentially there is with some people, and I think you do get the feeling that there is tension sometimes. I can certainly see why, because I think sometimes especially when I did go to certain meetings when I was interim director, there is a lot of talk about academic this, academic that, academic that. You do think, 'well, what about professional services?' so a lot of decisions are taken and talked about, about the development of academics but you think 'what about everybody else, though?

It is the perception here that is important, while some academic staff recognize that the divide is exasperated by the idea of academic needs coming first, it is how this is perceived by professional services staff that adds to them feeling forgotten about or second best.

Academic Staff Perceptions on Relationships with Professional Services Staff

When asked about their relationships with school professional services, the five academics interviewed all mentioned positive relationships and several reiterated how close they were, again, like the professional services staff, specific individuals were mentioned as well as teams of staff:

> I think it's good because I think people know how you are, the way you work, and you know how the people work so it's a bit more of a family

> I literally speak to them all on a daily basis. I mean with school and the person I deal with in that role, literally I'm either on the phone or emailing her like every single day. I could not do without that person; the whole department would not run without that person therefore everything wouldn't happen

This evidence of some positive relationships contradicts research by Seyd (2000), Lewis (2014) and Feather (2015) who argue the relationship between the two is strained due to academics believing that professional services staff are attempting to manage them and impose bureaucratic systems and processes on them which impede on their research time.

Lewis (2014) argues the rise of the neoliberal management within higher education has changed the status of both professional services staff and academics, perhaps de-professionalizing the latter. Feather (2015) counteracts this by stating Lewis is demanding greater administrative control over academic staff and points out that the two groups are very different from each other. The argument between the two is demonstrative of the whole relationship and divide between the two spheres and why the identities of the two appear to belong in separate figured worlds within higher education. Whitchurch (2012:4) summarizes the debate:

> There has been … a tendency for both academic and professional services to see the other as more powerful, and themselves as marginalized. This sense of exclusion, together with perceptions of fragmentation and de-professionalization, has

contributed to a binary view of academic and non-academic activities, roles and identities.

The responses from academics indicate a positive working relationship, one that is familial and in constant contact. Perhaps this is how the relationships moving forward will start to improve. Holland et al's. (1998) research into Nepalese women and the constraints on their gender, identifies how they were able to author new identities and a new sense of self by the art of song. They used the lyrics to challenge current practice and discourse. Both academics and professional services staff could benefit from space to understand their identity and their perceived collective identity to help author more productive ways of working (where required) and improve on their current relationships. I accept this is an idealistic view. I imagine trying to find the time to navigate relationships and understand roles is challenging in a climate where everyone appears to feel overworked. I do not think it would be high on a priority list for either occupational group.

Discussion and Further Research

The research and interviews with professional services participants demonstrated that negative relationships were based around individuals in an academic team. There were several examples of great relationships by professional services, but as expected, it was the negative ones that caused the most discussion.

Frustration at both their role and a lack of understanding by academics of the pressures that professional services face caused negative feelings. The constant changes higher education is going through and the nature of the student as customer has affected the roles that professional services undertake.

Most professional services and academics acknowledged the divide between the two groups. The most obvious difference between the two was the lack of training and development given to professional services, particularly now the academic career pathway is being established for academic career progression. This appeared to give rise to a level of frustration and a feeling of being ‘less than’. This was also acknowledged by several academic staff who spoke of a culture of academic staff being the more important occupational group and professional services not being considered when decisions are made. In my experience these decisions can include increasing academic staff numbers as student numbers increase without the equivalent rise in professional services staff and internal restructures and office moves without consultation. There is a need to explore this area further alongside the rise of the marketization of the higher education institution. This marketization places bureaucratic demands and reporting on both academics and professional services and adds to the feeling by academics of the demise of their academic autonomy.

The difficult relationships and feelings of academic advantage in certain areas did not come as a surprise. It also reflects the literature on the topic, in terms of professional services often being invisible (Szekeres, 2004; Akerman, 2020). Putting in development and career progression for professional services may help with this feeling of invisibility but it would also benefit the institution by upskilling current staff. The higher education sector needs to value all its staff to get the best from them. Acknowledging the importance of different roles and overtly trying to improve relationships should help improve staff perceptions of difference.

Overall, academic staff felt they had a good relationship with school professional services. By school, this means the staff they deal with regularly regarding the students they teach. They felt they could rely on them, and one participant called them ‘family’.

The idea of individualistic and performance-based relationships is something I have witnessed at my current institution, and I would imagine across higher education. Academic staff have a lot of pressure on them, and it makes sense that they rely on the professional services staff who they know can deliver results.

There is a clear value in having positive relationships for academics with school professional services staff. The academic staff indicated that knowing who they could count on to help them was extremely valuable. They also acknowledged that saying ‘thank you’ goes some way to demonstrate their appreciation but conversely admitted that professional services may not feel respected in their role.
Although academics felt the relationship was positive overall, they struggled to articulate the role of professional services. A number used the word support yet were almost embarrassed about it as they know professional services do more than that but could not explain what that was. There was an acknowledgment there was a large element of teamwork between the two groups.

The research findings indicate relationships between both occupational groups are difficult at times. This implies more work needs to be undertaken by the university to signal the importance of professional services and the roles they undertake so they feel more valued.

Negative interactions can make them feel inferior and the divide between the two groups can exacerbate this. Although academic staff state their relationship with school professional services is good overall, there is obviously a disconnect as professional services staff do not always feel the same. This communication problem is something that needs addressing. Enhancing the relationship between the two and a clearer understanding of the roles they undertake and the pressures they face may go some way to improving the day-to-day interactions. The historical notion of the divide between the two is a concept that appears to be ingrained into those who work within higher education. However, providing similar benefits and development opportunities would indicate an attempt by the institution to recognize the unevenness of the current situation. There is a clear craving in some professional services staff for promotion and development, but they see this within the setting of their current institution. The frustration lies with the lack of opportunity for professional services development.

This research was a small case study within a single institution and more research needs to be undertaken across the sector to understand how far these findings translate. Further understanding not just school but also central services relationships with academic staff would help increase the knowledge in this area. As working practices change in a post-pandemic era, the considerations for new ways of working will also need to be factored into the relationships between all parties within higher education.

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Academic Deans' Perceptions of Factors Contributing to Longevity in Their Positions

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The professional literature in higher education reveals that academic deans tend to serve in their positions four to six years on average (Butin, 2016; Greicar, 2009; Robbins & Schmitt, 1994). Yet some deans persist in these challenging roles notably longer than the typical term of office, while others fall short of this average. This wide variation begs the question of what factors contribute to academic deans' interest and ability to remain in their administrative positions beyond relatively brief periods of time. In effect, responses to this question address the construct of *longevity* (i.e., the duration of time in the position of academic dean) and the potential impact that endurance in the office exerts on the welfare as well as the growth and development of their schools and colleges. This construct warrants study considering that: (1) resilience in such a role represents one reasonable indicator of sustained effectiveness whereas brevity could suggest the opposite; (2) lack of longevity in the role could be a reflection of the time-consuming and all-encompassing demands placed upon academic deans; and (3) there could be important benefits to institutions if those in positions to affect the tenure of deans, especially the most effective ones, better understand factors that contribute to their time in office.

The purpose of the present study is to identify reasons academic deans report that they would choose to stay or exit from their positions, not to advocate for longevity in the deanship per se. This approach presupposes that academic deans can make such a decision for themselves rather than have it made for them. The study considers the idea that if certain favorable factors are in place, and deans are successful, the best leadership might be retained (Merrion, 2003), with the understanding that the quality of service in the dean's position is more important than the duration of service (Keyes et al., 2010).

Taken a step further, the retention of academic deans assumes special significance against the combined backdrop of short role durations and the apparent scarcity of high-quality leadership talent that has manifested over the past decade (Appadurai, 2009; Bornstein, 2010; Luna, 2012; Mead-Fox, 2009; Reichert, 2016). Search committees for key higher education administrative positions, as well as executive search firms report finding it increasingly challenging to identify superior candidates. It is often the case, for instance, in searches where initial pools seem robust, that as the process unfolds, presumably desirable candidates withdraw or are eliminated for any number of reasons. In turn, narrower pools of qualified candidates almost certainly threaten selectivity. Even when searches are seemingly successful, if the candidates go on to have relatively

limited longevity, they not only exert less substantive impact on their academic units, but equally important, their institutions must start seeking leadership talent all over again.

To offset limited longevity in the deanship and the dearth of leadership talent, one frequently recommended response centers on institutions "growing their own" (Bornstein, 2010; DeZure, Shaw, & Rojewski, 2014; Luna, 2012). Doing so is indeed possible, but it requires an awareness, a commitment, and systematic planfulness on the part of central administration. Moreover, these efforts, however earnest and impactful, are plagued by the fact that some number of faculty with the potential to lead are ambivalent about taking on these roles (DeZure, Shaw, & Rojewski, 2014). Reasons for their reluctance include wanting to stay close to their teaching and research, fearing the complexity of leadership in difficult financial times, regarding these positions as thankless, anti-intellectual, and a threat to work-life balance, not wishing to redefine their relationships with colleagues, and taken a step further, avoiding the perception of "going over to the dark side." In short, the challenges of finding and hiring qualified deans further argues for the importance of understanding the construct of longevity well enough for institutions to realize the retention of effective deans.

Roles, Responsibilities, and Characteristics of Academic Deans

According to several sources, academic deans are considered middle managers in higher education. For instance, they are often seen as the on the ground "movers and shakers" because they are responsible for advancing new programs and initiatives, recruiting new faculty, and ensuring that students move successfully through their programs of study. Deans are also seen as essentially embodying all that is both positive and negative about their schools and colleges (Williams, 2017) with the caveat that roles and responsibilities vary according to their academic field, institutional type, and institutional context (Del Favero, 2020). It can also be said that academic deans are under enormous pressure to develop innovative solutions to a range of evolving challenges in higher education (U2, 2017). At the same time, they are dependent on senior administration, faculty, and staff for support and assistance to find real solutions to real problems (Ruben, 2015; Williams, 2017).

For all intents and purposes, academic deans bear ultimate responsibility for all internal matters, most notably budgets, curriculum and program development, faculty and administrative staff hiring and performance, and student achievement. Deans are facilitators and intermediaries between presidential and trustee initiatives, administrative operations, faculty governance, and student needs. They need to work successfully with a broad array of individuals and groups to promote the mission of their academic units and genuinely assist their external stakeholders (Dill, 1980; Gmelch, 2002; Gould, 1964; Kerr, 1998; McCarty & Reyes, 1987; McGannon, 1987; Morris, 1981; Morsink, 1987; Perlmutter, 2017, 2018; Rosser, Johnsrud, & Heck, 2003; Salmen, 1971; Zimpher, 1995).

Whether internally or externally focused, academic deans must be strategic thinkers and leaders who bring about positive change to their schools and colleges by inspiring and mobilizing stakeholders (Thomas & Fragueiro, 2011). According to (Butin, 2016, p. 17), they need to be able to move "a wide range of highly complex puzzle pieces around in real time with the foreknowledge that the implications could resonate for years or even decades." He goes on to say

that, in order to do so, deans need to be able to weigh the evidence to make quick decisions and be able to compromise on policies, programs, and practices related to nearly every possible aspect of their academic unit. They must manage both up and down by engaging regularly with senior officials, faculty, staff, and students (June, 2014). Furthermore, they need to combine an academic orientation with a business orientation so that they embrace and incorporate the multiple perspectives of their stakeholders into tactical initiatives that expand and diversify their units through increased resources and opportunities.

Contributing to the challenge for academic deans is the lack of formal preparation for the job because most start their careers as faculty, not expecting or aspiring to advance to an administrative role (Enomoto & Matsuoka, 2007; Greicar, 2009; Harvey et al., 2013; Morris & Laipple, 2015; Perlmutter, 2018; Tabors, 2019). Their development of the skills necessary to succeed in the position usually comes from on-the-job training. What cannot be taught, yet is critical for success, however, is academic deans' reliance on their interpersonal skills (Butin, 2016; Wepner et al., 2014). Their ability to interact, collaborate, and negotiate with those with whom they work often determines the outcome of their efforts (Butin, 2016). To achieve success, they need to believe in the people that they lead and appreciate the value of positive relationships, effective teams, and shared responsibilities as critical pathways to important accomplishments (Batch & Heyliger, 2014; Wasicsko & Balch, 2014; Wiley, 2013).

In addition to possessing the necessary skills and characteristics to function in their roles, academic deans need to have the wherewithal to remain in their positions long enough to ensure that their units accomplish their strategic goals. Conversely, momentum related to a unit's progress is interrupted when a new dean must be hired because of the time and money expended to search for, recruit, and coach a new leader (Persson, 2014). In fact, many schools and colleges suffer from leadership whiplash because of the "revolving door" syndrome (i.e., high turnover rate) of deans, which seems to limit or outright impede progress (Butin, 2016; Harvey et al., 2013; Robbins & Schmitt, 1994; Wolverton et al., 2001).

Literature on Longevity in the Deanship

Research on the concept of longevity of academic deans focuses on factors that both facilitate and limit tenure in the position. However, a number of studies reveal that deans across disciplines average only three to six years in their positions. For example, the average length of tenure of business school deans is three years, yet it can be six years at top institutions (Bradshaw, 2015; Thomas & Fragueiro, 2011). The average length of time for law school deans is between three to five years (Heinsz, 1999-2000; Rubino, 2019), whereas medical school deans serve on average between five to six years (Keyes et al., 2010). Similarly, fine arts deans tend to serve between five and six years (Merrion, 2003).

One advantage of longevity in the deanship figures to be providing stability and direction for their schools and colleges (Harvey et al., 2013). Long-serving deans possess institutional memory, an understanding of university budgeting and decision making, the strategic insights that come with experience, and deep and productive ties with alumni and other supporters including current and prospective corporate donors. They also have a chance to leave behind lasting legacies of

accomplishment and effectiveness (Gmelch, Hopkins, & Damico, 2011; Thomas & Fragueiro, 2011; Wasicsko & Balch, 2014).

By contrast, a major disadvantage of longevity can be deans' eventual lackluster approach to the job. Some deans have been in their positions too long and have lost their passion and drive (Freed, 2016). They frequently fail to keep up with changes in the field, have lost a measure of interest in the university, and enter what is referred to as a "performance plateau" (Gmelch, Hopkins, & Damico, 2011). For this reason, deans who have been in their roles for extended periods of time need to reflect in earnest upon their motivation for staying in their positions (Syverud, 2006).

The number of years for a dean to be considered sufficiently long-serving has been addressed with a few studies. One such study suggests that a dean should serve for about a decade (Syverud, 2006). However, two other studies suggest that there should not necessarily be an upper limit of time in the role (Gmelch, Hopkins, & Damico, 2011; Thomas & Fragueiro, 2011).

Factors that might contribute to a dean's longevity include a self-realization that the job is "about serving others," not about themselves. These deans are likely to communicate with individuals and constituent groups in all directions, are able to relate well to others, especially their direct reports who are typically Provosts, and they have figured out effective ways to seek feedback and express their values and beliefs. In addition, they feel connected with coworkers and the academic community, have autonomy, can speak before large groups, and are patient with individuals and governance processes so as to garner support (Al-Shuaiby, 2009; Coll et al., 2018). Such deans manage to balance expert knowledge and charisma, are adept at communication, conflict resolution, and budgetary issues, value the challenges of problem-solving, enjoy helping faculty and administrative staff, have had an opportunity to spend time in diverse and increasingly challenging leadership roles, and are quite satisfied with their job as dean (Coll et al., 2018; Gmelch, Hopkins, & Damico, 2011; Haden et al., 2015; Wepner et al., 2015).

An individual's longevity as an academic administrator seems to depend on the person and the specific context. Factors that are most pressing for the institution often affect the person's ability to navigate the work environment. For example, business school deans find that their most pressing priorities are to improve the school's reputation and achieve accreditation (Anonymous, 2015). Education deans focus on accreditation, but also are concerned with enrollment and school district partnerships, so that their students can engage effectively in high quality fieldwork experiences. Another important factor appears to be deans' access to a network of peer colleagues to connect with informally and develop professionally (Merrion, 2003).

Negative factors that can presumably influence length of service include personnel problems, fiscal woes, feelings of tedium and fatigue, personal health, well-being and family concerns, unhealthy and resistant cultures, and departures of key personnel, particularly faculty. Still other factors include the loss of funding, unsatisfying working conditions, an inability to stay close to one's scholarship, an insufficient salary, lack of central administrative backing, and lack of support from constituencies (Coll et al., 2019; Gabbe et al., 2008; Merrion, 2003; Wasicsko & Balch, 2014). To determine the factors that contribute to academic deans' endurance in their positions, information must be gathered directly from those sources to better understand their perspectives on longevity.

Impetus for the Study

This investigation builds upon 10 years of previous work involving the leadership practices and characteristics of education deans. Six such deans first studied their own patterns of behavior and then surveyed other education deans nationally about essential ways for thinking, being, and acting (Wepner et al., 2011, 2012, 2014, 2015). The first six years of this work involved a qualitative analysis of vignettes, meetings, and daily practices which led to the conclusion that education deans rely most on Interpersonal/Negotiating Skills, specifically, working closely with others. The seventh year involved documentation of education deans' on-the-job experiences with others during 15 scheduled meetings. Major recommendations emerged from these qualitative analyses about how to think, believe, and act in the role.

These recommendations served as the basis for the eighth and ninth years of research, which involved the distribution of two national surveys to education deans and directors (Henk et al., 2017 Wepner, et al., 2020), both hosted by the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE), a nonprofit national alliance of education preparation programs. The original and expanded *Deans Performance Belief Survey* showed that, while all of the 23 recommendations were considered largely essential, the deans gave the most weight to the importance of *honesty, advocacy, follow through,* and *flexibility* (Henk et al., 2017; Wepner, et al., 2020). This wide range of factors represented what education deans felt were necessary to be successful in their roles, not only in the short term, but ostensibly over time as well.

The latter two years of research also revealed that respondents, mostly 50 years and older (86%), had only been in the deanship for five years or less (69%). This finding prompted an interest in identifying more directly the self-reported factors contributing to longevity in the deanship, defined as a professional who has served at least five years in the role of education dean, and it gave rise to a qualitative study of the construct (Wepner et al., 2020).

Once again hosted by AACTE, a 12-item, open-ended online survey asked practicing education deans to share their perspectives on the professional and personal benefits of longevity, the impact on their institutions, factors that could contribute to or jeopardize their own duration in the deanship, and the perceived optimal length of time to stay in the same position. Respondents who had been in the position an average of seven years were especially sought.

Although some 26 different categories bearing on longevity surfaced, *job satisfaction*, broadly defined, emerged as the overarching conception that education deans reported would influence staying in their positions. Most frequently they mentioned enjoying service in their roles, because they felt supported and still had goals to accomplish, were committed to their institution and their students, had a great team and meaningful work relationships, believed in the importance of leadership stability, and to a lesser extent, thought that the job supported their personal life and financial needs. On the other hand, politics, personnel, and budget issues emerged as the most unsatisfying and frustrating aspects of their education dean positions. In effect, burnout and exhaustion, lack of upper-level leadership and faculty support, and feelings of irrelevancy surfaced as factors that could limit respondents' time in the education dean's role (Wepner et al., 2020), all factors that could reasonably be associated with job dissatisfaction.

The deans' recommendations for thriving long-term in the role focused on having the wherewithal to focus on serving others. They encouraged new deans to build alliances with faculty and staff to accomplish the goals that have been set. Such counsel supported previous research findings about the importance of interpersonal/negotiating skills and honesty and advocacy (Wepner et al., 2014,).

More than half of the deans thought that they would stay in their positions 10 years or less, with about a third of them having entered the deanship with no expectation for their longevity in the position. Consistent with the findings of Gmelch, Hopkins, and Damico (2011) and Thomas and Fraguerio (2011), a majority of the deans did not believe that there is an upper limit for serving in the role, but rather it depended on the individual person and the situation.

This qualitative investigation of education deans served as a catalyst for examining the construct of longevity not only quantitatively, but also across deans drawn from multiple academic disciplines. More specifically, we endeavored to establish the relative strength of a range of 26 factors identified in the qualitative inquiry as influencing either staying or exiting the dean role among an expanded array of academic deans. In addition, we were curious to see if these factors might differentially affect perceptions about staying or exiting the position depending on whether the same factor was stated in a manner conducive or adverse to longevity. Lastly, we sought to test whether the presumed superordinate factor, job satisfaction, and its converse, job dissatisfaction, held up when studied empirically using exploratory factor analytic techniques.

Methods

In order to collect the longevity data, a partnership was struck with two major professional organizations, the Council of Colleges of Arts and Sciences (CCAS) and the American Conference of Academic Deans (ACAD). CCAS is the national association for deans of arts and sciences, and its membership includes academic deans, associate deans, and assistant deans. ACAD is essentially an organization for academic deans drawn from a wide range of different disciplines at institutions belonging to the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AACU). More recently, its membership has also been open to all academic officers regardless of membership in AACU.

Both CCAS and ACAD alerted their academic dean members to the survey in a targeted email announcement in mid-October of 2020. ACAD also distributed the announcement to Provosts at that time with a request to pass the information along to their deans. All of the initial announcements included encouragement to participate, as well as a link to the online survey. One week later a reminder email was sent by both organizations that also included the link, with ACAD sending an additional email message on the last day to participate in the study. The deadline for both organizations was set at two weeks after their initial announcements.

Instrumentation. The *Academic Deans Longevity Survey* was created to determine the factors that would likely influence academic deans staying or exiting their positions. In short, the survey included prompts for demographic information, the target longevity items, and some related follow-up questions. Respondents had to confirm that they served in the role of dean as opposed to being an associate or assistant dean. If they indicated either of the latter two choices, they were thanked, but were precluded from going any further.

The first part of the survey asked for basic demographic information about the respondents and their academic units and institutions. They were queried about gender, age range, race/ethnicity, and their highest degree earned. In addition, they were questioned about whether their institution was public or private and its Carnegie classification. In terms of their academic units, the deans were asked to identify the type of school or college by discipline (e.g., arts and sciences, business, communication, education, engineering, health sciences, and nursing). Information was then sought on the approximate enrollment of their academic school/college and of their institution, as well as the number of schools and colleges represented there, and the geographic region of the United States where the institution was located. Finally, they were queried about how long they had served in their current dean role, the position they held immediately prior, and whether they were members of ACAD and/or CCAS.

The core of the survey consisted of items derived from the qualitative study, described earlier, that had been conducted with veteran education deans (Wepner et al., 2020). That study, which used open-ended prompts, revealed 26 categories of reasons that the deans associated with staying or exiting their roles. The nature of these prompts spanned factors pertaining to belief in the institution, its political climate, the support of upper administration, feeling trusted and worthy of confidence, the availability of resources, the capacity to exert an impact through advocacy, the gratification of interpersonal relationships, student considerations, one's orientation toward challenges and goals, and personal considerations like finance, health, and age.

As it turned out, each of the reasons could be stated in the contrary. That provision allowed for the generation of pairs of items in which one item articulated a reason conducive to staying while the other articulated a diametrical reason to exit (e.g., Your work relationships feel meaningful; You no longer find meaning in your relationships at work). The pairing resulted in the 52 target items. Although we suspected that the factors would, as a general rule, tend to exert a relatively equal impact on staying (e.g., manageable workload) or exiting (e.g., unmanageable workload) their roles, the possibility certainly existed that a factor could be notably more salient to one or the other.

Likert-type choices for items on the survey ranged from Absolutely Important (coded as a 6 for analysis) to Not At All important (coded as a 0). Along the continuum were choices for Very Important, Moderately Important, Neutral, Somewhat Unimportant, and Hardly Important corresponding to values of 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1, respectively. To keep the directionality of the Likert responses consistent relative to the item intent and the set of instructions, it was necessary to separate the prompts such that all of the stay items appeared in the first section of the survey and all of the exit items appeared in the second section. In effect, two scales, Stay and Exit, were created, and items were randomly ordered within each one.

Each section had its own set of directions. For the first section, the deans were told to assume that the statements which followed were true. Then they were asked to consider how important the ideas in each statement would be in a decision to stay in their role as dean. In the second section, the deans were again told to assume that the statements which followed were true, but this time the deans were to consider how important the idea would be to a decision to exit their role.

Respondents were then given two further open-ended prompts: first, to identify any other factors not previously mentioned that would impact their decision to stay in the dean's role, and second, to note any other factors that would impact their choice to exit the dean's role.

The final two survey questions asked if the COVID-19 pandemic affected respondents' intentions to remain in or depart their current role. These questions were included because the United States had been beset by this historic circumstance for roughly eight months at the time that the data were collected. It was believed that this extraordinary context could exert an impact on the deans' thinking about staying or exiting their roles. The Likert-type response options for this item were that the pandemic made it: much more likely to leave, somewhat more likely to leave, not a consideration, somewhat more likely to stay, or much more likely to stay. The final survey question was open-ended and asked the deans to express the reasoning they used in responding to the pandemic item.

Analyses. Percentages were calculated for each of the personal demographic prompts and means and standard deviations were computed for the 52 target items. In effect, the Stay items were written as likely incentives to remain in the role, whereas the Exit items were cast as disincentives. It should also be noted that Pearson Product-Moment correlations were used to explore the relationships between these matched pairs of items, controlling for all demographic variables represented in the survey. All but one of the coefficients proved to be significant ($p < .002$), indicating 98% of the item pairs were meaningfully associated.

Visual inspections were made of the relative magnitude of each of the means as well as of their comparative rankings among each set of 26 items. Differential effects of the factors on Staying or Exiting were ascertained by noting how the item pairs varied by ranking within their respective set, as well as by calculating the size of the disparity between their corresponding means.

Multiple linear regression techniques were utilized to examine possible significant differences in the way that deans responded to the target longevity items as a function of the personal and institutional demographic information that they reported. For each set of items, three analyses were conducted as follows: (1) the Stay prompt served as the dependent variable and all demographics characteristics were treated as independent variables, (2) the Exit prompt represented the dependent variable and all demographic characteristics served as the independent variables, and (3) the Stay prompt served as the dependent variable and the Exit prompt plus all demographic characteristics were treated as independent variables (which, in effect, allowed for an examination of the correlation of the pairs controlling for all of the demographic characteristics).

In addition, exploratory factor analysis procedures were conducted for the Stay scale separately, for the Exit scale separately, and for both scales combined. The intent was to determine whether there were one or more overarching psychological factors contributing to the deans' response patterns relative to longevity. Next, open coding was used to organize the qualitative data, in this case, the open-ended responses to factors that the deans believed were not addressed either in the Stay or in Exit target items. Finally, the results of the COVID-19 Likert question were analyzed using simple percentages, and the explanations given by the deans for those responses were once again open coded.

Results

Participants. A total of 272 (33%) deans completed the survey with 55% of the respondents identifying as female, and 45% identifying as male. Eighty percent of the respondents indicated that they were 50 years or older and 31% indicated that they were 65 years or older. Ninety percent of the respondents identified as White, 4% identified as Black, 3% identified as Hispanic, 2% identified as Asian/Pacific Islander, and 1% identified as Other.

Ninety-five percent indicated that they held doctorate degrees and 5% indicated that they have master's degrees. Sixteen percent of respondents previously served as a dean, with the average length of time 4.6 years. Some 68% reported that they were program coordinators, department chairs, department heads, assistant deans, or associate deans; and 16% reported that they were in an Other position. The average length of time that respondents reported having been in their current dean's position was 4.5 years. In terms of institutional affiliations, 43% percent of the respondents were CCAS members, 35% were ACAD members, 16% were both CCAS and ACAD members, and 6% were neither ACAD nor CCAS members.

A total of 200 (74%) of the respondents were arts and sciences deans, whereas 44 respondents, or a total of 16% were drawn from business (4%), communication (2%), education (3%), engineering (1%), health sciences (5%), and nursing (1%). Another 28 deans (10%) oversaw graduate/professional studies, whole colleges, or were another type of dean. Fifty-one percent were working at public institutions and 49% at private institutions. Forty-nine percent were working at master's comprehensive institutions, 29% at doctorate-granting institutions, 18% at baccalaureate or baccalaureate/associate institutions, 3% at associate degree institutions, and 1% at special focus institutions. Twenty-five percent of these institutions were in the Midwest, 33% in the Mid-Atlantic, North, and Northeast regions, 26% in Southern regions, while 16% were located in the West and Pacific West regions. The average number of schools/colleges within the deans' institutions was five. The average enrollment within respondents' institutions was 12,000 students, and the average enrollment within their own schools/colleges was 2,600.

Because nearly three quarters of the participating deans (N=200) represented arts and sciences, analyses were done that compared how these deans responded to the target longevity items compared to the group consisting of all remaining deans (N=72). In effect, the potential impact of arts and sciences dean group membership versus all others was accounted for in separate linear regression analyses for each of the 52 items. The analyses revealed no significant differences ($\underline{p} > .05$) in the way the two sets of deans responded to any the items, giving substantial credence to the assertion that deans broadly defined were likely to answer in similar fashions.

Reasons for Staying and Exiting the Dean Position. Means and standard deviations for the target items appear in Table 1.

Staying. Support from upper administration (M=5.47), making a noteworthy difference (M=5.38), support from faculty and staff (M=5.35), finding joy and satisfaction in the role (M=5.30), and effective work with faculty and staff (M=5.29) were the top five reasons given for staying in the role of dean. Several other factors ranked highly among the reasons to stay, including being healthy enough to make an impact (M=5.23), feelings of role relevance (M=5.23), still having goals to

accomplish (M=5.15), being trusted to provide stability (M=5.15), and one's experience enabling advocacy for the academic unit (M=5.13). Three other factors fell into the Very Important range for staying (i.e., belief in the institution, one's mental, emotional, and physical well-being, and effective teamwork), with some five or more additional factors situated in the upper half of the Moderately Important range as well.

By contrast, the five least important reasons for staying in their positions included a feeling that it is time to retire (M=3.94), contentment to stay at the current level of position (4.12), personal financial needs being met (4.28), having ample personnel (i.e., human) and material resources to do the job (4.30), and successful work with students (4.41).

Exiting. Lack of support from faculty and staff (M=5.39), lack of support from upper administration (M=5.27), a belief that one's leadership is no longer trusted (M=5.19), ineffective work with faculty and staff (M=5.16), and confidence lost in the institution (M=5.11) were the top five reasons for exiting. Several other factors ranked highly within the Moderately Important range, including not being healthy enough to make an impact (M=5.06), feelings of role relevance (M=5.03), lack of enjoyment and gratification from the role (M=4.95), experiencing burnout and exhaustion (4.94), and feeling that one's service is not valued for its continuity, consistency, and influence (4.91). In addition, several items ranked highly within the Moderately Important range, including not finding joy and gratification in the work, burnout and exhaustion, ongoing service not being valued, a diminished capacity to make notable differences, age causing performance to wane, institutional experience not benefiting advocacy, and having an unmanageable workload. Two other factors fell into the Very Important range for exiting (i.e., ability to make an appreciable difference and ineffective advocacy), with some five or more additional factors situated in the upper half of the Moderately Important range as well.

By contrast, the five least important reasons for exiting from dean positions included personal financial needs not being met (3.39), seeking a higher-level position (3.75), unsuccessful work with students (4.01), feeling that one has accomplished enough (4.26), not having ample personnel (i.e., human) and material resources to do the job (4.37), and feeling that it is time to retire (4.41).

Table 1

Rank, Means and Standard Deviations for Stay and Exit Items

Stay Prompts				Exit Prompts			
Rank		Mean	SD	Rank		Mean	SD
1	You retain the support of upper administration.	5.47	.071	2	You lack the support of upper administration.	5.27	0.97
2	You believe that you can make a noteworthy difference.	5.38	0.64	11	Your ability to make an appreciable difference has diminished.	4.90	0.90
3	The faculty and staff remain supportive of you.	5.35	0.68	1	You lack the supports of faculty and staff.	5.39	0.90

Stay Prompts				Exit Prompts			
Rank		Mean	SD	Rank		Mean	SD
4	Your dean's position continues to give you joy and satisfaction.	5.30	0.77	8	Your dean's position is no longer enjoyable and gratifying.	4.95	1.21
5	Your work with faculty and staff is effective.	5.29	0.57	4	Your work with faculty and staff is ineffective.	5.16	0.99
6	Your health permits you to be impactful as a dean.	5.23	0.93	6	Your health has begun to have a negative impact on your performance.	5.06	1.30
7	You continue to feel relevant in your role.	5.23	0.74	7	You have come to feel irrelevant in your role.	5.03	1.23
8	You still have goals to accomplish.	5.13	0.93	23	Realistically you have accomplished all that you can.	4.26	1.29
9	Your leadership is trusted to provide stability.	5.15	0.88	3	Your leadership is no longer trusted to provide stability	5.19	1.03
10	Your institutional experience in the den's role enables you to advocate effectively for your school/college.	5.13	0.80	13	Your institutional experience in the dean's role does not assure you of being an effective advocate for your school/college.	4.71	1.16
11	Your belief in your institution remains high.	5.08	0.87	5	You have lost confidence in your institution.	5.11	1.15
12	You feel fine mentally, emotionally, and physically.	5.03	1.00	9	You find yourself experiencing burnout and exhaustion.	4.94	1.15
13	Your academic unit's team works effectively.	5.01	0.77	16	The effectiveness of teamwork in your school/college has declined.	4.49	1.17
14	Your work relationships feel meaningful.	4.98	0.77	20	You no longer find meaning in your relationships at work.	4.44	1.29
15	The relationships you have formed as a dean help to influence outcomes for your academic unit.	4.95	0.86	18	The relationships you have formed as dean no longer help in achieving outcomes for your school/college.	4.48	1.17
16	You continue to perform effectively regardless of your age.	4.94	1.03	12	You have reached an age where you notice	4.73	1.41

Stay Prompts				Exit Prompts			
Rank		Mean	SD	Rank		Mean	SD
					your performance is waning.		
17	Your institution's political climate values your school/college's work.	4.80	1.06	15	The political climate of your institution does not value your school/college's work.	4.52	1.30
18	Your ongoing service provides continuity, consistency, and influence for your academic unit.	4.79	0.76	10	Your ongoing service is not valued for its continuity, consistency, and influence for your academic unit.	4.91	1.11
19	Faculty and staff personnel matters are manageable.	4.64	0.90	17	Personnel matters for faculty and staff are unmanageable for you.	4.49	1.36
20	You can meet your personal needs as a dean.	4.60	1.17	19	Your personal needs are not being met in your dean role.	4.45	1.37
21	Your workload is manageable.	4.47	1.16	14	Your workload is unmanageable.	4.59	1.26
22	You can work successfully with students.	4.41	1.15	24	Working with students is not as fruitful.	4.01	1.42
23	Ample personnel and operational resources exist to do your job effectively.	4.30	1.18	22	The lack of personnel and operational resources prevents you from doing your job effectively.	4.37	1.21
24	The dean's position supports your financial needs.	4.28	1.33	26	Your financial needs exceed your dean's earnings.	3.39	1.97
25	You are content to stay at the level of your present position.	4.12	1.49	25	You are at the point in your career where you aspire to higher level positions.	3.75	2.04

Focusing simultaneously on the five top reasons given both to stay and to exit, as well as on the bottom five reasons given for remaining or departing the dean role yielded some notable information. Two items fell both into the top items for staying and into the top items for exiting: (1) support from upper administration and (2) support from faculty and staff. In other words, having the support of superiors as well as that of faculty and staff contributed to wanting to remain in the dean's role just as the absence of those two circumstances contributed to reasons to depart the position. The takeaway here is that these items clearly mattered to the deans' perceptions regarding longevity influences.

Similarly, two items fell both into the bottom reasons for staying and the bottom reasons for exiting: (1) contentment to stay at the current level of position and (2) personal financial needs being met. Being content with the level of position and its financial benefits were not compelling reasons to stay in the role, just as contentment with the level of position and its benefits and ample personal benefits did not contribute markedly to staying in the role. Consequently, these two items just as clearly did not matter appreciably to the deans in their longevity perceptions.

Influence of target items on staying and exiting. A number of noteworthy findings occurred as a result of noting the central tendencies and variability of the target items. On the latter count, with the exception of only one item related to retirement, the standard deviations for the Exit items exceeded that for the corresponding Stay items, ranging from about one-fourth to one half of a standard deviation. Put differently, there was less agreement among the deans for the Exit items compared to the Stay items, suggesting that they were exerting somewhat different effects.

Of more interest, specifically turning to the magnitude of the means, all but one of the Stay prompts (i.e., time to retire) and only two of the Exit prompts (i.e., financial needs and aspiring to higher positions) averaged less than 4.0, putting them in the neutral range on the 7-point Likert scale that was used. In effect, these three reasons were the only prompts not consistently perceived as being instrumental to the longevity of academic deans.

The 49 remaining items demonstrated at least a moderate degree of importance to academic deans in remaining in or departing their roles. Fully half of the Stay items fell into the Very Important range, whereas only slightly more than one fourth of the Exit items achieved this same level of influence. On balance, the means for the Stay items exceeded the corresponding Exit items of the pair in 19 of 26 cases. In seven instances, the reverse was true; however, in each case the margin was narrow. Generally speaking, then, the Stay items tended to be both rated greater in importance and less variable.

Demographic influences. Based upon regression analyses, the demographic characteristics that appeared to have the greatest influence on the reasons to stay and/or exit the dean's position were previous experience as an academic dean, gender, race/ethnicity, and age. More specifically, on average the following trends were observed: (1) those with previous academic dean experience rated Stay items about joy and satisfaction, faculty and staff support, accomplishing goals, and a manageable workload higher than those without previous academic dean experience; (2) female academic deans rated both the Stay and Exit item about trust in one's leadership and Exit items about upper administration support and resources to do their job effectively higher than male academic deans; (3) academic deans of color, albeit very few in number, rated exit items about accomplishing goals, service, and confidence in one's institution higher than white academic deans; and (4) older academic deans rated Stay and Exit items about age and retirement, and the Exit item about relevance higher than younger academic deans.

Differential impact of item pairs. Two methods were used to determine the relative differences between the corresponding Stay and Exit pairs. In the first, an examination was made of how the item pairs varied by their ranking within their respective set of 26 prompts, while in the second, the exact differences between their means were calculated. Comparing the ranks of the pairs revealed

that four of the pairs varied considerably. Two comparisons favored the impact of the Stay means (i.e., Still Having Goals to Accomplish (#8 ranking for stay and #23 ranking for exit) and Can Still Make a Difference (#2 ranking for stay and #11 ranking for exit)). For the first, having goals influenced staying notably more than not having them influenced exiting. For the second, feeling that one can still make a difference influenced staying more than not feeling one can make a difference influenced exiting.

On the other hand, two comparisons favored the impact of the Exit Means (i.e., Ongoing Service Not Influencing the Academic Unit (#10 ranking for exit and #18 ranking for stay) and Unmanageable Workload (#14 ranking for exit and #21 ranking for stay)). In the first instance, feeling that one's ongoing service would not assist the academic unit was more of a reason to exit than feeling one's service still assisted the academic unit was a reason to stay. As for the second comparison, an unmanageable workload was more of a motivation to exit the deanship than having a manageable workload was to remaining in the role.

When comparing the magnitude of the means (using a difference approaching .5 or higher as the criteria), six items showed appreciably greater Stay means than the corresponding Exit means. Again, the item pair for Having and Not Having Goals produced a mean difference (MD) of .89 between the pair, and the item pair for Making or Not Making a Difference (MD=.48) was also notable. The same was true of the item pairs for Ample versus Insufficient Personal Finances (MD=.89), Meaningful versus Non-Meaningful Work Relationships (MD=.54), Effective versus Ineffective Teamwork (MD=.52) and Relationships Influencing Outcome versus Not Influencing Outcomes (MD=.47). In only one case, Believing versus Not Believing it was Time to Retire, was the mean for the Exit prompt markedly greater than its Stay counterpart (MD=.47).

Factor analyses. The final major statistical undertaking utilized exploratory factor analyses for the Stay scale items separately, the Exit scale items separately, and then all items combined as a crosscheck. The intent was to examine the underlying psychological factor structure of the longevity construct as evidenced by the responses of the academic deans. Tables 2 and 3 present the results of the separate analyses of the Stay and of the Exit items carried out to five factors. Because the combined analysis shed no new light beyond the separate scale analyses, its results are not reported.

The factor analyses showed that there is one major factor decidedly at work in staying and/or exiting the dean position or what we define here as longevity. On the Stay scale, the highest factor loadings for 24 of the 26 items were notably higher for Factor 1 than for any other of the other factors revealed by that analysis. Likewise, the factor loadings for 24 of the 26 items on the Exit scale fell into its respective Factor 1. We maintain that in the case of reasons for staying in the position this factor is Job Satisfaction, or conversely, Job Dissatisfaction in the case of reasons for exiting the position. These parallel, overarching findings seem to confirm the interpretation given to the data in the previous qualitative study that gave rise to the current investigation (Wepner et al., 2020). From a logical standpoint, it stands to reason that global satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the position represents an aggregate of multiple, narrower perceived causes contributing to staying or exiting.

Table 2

Factor Analysis of the Stay Scale

Item		Factors				
		1	2	3	4	5
1	Your dean's position continues to give you joy and satisfaction.	0.28	0.14	-0.11	0.31	-0.13
2	You still have goals to accomplish.	0.31	0.31	0.02	0.06	0.00
3	You retain the support of upper administration.	0.36	-0.01	-0.18	0.21	-0.05
4	The faculty and staff remain supportive of you.	0.42	0.19	-0.27	0.06	0.01
5	You believe that you can make a noteworthy difference.	0.37	0.33	0.11	0.14	0.18
6	Your ongoing service provides continuity, consistency, and influence for your academic unit.	0.48	0.27	-0.06	-0.17	-0.14
7	Your work relationships feel meaningful.	0.40	0.19	-0.11	-0.07	0.08
8	Your academic unit's team works effectively.	0.43	0.31	-0.08	-0.04	0.21
9	Your belief in your institution remains high.	0.39	0.13	0.00	0.15	0.15
10	Your institutional experience in the dean's role enables you to advocate effectively for your school/college.	0.61	0.30	-0.15	0.23	-0.38
11	The relationships you have formed as dean help to influence outcomes for your academic unit.	0.65	0.35	-0.06	-0.03	-0.18
12	Your work with faculty and staff is effective.	0.54	0.27	0.14	-0.04	0.00
13	You can work successfully with students.	0.46	0.08	0.11	-0.03	0.05
14	Your leadership is trusted to provide stability.	0.60	0.22	0.01	-0.18	0.00
15	You can meet your personal needs as a dean.	0.56	-0.30	-0.05	0.01	0.04
16	The dean's position supports your financial needs.	0.45	-0.32	-0.06	-0.25	-0.14
17	Your institution's political climate values your school/college's work.	0.48	-0.14	-0.22	0.02	0.15
18	Faculty and staff personnel matters are manageable.	0.56	-0.22	-0.33	-0.20	0.22
19	Ample personnel and operational resources exist to do your job effectively.	0.56	-0.24	-0.36	-0.12	0.14

	Item	Factors 1	2	3	4	5
20	You feel fine mentally, emotionally, and physically.	0.48	-0.48	0.06	0.43	-0.02
21	Your workload is manageable.	0.53	-0.52	-0.16	0.10	0.00
22	You continue to feel relevant in your role.	0.50	0.11	0.36	-0.01	0.35
23	Your health permits you to be impactful as a dean.	0.53	-0.29	0.44	0.19	0.03
24	You continue to perform effectively regardless of your age.	0.48	-0.02	0.57	-0.04	-0.01
25	You are content to stay at the level of your present position.	0.43	-0.20	0.21	-0.25	-0.17
26	The time has not yet come for you to retire.	0.47	-0.22	0.17	-0.25	-0.27

Table 3

Factor Analysis of the Exit Scale

	Item	Factors 1	2	3	4	5
27	The political climate of your institution does not value your school/college's work.	0.46	0.32	0.15	-0.14	-0.24
28	Personnel matters with faculty and staff are unmanageable for you.	0.56	0.35	0.00	-0.13	-0.17
29	The lack of personnel and operational resources prevents you from doing your job effectively.	0.49	0.44	0.21	-0.09	-0.23
30	You find yourself experiencing burnout and exhaustion.	0.59	0.40	-0.29	-0.25	0.31
31	Your workload is unmanageable.	0.65	0.45	-0.07	-0.21	0.07
32	You have come to feel irrelevant in your role.	0.68	0.03	-0.26	-0.06	-0.12
33	Your health has begun to have a negative impact on your performance.	0.68	-0.04	-0.46	0.03	-0.07
34	You have reached an age where you notice your performance is waning.	0.62	-0.20	-0.46	0.17	-0.27
35	You are at the point in your career where you aspire to higher level positions.	0.18	0.22	0.05	0.51	0.12
36	You believe the time has come for you to retire.	0.37	0.01	-0.49	0.23	-0.11
37	Your dean's position is no longer enjoyable and gratifying.	0.66	0.10	-0.19	-0.08	0.28

Item		Factors 1	2	3	4	5
38	Realistically you have accomplished all that you can.	0.54	-0.11	0.01	0.10	-0.13
39	You lack the support of upper administration.	0.54	-0.04	0.17	-0.13	0.18
40	You lack the support of faculty and staff.	0.58	-0.24	0.04	-0.12	0.20
41	Your ability to make an appreciable difference has diminished.	0.64	-0.19	0.17	0.05	-0.16
42	Your ongoing service is not valued for its continuity, consistency, and influence for your academic unit.	0.67	-0.34	0.13	-0.01	0.15
43	You no longer find meaning in your relationships at work.	0.65	0.01	0.28	-0.07	-0.03
44.	The effectiveness of teamwork in your school/college has declined.	0.72	-0.05	0.29	-0.08	-0.16
45	You have lost confidence in your institution.	0.62	-0.15	0.12	-0.01	0.10
46	Your institutional experience in the dean's role does not assure you of being an effective advocate for your school/college.	0.75	-0.21	0.10	0.06	0.06
47	The relationships you have formed as dean no longer help in achieving outcomes for your school/college.	0.78	-0.17	0.20	0.07	-0.02
48	Your work with faculty and staff is ineffective.	0.67	-0.24	-0.12	0.04	0.08
49	Working with students is not as fruitful.	0.50	0.00	0.15	0.09	-0.20
50	Your leadership is no longer trusted to provide stability.	0.53	-0.22	0.07	0.04	0.02
51	Your personal needs are not being met in your dean role.	0.59	0.18	0.05	0.14	0.22
52	Your financial needs exceed your dean's earnings.	0.23	0.38	0.20	0.64	0.11

For the factor analysis centered on staying in the position, there were minor second and third factors at work. Under factor 2, four items clustered which seemed to represent the notion of achieving outcomes. There were three items under Factor 3 that clustered which appeared to represent maintaining relevant performance. For the factor analysis of the exiting items, one additional factor emerged. That respective Factor 2 showed five clustered items which appeared to represent barriers to achievement that induce frustration. In any case, it should be acknowledged that for each of these five items, higher coefficients aligned with Factor 1, suggesting that it was the dominant influence on longevity.

Lastly, one especially revealing finding from the factor analyses is that, on balance, the factor loadings were higher for exiting than for staying. That pattern suggests that, from a psychological

standpoint, negative reasons to leave the dean position were more pragmatically and emotionally compelling than positive factors were to remain in it.

Other possible longevity factors. When asked to list any reasons that were not cited in the Stay scale, the deans identified the following: favorable decisions, practices, and policies set in place by upper administration, effective relationships with their supervisor, family needs being met, the need for continuous leadership in difficult times like a pandemic, the availability of a capable successor, and seeing an internal opportunity for growth or upward mobility. Their responses to reasons that might have been overlooked in the Exit scale largely resembled the Stay omissions, but in reverse. These reasons included: unfavorable decisions, practices, and policies set in place by upper administration, poor relationships with their supervisor, family needs such as re-location or spousal health, and external opportunities for growth and upward mobility. One additional reason to Exit centered on changes in upper administration. Each of these additional factors seems reasonable enough to warrant future consideration.

When asked how the COVID-19 pandemic affected deans' intentions to remain in or exit their current role, a total of 43% responded that it was not a consideration to stay or exit their position. Some 29% responded that it had made them somewhat (16%) or much more likely (13%) to stay in their role, and 28% responded that it has made them somewhat (23%) or much more likely (5%) to exit their role. With 72% indicating that it was either not a factor or an actual reason to stay, and only 5% characterizing the pandemic as a major reason to exit, our data collection was seemingly not overly influenced by the pandemic.

Nonetheless, in explaining why they responded to the question as they did, the deans' top two themes for why COVID-19 was not a consideration to stay/exit or why they would likely stay were: feeling especially critical or essential to their academic units during the pandemic and COVID-19 representing just another challenge of the job. The top theme for why respondents were likely to exit due to COVID-19 was the challenge to the financial stability of their institutions.

Discussion and Implications

A majority of the respondents who completed the demographic questions on the *Academic Deans Longevity Survey* were arts and sciences deans who identified as White female and 50 years or older. They had been serving in their positions an average of 4.5 years, which is the average number of years that deans serve across disciplines (Bradshaw, 2015; Butin, 2016; Greicar, 2009; Heinsz, 1999-2000; Keyes et al., 2010; Merrion, 2003; Robbins & Schmitt, 1994; Rubino, 2019; Thomas & Fragueiro, 2011). Slightly more than half were working at public institutions, many of which were categorized as master's comprehensive. Most respondents came from the Mid-Atlantic, North, Northeast, and Midwest regions of the United States.

In addressing the question of the factors that contribute to academic deans' interest and ability to stay in their administrative positions beyond relatively brief periods of time, one major factor arose: *Job Satisfaction.* This multifaceted conceptualization encompasses a constellation of impactful elements including the capacity to do the job, enjoying authority and empowerment, being valued, appreciating the culture of the institution and the academic unit, being able to cope with the influence of external forces, and envisioning professional growth opportunities. Such a global

finding seems to confirm the interpretation of data from the forerunner qualitative study that gave rise to the current investigation (Wepner et al., 2020). And relatedly, both by logical extension and by formal empirical analysis, its converse, Job Dissatisfaction, surfaced as the definitive organizing factor for deans' reasons for exiting their positions.

Elements that appeared to be vital for deans' job satisfaction, and for staying in their positions, were perceptions of support, the ability to make a noteworthy difference, finding joy and satisfaction in the role, and effective work with faculty and staff. In contrast, elements that appeared to contribute appreciably to a dean's decision to exit the position were lack of support, a belief that one's leadership is no longer trusted, ineffective work with faculty and staff, and lost confidence in the institution.

In particular, two related reasons appeared especially critical for deans to stay in or exit from their positions: (1) support from upper administration and (2) support from faculty and staff. Support from supervisors *and* faculty and staff were perceived as important for the deans to remain in their positions just as the perceived absence of those two circumstances served as reasons for departing the position. Staying power in the role seemed to be dependent on these feelings about sources of support. Beyond the target items, deans' open-ended comments further explained the importance of having favorable decisions, practices, and policies in place by upper administration and enjoying effective relationships with their supervisors. This type of upper administrative backing and assistance seemed especially important to female academic deans for exiting their positions. The tendency for females to value relationships more than males aligns with research about women leaders (Toussaint & Webb, 2005).

Two items that were not rated as important for either staying or exiting were: (1) contentment to stay at the current level of position and (2) personal financial needs being met. The deans who responded appeared to be satisfied with their current positions and their earnings for the work that they were expected to do. As would be expected, older academic deans were more concerned than younger deans about age, retirement, and relevance in relation to their staying power. They expressed concern about decreasing stamina and energy as factors that could limit their time in the role. On those counts, they appeared to understand the need to be acutely aware of changes in their health that would affect their ability to do the job. These perceived impediments have been previously found to affect deans' longevity in the deanship (Coll et al., 2019; Wasicsko & Balch, 2014).

The differences in means between staying and exiting the dean's role indicated that two reasons were more important for staying than exiting: still having goals to accomplish and remaining able to make a difference. Conversely, two reasons influenced exiting more so than staying: ongoing service not benefiting one's academic unit and having an unmanageable workload. These two aspects of the position were more of an incentive to exit than their opposites were to remain in the role. These deans seemed to believe that as long as they still had a purpose, they should stay, but as soon as they determined that their service, especially with an unmanageable workload, was not making a difference, it would be time to exit their positions. Interestingly, the pandemic did not exert a noticeable impact on their reported longevity perceptions. In fact, the respondents mentioned that the need for continuous leadership in difficult times like a pandemic was a reason to stay and continue to make a difference.

While the deans who responded to this survey, on average, have not been in their positions for a duration sufficient to be considered long-serving per se, they indicated that their job satisfaction and eventual longevity would be largely dependent on the support they received from those above and below them. If they were to perceive a lack of support from either or both, they would be predisposed to exit their positions. This finding is a reminder that academic deans reside in the middle of the academic ladder in advancing the work of their school or college (see for example, Morris, 1981; Williams, 2017). Deans must continuously seek and encourage cooperation, collegiality, and support, while finding ways to negotiate and compromise to achieve desired outcomes for their faculty, staff, and students, while concurrently supporting the university's mission (Williams, 2017). In effect, they are at the forefront of institutional change for the academic disciplines they represent (Gabbe et al., 2008).

As indicated, support from upper administration is essential to enhance deans' ability to excel (Merrion, 2003). The deans in our study communicated that if a Provost or Academic Vice President does not support and empower them, while providing the necessary capacity to do their jobs adequately, they will be inclined to leave. Given the literature on the limited terms of deans (Butin, 2016; Greicar, 2009; Robbins & Schmitt, 1994), the relative scarcity of qualified candidates (Appadurai, 2009; Bornstein, 2010; Luna, 2012; Mead-Fox, 2009; Reichert, 2016**),** and the challenges of growing your own deans (DeZure, Shaw, & Rojewski, 2014)**,** it behooves Provosts and Academic Vice Presidents to realize the criticality of their endorsements and empowering of their deans to help keep these important direct reports in their roles, especially if they show decided potential for leading their schools and colleges. Provosts and Vice Presidents, as the academic leaders of their institutions, need to be willing and able to support, mentor, and guide their deans so that they are positioned for success. Provosts and Vice Presidents who are new to their positions should work together with their already serving deans to learn about and honor the current initiatives that are having a positive impact in their schools and colleges.

Moreover, these central administrators should support their deans' networking and professional development opportunities. Deans' networking with other deans outside their institutions provides peer support for giving and taking advice. Formal professional development activities such as leadership institutes, seminars, and workshops offer support and reinforce ideas about leadership. Formal mentoring relationships offer encouragement in professional and personal development and assist with general knowledge and skills. Performance appraisals also can be a motivating element if they are intended to provide guidance for improvement and are offered predominately in a spirit of affirmation. Deans should also be encouraged to pursue their own professional development in the form of scholarship or artistry, so that they can stay in touch with their academic disciplines (Greicar, 2009; Merrion, 2003).

On the other hand, deans must earn the respect of upper administration from their own work ethic, ability to build programs and develop innovations, commitment to the institution, and capacity to establish effective relationships with their faculty and staff so that they, in turn, work collaboratively to accomplish goals that have been set for their programs and students. Deans are obliged to appreciate that the ability to thrive long term means that they have the sensitivity and wherewithal to focus on serving others. This mindset supports previous research findings about the importance of interpersonal/negotiating skills and honesty and advocacy (Butin, 2016; Wepner et

al., 2014, 2020). Deans would do well to believe in and trust the people they lead and appreciate the value of positive relationships, effective teams, and shared responsibilities as critical pathways to important accomplishments (Batch & Heyliger, 2014; Wasicsko & Balch 2014; Wiley 2013).

To sum up, the leadership that deans bring is essential to the success of their schools and colleges (Gabbe et al., 2008; King & Hampel 2018; Ngo, De Boer, & Enders, 2014). They must navigate both up and down by engaging regularly with senior officials, faculty, staff, and students so that they have the necessary resources and support to sustain current initiatives and cultivate new opportunities (Gabbe et al., 2008; June, 2014). Deans will benefit immeasurably if they are persuasive and persistent in meeting the challenges that come their way, similar to the TV detective Columbo who kept showing up with the same questions until he found the answer (Reichert, 2016). If deans feel satisfied with their positions because of support from both directions, which most likely is a reflection of their own leadership acumen, they will endure in being supreme doers for their schools and colleges (Williams, 2017).

There was one limitation with the survey worth noting, which was the unevenness of the sample size with arts and sciences deans responding in much greater numbers than deans from other types of schools and colleges. This imbalance could conceivably affect the generalizability of the findings to deans from other disciplines (e.g., business, communication, education, engineering, health sciences, and nursing), although there was no empirical evidence to that effect with our sample. Even so, additional studies should be conducted of deans from these disciplines to see directly whether the same factors for staying and exiting apply to them rather than leaving the matter to statistical inference.

Looking to the future, studies of other types of academic deans across the university can provide additional information about the construct of longevity. Furthermore, studies of Provosts' and Presidents' longevity can help to provide a better understanding of the benefits and impediments of central administrative success at higher education institutions. Given that leadership stability promotes continuity and consistency in the way an academic ship is steered, it is fitting for the higher education community to continue to study ways in which those possessing the most administrative authority can navigate their institutions to reach their full potential. To the extent that longevity matters to that attainment, those in the position to affect deans' tenure in their positions should keep in mind that the demand for effective leaders outstrips supply and internal leadership cultivation does not always lead to desired outcomes.

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The Dean's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Fellows Pilot Program at Michigan State University

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Introduction

Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) is fundamental to any university's institutional excellence. As such, it should be infused into the university's most important academic human resources—the curriculum, the compositional diversity of the university's students, faculty, and staff, as well as policies and practices designed to improve campus climate. DEI should also be integrated across admissions, faculty development, marketing and communication, and institutional advancement.

Yet, this is not the case in most universities of higher education. During an era of shrinking university budgets nationwide, DEI work is often introduced as an additive, rather than embedded into the overall university system. Moreover, it tends to be the least resourced work in higher education administration. DEI work also tends to be funded by non-recurring budget streams, instead of recurring ones, and therefore the work can easily be discontinued. A 2019 *Insight into Diversity* study reveals that even though DEI costs have increased by nearly a third from 2014/15 to 2018/19 academic years, it accounts for an extremely low 0.49 percent of university-wide budgets (Insight to Diversity, para. 3).

In response to the turmoil of visible social injustices nationwide, universities want to present the image that they take DEI seriously. Therefore, they perform DEI, that is, create visible expressions of DEI support—webspace, statements, and token appointments that are neither institutionalized nor embedded in the administrative structure of the university. Because these appointments are made at the whim of a sitting administrator, they may be dissolved when another administrator arrives. Moreover, individuals chosen to do this work are often not tenured, and therefore are vulnerable to censure and may refrain from pushing for impactful DEI change for fear of losing their positions, jobs, and livelihood. Recent studies show that university Chief Diversity Officers on average do not last very long in their positions (Hamilton, 2021; Fairchild, 2020; Cutter and Weber, 2020).

Against this backdrop, the College of Social Science (SSC) wanted to assume a leadership position in the DEI space at Michigan State University (MSU). Towards these ends, the College created a new position of Associate Dean for DEI. This Associate Dean however had little to no support for the work that needed to be done, as the College failed to prioritize DEI in its budgeting or funding. Thus, the SSC's Dean's DEI Fellow's Pilot Program was created to help propel the College's DEI agenda. The authors of this article are members of the first cohort, which included rotating graduate student membership.

We ground the development of the Dean's DEI Fellow's Pilot Program in broader MSU social context, reflecting on our experience with this program, and sharing the lessons learned. We view the lack of resources/support in MSU's College of Social Science in relation to other colleges at MSU, Colleges of Social Sciences (or equivalent Arts and Sciences colleges) nationwide, Schools in the Big 10 Conference, and DEI award-winning Champion institutions. Framing our discussion within the available literature, we make recommendations concerning the under resourcing (budgets, human resources) of DEI projects and programming, the performative nature of DEI structures (single position, lack of infrastructure), and the fact that DEI is not built into the reward structures (e.g., tenure and promotion) of most institutions.

Origins. In March 2020, there was a dean transition at MSU's SSC. The outgoing Dean was assuming a more senior leadership position as Provost at a peer institution. Because of this transition, an Interim Dean was named. The past Dean had conceptualized the position of Associate Dean for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion before she left the university and hired the existing Faculty Excellence Advocate[1] to fill that position after a university-wide search process. Coming on the heels of the murder of George Floyd, and the Black Lives Matter Movement, the Interim Dean of Michigan State University's largest college wanted to have the SSC assume a leadership position in the DEI space. While there was an articulated intent to build and advance DEI in SSC, the resources and staffing for this work was non-existent. Therefore, with the encouragement of the new Interim Dean, the in-coming Associate Dean for DEI visioned a Dean's DEI Fellows Pilot Program which would provide support for DEI work in the College.

The in-coming Associate Dean and the chair of the DEI committee in one of the SSC departments set about the task of imagining what this pilot program would look like. The process was data driven. We scoured the internet for similar programs in the Big Ten Conference and further. The institutions that we explored had various DEI structures and levels of support. Universities with the highest levels of support, had DEI administrators (i.e., Chief Diversity Officer at the university level, Associate or Assistant Deans, and/or Director of DEI Offices at the College level) with support staff (i.e., Assistant Director, program coordinator) embedded into their overall DEI structures, clear and actionable DEI strategic plans, recruitment programs for future students, required and elective DEI courses, and mentoring initiatives for pre-college students. In addition, peer institutions, for the most part, provided more support for program participants than we were able to secure for our DEI Fellows Program.

Our initial idea was to bring together faculty (tenure-stream and fixed term, or those on short-term contracts), academic staff, and graduate students to work together on identified College-wide DEI concerns. After consultation with the Interim Dean, however, the program scope was narrowed to only include faculty. The central question that propelled the creation of the Dean's DEI Fellows Program was the following: What does a leader who is committed to, and demonstrates equity and inclusion act like and what is that skill set? Working under the premise that universities, like other communities, have struggled to both attract, retain, and promote, diverse leaders and build inclusive environments, the SSC's Dean's DEI Fellows Pilot Program was envisaged as a competitive

[1] Faculty Excellence Advocates at Michigan State University work with faculty, department chairs, and the Dean's Office, to create a climate of, and meet its goals for, quality, inclusiveness, alignment, objectivity, consistency, and transparency of all academic human resource policies and practices (particularly faculty recruitment, retention, and advancement) in all the colleges at Michigan State University.

program that would attract faculty to build leadership skills around DEI and prepare the fellows to lead internally and externally. Additionally, the Dean's DEI Fellows Pilot Program would offer opportunities for professional development around DEI issues.

Purpose and Focus. During their fellowship year, the DEI Fellows would be expected to participate in the creation and structuring of DEI programming in the SSC, including: (1) assisting with the development of innovative strategies and programs that advance DEI in SSC; (2) having meaningful impact on DEI policy in SSC and its units; (3) serving in collaboration and partnership with the Associate Dean for DEI to realize the overall SSC DEI strategic initiative; (4) undertaking one or more mutually defined DEI projects that benefit the Fellow's unit and SSC at large; and (5) participating in weekly meetings with the Dean's DEI Fellows team.

The Associate Dean and the Interim Dean pinpointed key DEI focus areas for the pilot program, including:

> (1) Inclusive Climate: Implement a comprehensive College climate assessment system to regularly evaluate the climate for equity and inclusion in SSC.
>
> (2) Equity and Access for Students: Develop innovative strategies to advance the recruitment, retention, funding and success, graduation/promotion of diverse students. For instance, the creation of a summer immersion program for first generation students, or First-Generation Scholars program.
>
> (3) Education and Learning: Design/re-design curriculum and pedagogy that prepares students for a diverse and inclusive world (e.g., creation of a DEI minor).
>
> (4) DEI Criteria for Faculty Reappointment, Promotion, and Tenure: Assess SSC policy and practices on key decision points for faculty—annual review, promotion, assessment of academic progress, etc.—to ensure that faculty governing documents relating to Reappointment, Promotion, and Tenure support greater equity and inclusivity.
>
> (5) Leadership and Professional Development: Develop training and skills that nurture diverse talent and cultivate leaders and professionals to implement and sustain a diverse, equitable, and inclusive world. (Diversity Fellows SSC, 2021)

Fellows would submit an application for the Dean's DEI Fellows Pilot Program which addressed proposed DEI focus areas that they would like to concentrate on during the first year of the program. Successful Fellows would report directly to the Associate Dean of DEI and would be appointed for a negotiable 1-2-year term. Each Dean's DEI Fellow would receive $4,000 which could be used for professional development, teaching/research materials, funding for community partners, or other appropriate uses, as determined by the fellow and approved by the Associate Dean for DEI. Funds could not however be used for compensation or for course buyouts or be in conflict with Michigan State University policy regarding expenditure of general funds.

Being mid-semester in the pilot year, the Interim Dean and Associate Dean agreed that a competition would not be launched, but rather, the Associate Dean would handpick members of the 2020-2021 Dean's DEI Fellows Pilot Program cohort. The Fellows included a tenured Associate Professor in the School of Criminal Justice, and past chair of her school's DEI committee; a tenured Associate Professor in the School of Social Work, and current chair of his school's DEI committee; and a Fixed Term Assistant Professor in the Department of Human Development and Family Studies, and current chair of his department's DEI committee, who in collaboration with the Associate Dean for DEI and her DEI graduate assistant carved out activities for the initial 1.5 semester appointment, including:

Creating two DEI Minors—domestic and global focus;

Creating three new courses for the DEI Minors, including one entry course on "Critical DEI Studies" covering both DEI domestic and global issues; and two capstone seminars covering domestic and global issues, respectively;

Creating a DEI Small Grants Program for faculty, staff, and graduate students;

Creating a proposal for an empowered and inclusive Office of DEI/Associate Dean for DEI Office Structure redesigned organizational diagram;

Writing and publishing articles about our process.

University Climate

The DEI Fellows Program was implemented on the heels of a major sexual abuse scandal and series of racist incidents on campus emblematic of the need for change. Regarding the former, allegations of serial sexual abuse by MSU faculty member Larry Nassar became public in September 2016, with the publication of a story in *The Indianapolis Star* (Evans, Alesia & Kwiatkowski, 2016). Ultimately, the allegations of more than 160 women and girls (Correa & Louttit, 2018) resulted in a 175-year prison sentence for Nassar for child pornography and first-degree criminal sexual conduct (Adams, 2018). Although MSU reassigned him from clinical and patient responsibilities after receiving a criminal complaint a few months prior to the initial story (Evans, Alesia & Kwiatkowski, 2016) and subsequently fired him (Adams, 2018), survivor complaints (including some to university personnel and local police) were ignored for decades prior (Dolce, 2018; see also NPR's Believed podcast). As a result, several MSU administrators (including President Lou Anna Simon) and other personnel resigned, and/or were charged, and/or convicted for actions or inaction related to the Nassar case (Hauser & Zraick, 2018).

While the MSU community was still reeling from this egregious failure, a series of racist incidents occurred on campus, three in October 2019. In one incident, two men trespassed on the property of the MSU Hillel Jewish Student Center and destroyed the Sukkah during a Jewish holiday (Tidwell, 2019). In another, two African American students reported that a toilet paper noose was hung on their dorm room door (Walker, 2019). The culprits stated that it was not meant to resemble a noose (Schellong, 2019). Afterwards, the executive director for residential education and housing, Ray Gasser, sent out an email in which he referred to the noose incident as a "Halloween prank." This

email was not well received by the Black student population already aggrieved by the noose. Students saw the email as offensive and dismissive to their feelings (Johnson, 2019). During a town hall meeting organized by the Black Students Association and Associated Students of MSU, Black students made it clear that a response like Gasser's normalizes racial bias at MSU (Walker, 2019). Gasser, who was in attendance, apologized, and apologized again in another email to MSU students, while reaffirming the university's efforts to make its living space diverse and inclusive (Johnson, 2019).

In the wake of the noose incident, an Associate Professor of public relations and social media in the College of Communication Arts and Sciences created a survey to understand how various people respond to racist online speech. The survey asked students to rate racially charged social media statements by determining the degree to which the statements were stereotypical, offensive, positive, funny, or prejudiced (Burr, 2019). While the survey included a warning that the content could be considered racially stereotypical and offensive, this statement appeared at the bottom of the survey (Johnson, 2019). Minoritized students insisted that the disclaimer was insufficient, and many reported feeling ill and unsafe on campus after the survey was circulated (Johnson, 2019b). The survey was taken down, but it had nevertheless set into motion, conversations about the racial climate at MSU and the loopholes inherent in the university's IRB process (Guzzman, 2019). In the aftermath, MSU Black Students' Alliance hosted a community forum and students protested on campus, voicing concerns that the university does not adequately respond to racism on campus (Johnson, 2019a).

These incidents continued into 2020. In February, the gift shop at the Wharton Center for Performing Arts displayed figures of historical and current African American leaders hanging from a rack resembling a tree (Das, 2020). Again, MSU apologized, calling the display "inappropriate and insensitive" (Rahman, 2020). In his response letter, MSU President acknowledged the traumatic impact of the display, especially on African American communities, noting the launch of racial-bias education for Wharton staff, a university-wide DEI strategic planning, and the recruitment of a new Chief Diversity Officer (Das, 2020). Later that month, during an "Ask [the] President" student event, a series of racist remarks were posted on the Q & A screen by audience members (Guzman, 2020). Black students were frustrated when the MSU police pointed to free speech as the reason not to investigate the anonymous comments (Monroe, 2020).

Though the frequency of such incidents has declined, perhaps due to a suspension of on-campus activity resulting from the COVID-19 global pandemic, these episodes have nonetheless, continued. In June of 2020, a university employee was investigated after posting racist comments and stories on social media (Berg, 2020). The employee was initially suspended, but later fired in response to a student-led petition for dismissal (Chhabra, 2020). In 2021, students continued to express frustration with the university response to racism on campus. At a March 25th Community Town Hall on Anti-Asian Violence, students linked racialized rhetoric, like comments by an MSU donor targeting Vietnamese businesses, to violence against Asian and Asian-American communities. They called for the university to change the name of the offending donor-funded program and expressed more general frustration at the failure of MSU to listen and be held accountable (Hall, 2021). Student pressure for change at MSU is not at all new and goes back to the Civil Rights Era. (Multicultural Center, para. 2).

University Transitions

Following the fallout engendered by the Nassar affair, a new President and Provost were hired at Michigan State. President Samuel Stanley, an infectious disease medical doctor by training, joined Michigan State on August 1, 2019, from Stony Brook University, where he had served as President. (Office of President, para. 1-2) Provost Teresa K. Woodruff, the past Dean and Associate Provost of Northwestern's Graduate School and an endowed professor of Obstetrics & Gynecology, was hired to fill the position ceded by Interim Provost Teresa Sullivan, President Emerita of University of Virginia, who had agreed to serve her alma mater in this capacity at the invitation of President Stanley (Provost, para. 3). With both President Stanley and Provost Woodruff in place, in late summer of 2020, a search committee was convened to hire a new Vice President and Chief Diversity Officer (VP CDO). Jabbar Bennett, an Associate Professor of medicine and former Associate Provost for Diversity and Inclusion and Chief Diversity Officer at Northwestern University was hired (President, para. 1). Bennett's position was brand-new, as Michigan State University had previously only had a Senior Advisor to the President on Diversity, who also served as the Director of the Office of Inclusion and Intercultural Initiatives (OI3). Prior to Bennett's hire, President Stanley had set up a DEI Steering Committee as well as a Taskforce on Racial Equity. The steering committee was tasked to:

> Produce a university-wide inventory of DEI efforts and initiatives;
>
> Aggregate feedback across campus and from alumni and external partners;
>
> Review and highlight best practices and insights on DEI efforts from benchmarking;
>
> Identify and recommend metrics, central and unit based, to measure on-going progress for DEI across MSU; as well as unit/role accountability for DEI initiatives and outcomes across MSU;
>
> Make recommendations for a Strategic DEI Planning Process for the university, with short-term, mid-range and long-term action items and goals, with the end goal of making MSU a national leader in this area." (President, para., 7)

The Racial Equity Taskforce's work concentrated on three focus areas: 1) policing; 2) campus climate and safety, 3) and faculty and staff diversity. For the first time in the authors' cumulative 45-year tenure at Michigan State, the university was engaging and having open dialogue about DEI.

Just before the hiring of the VP CDO, the Associate Dean for DEI in the SSC collaborated with two other DEI Deans on campus to create a Council of Diversity Deans (CODD), whose aim it was to provide a university level "forum for Assistant and Associate Deans with college level responsibility for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at Michigan State University." The Council "provides recommendations for policies and procedures that strengthen diversity, equity, and inclusion within the MSU community . . . [and] collaborates with university administration including the President, Provost, Vice President for DEI, and Deans to inform the University's overall action plan for DEI." (Inclusion and Intercultural Initiatives, para. 1-2)

The Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic forced another transition and presented many challenges that would add additional roadblocks to the advancement of DEI initiatives at MSU. As a result of the pandemic, the university experienced an economic loss from the emergency measures it had to take to mitigate the effects of the virus. One of the ensuing consequences came, in April 2020, with the announcement from university administration that there would be a tuition freeze (Guerrant, 2020). This resulted in widespread budget reductions ranging from salary cuts at the executive and faculty levels (including no merit increases), to hiring freezes, and suspending matching contributions on retirement plans and furloughs for non-academic staff (Office of the President, 2020). Discretionary expenses were discouraged, and a 3% budget reduction was applied to academic administrative units (Office of the President, 2020). At the same time, employees were instructed to work remotely. Under this backdrop, DEI work and programming, which ran on a skeletal basis, remained wrapped in tense climates due to the uncertainty about the financial future of the university.

The pandemic revealed differentials in the experiences of faculty, staff, and students. Minoritized and low-income populations were severely impacted, with many having uneven internet access. (Francis and Weller, 2021). Some students relied on public internet at fast food restaurants and parking lots to access courses. Others who had internet access at home may have experienced the doubly challenging reality of living in distracting and/or unsafe environments (Office of Civil Rights, 2021). These realities and environments were not learning-friendly, yet the university was not as proactive in addressing and adjusting to these circumstances with student success in mind as it could have been. These disparities were further exacerbated by instructors who demanded that students have cameras and other accessories to complete courses successfully. The differential impact of COVID was also revealed in the discomfort expressed by students who lived in suboptimal conditions and felt bullied by their professors' insistence that they turn on their computer cameras (Office of Civil Rights, 2021).

The pivot to remote learning also raised security concerns for many students who faced domestic/gender violence in their homes, at the hands of members of their households. Further, women (faculty and/or students) who bore the responsibility of childcare (and child education) or eldercare were adversely impacted (Office of Civil Rights, 2021). The members of the Dean's DEI Fellows program were all too aware of these disparities but struggled to address them due to the financial and systemic restrictions that were made more visible during the pandemic.

Challenges and Opportunities

The DEI Fellows Program operated in a financially restricted environment, which challenged the opportunities for funding and resources to accomplish the work. University and college priorities often placed DEI work at the low rung of the ladder. In research-intensive universities, research takes precedence over other pursuits. Thus, the expectations for research productivity (publications and grants) remain, and DEI work is seldom counted toward Reappointment, Promotion, and Tenure. Therefore, in setting up the Dean's DEI Fellows Program, an expectation for scholarly production was necessarily built into the program. Yet, there was also resistance to incentivizing the participation of Fellows by granting time away from teaching or providing adequate monetary

relief. Neither were exemptions for other types of time release from preexisting workloads considered, despite the considerable amount of time needed to complete the DEI agenda for the first year of the program. Another form of resistance came with the lack of staff support for DEI work in the College—a dearth that the program was set up to address.

Effective DEI work is both collaborative and inclusive. The initial proposal for the DEI Fellows program included staff personnel, but there was reluctance to grant staff time away from their work to dedicate to the fellows' program. Shrinking budgets, financial cuts, and uncertainty due to the pandemic, made it even more difficult to fight resistance. Nonetheless, financial constraints do not explain the lack of prioritization of DEI work by university administrations. Such resistance is neither new nor resulting from the pandemic, rather it is a sign of systemic white supremacy which allows for a devaluation of DEI in support of the status quo, of things staying the same, of "the way it has always been done." Despite this resistance, the Associate Dean for DEI was able to secure a small research budget for each fellow in recognition of their work in the program.

Accomplishments

In recognition of the need for a better resourced and more collaborative approach to DEI, Associate Dean and the DEI Fellows prioritized the construction of a proposal for a Diversity, Equity and Inclusive Affairs (DEIA) Office. The proposal provided an organizational structure, a description of additional DEIA office positions, and a vision for working with the other Associate Deans as an interdependent network to integrate DEI into every theater of operation in the College. To contextualize and justify the additional positions, a set of responsibilities was provided. Given MSU's ongoing budgetary constraints exasperated by the Nassar sexual assault survivor payout, related fines, and the pandemic, the proposal drew upon existing personnel in the college as much as possible. For example, the document asked for an incorporation of DEI responsibilities into the work of current communications and development specialists by allocating a portion of their time to DEI work, and the increasing of the Associate Dean for DEI appointment to .75 FTE from its present .51 FTE combined Associate Dean and Faculty Excellence roles. Fully integrating DEI into the College, we argued, would require additional positions, including an Assistant Director/Dean who would be in charge on the day to day running of the DEIA Office, an Assistant Director of DEI for Undergraduate and Graduate Affairs, an administrative assistant, as well as a graduate student assistant. The proposal forcefully tied DEI to academic excellence, included justifications for the infusion of DEI into every single college endeavor, and concluded with a description of the resources needed to realize the reconceptualized structure.

As part of our multipronged DEI college strategy, the DEI Fellows worked to create a DEI minor track for Michigan State University students. We conceptualized and created from the start, three new syllabi: an introduction to critical DEI studies and two exit capstone courses—domestic and global tracks. The three courses were visioned to capture the realities of all student populations in the SSC and beyond, both domestic and global.

"Introduction to Critical DEI Studies" is a 4-credit course aimed at introducing students to critical DEI issues, different DEI theoretical frameworks and the historical, structural, and cultural dimensions of DEI. Students are introduced to a wide range of scholarship—social justice issues and the varying dimensions of power and agency in the US and globally. The aim is to help students

recognize different dimensions of power and inequalities and how these inequalities manifest. The course provides a framework for the understanding these inequalities. The first few weeks of the course are dedicated to exploring the treatment of difference and differential access to power, using theoretical, historical, and cultural lenses. From local to global communities, "Introduction to Critical DEI Studies" engages various understandings of identity, intersectionalities, historic and current structural differences, social justice, and directions for change. At the end of the course, students are expected to:

> Know the key concepts related to identity, power, oppression, and difference;
>
> Understand how historical and structural relations of power and difference shape social relations and outcomes;
>
> Explore theoretical approaches to explain different social outcomes;
>
> Critically evaluate and assess disparities at the personal, interpersonal, structural, and cultural levels;
>
> Exposure to potential strategies for and ability to effect change.

The themes and assigned readings in the introductory course were chosen consciously to touch on major DEI issues both locally and globally, giving the same amount of time to both the domestic and global components. This choice was made to introduce students to a variety of realities, which would in turn help them decide on which track—domestic or global—to focus on.

The exit capstone courses offer students a more focused and intensive study. The themes selected for each track remained constant even as geographical location changed. This too was intentional, so that students were able to assess how major issues affect individuals and groups in the US and how those issues may be different or have different effects on individuals and groups outside the US. The exit capstone courses allowed students an opportunity for intensive experiential learning and reading, focused on the principles, practice and application of DEI. Specifically, students examine the processes of societal, institutional, organizational, and personal change; and how various forms of supremacy underpin the resistance to these processes of change. The courses also examine how white supremacy culture and values manifest and intersect with other systems of domination to oppress multiple social groups. Each capstone DEI minor course culminates in a collaborative project highlighting the needs of a local organization for the domestic focus minor, or the needs of a local group which focuses on international issues or an international organization, for the global track. Both with the aim of jointly developing a proposal for change around a specific DEI issue.

The assignments for all three courses are designed to help students understand DEI in its broadest of terms, understand implicit and explicit bias, and develop an attitude for problem solving. The assignments in the exit courses are explicitly designed to help students be active observers and learners and involve themselves in enacting policies that can help solve an identified DEI issue important to the organizations with whom they are working. Students are expected to work in

collaboration with the said local or international organizations in tackling their identified DEI concerns.

The Dean's DEI Fellows also put together a proposal for establishing a Dean's DEI Small Grants Program for faculty, staff, and graduate students. These grants were conceptualized to advance DEI scholarship, support innovation, scale up initiatives, and provide avenues to make these initiatives sustainable. Two faculty grant tracks were envisioned—innovation and research. Faculty innovation grants are open to faculty holding majority appointments in the College of Social Science, and provide up to $5,000 for social science initiatives, or innovations, that engage thoughtfully with, and advance SSC's educational mission of inclusive excellence. The College encourages collaborative innovation projects and will award up to 3 grants a year. Faculty research grants also provide up to $5,000 for social science scholarship that engages thoughtfully with, and advances SSC's educational mission of inclusive excellence. Open to tenure stream and fixed term faculty holding majority appointments in the SSC, the college will fund up to 5 grants a year.

Staff holding majority appointments in the SSC are also eligible to apply for DEI funding in this small grants program. Staff grants are awarded for initiatives that have the potential for long-term transformative DEI change in the College. These initiatives could, for instance, help improve student and staff retention, climate, and DEI competency within the College. Like the faculty grants, collaborative projects are highly encouraged, and the College will award up to 2 grants a year. The graduate student small grants program funds graduate students in the SSC who are in good academic standing and are awarded for DEI dissertation research and dissertation completion. Each grant comes with $5000 stipend.

Recommendations

Under-resourcing budgets and human resources for DEI projects and programming creates an environment of performative DEI, where choices of what is done or left undone are guided exclusively by the visible nature (hiring an administrator without resources, updating webspace etc.,) or impact of the said DEI activity. Institutions do this, so that, from the outside, it appears as though the institution is in fact doing transformative DEI work, when it is not. There is often a lack of DEI infrastructure, nor is DEI built into the reward structures (e.g., tenure and promotion) of most institutions.

As noted by the National Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education, effective DEI change requires organizational infrastructure, including fiscal, physical, and human resources (Worthington, Stanley, and Smith, 2020). This would include a DEI office similar to the one proposed by the fellows. Absent such infrastructure, goal achievement becomes very difficult. Such infrastructure may be complimented by programs similar to our Dean's DEI Fellows Program. For greatest impact, we recommend upfront and regular interaction and dialogue with, and support from, the Dean and other stakeholders in the Dean's office. It is also important to immerse the fellows into the college-level (DEI) leadership, which may also allow the fellows help promote change within their own units. Achieving DEI goals requires a balance between centralized and decentralized effort (Worthington, Stanley, and Smith, 2020).

In our experience, having faculty from tenure and non-tenure systems as well as graduate students in our DEI Fellows Program was very instrumental in creating an inclusive environment and a diversity of perspectives. Furthermore, we were able to incorporate international and domestic (USA) representation and expertise within the same cohort. Nonetheless, the absence of academic staff and other students from the undergraduate level was felt as a shortcoming that we strongly advocate for our program as well as similar efforts at other institutions. Ideally, there should also be a community liaison to represent the perspectives of the community in which the university resides. This representation is often left out of the conversation—a grave oversight, since they may hold key insight into innovative ways of reaching and collaborating with communities that are marginalized. Inclusive representation can mean more investment of resources on the part of administrators, which universities and colleges tend not to want to do. That notwithstanding, the labors of faculty in such programs should be recognized with course load reductions, annual review, and reappointment, promotion, and tenure credit.

Developing a minor and a grants program was met with support and constraints. Both initiatives were welcomed, however, the process of obtaining approval to implement the programming was constrained by budget concerns and required negotiation. Negotiating DEI investment is counterproductive, especially when universities insist that there can be no excellence without diversity. Since university missions and visions prioritize DEI, universities should necessarily fund DEI initiatives as a recurring expenditure. More efforts should be dedicated to envisioning short-, medium-, and long-term benefits to implementing transformational DEI strategies and programming beyond the performative trap of implementing the lowest costing visible DEI initiatives. Our experience underscores the need for continued work and support of DEI programming at the unit, college, and university levels. DEI must be integrated across multiple domains (Worthington, Stanley, and Smith, 2020).

Conclusion

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion literally permeates every facet of university life: faculty, staff, alumni, students, and future students. Nonetheless, universities are resistant to adequately resourcing this work, worsening already existing inequities, whereby minoritized faculty are expected to shoulder burdens of working in this space, with little or no funding or human resource support. What is more, DEI tasks are assigned to minoritized faculty, in addition to existing duties, and is not provided the necessary support.

The labor of DEI advocates and administrators is equally unrecognized and underappreciated (American Council on Education, 2020). As argued in this article, DEI work is often performative, with universities creating positions of convenience, and a visibility around DEI that makes it appear as though they are more committed than they actually are. Additionally, DEI sustainability tends to be lacking in universities because it is not embedded into the mission and structure of universities colleges, departments, and units as it should be. Moreover, DEI objectives are far too often contingent on the goals of a current dean, provost, or president, which provides no stability for the work, and makes its existence dependent upon the whims of a current administration. To propel transformative DEI change, these values must permeate all goals and objectives of universities, colleges, departments, and units, and must be supported at all levels of the university. It is not enough to simply form taskforces and steering committees or create scholarly platforms for the

study of race and anti-racism. The recommendations of these DEI scholars, taskforces, and steering committees must form the blueprint for effecting transformative DEI change and advancement within institutions of higher learning. Furthermore, university chairs/directors, deans, provosts, and presidents should be held accountable for this programming, and DEI successes and failures should be effectively tied to performance reviews for these administrators. When this occurs, DEI support programming, like our Dean's DEI Fellows Pilot Program will flourish in partnership with the institutions in which they inhabit.

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Merit Raise Models Based on Faculty Performance Evaluation Scores

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Faculty annual evaluations and merit raises play key roles in encouraging and rewarding excellence in higher education. There has been extensive literature on faculty performance evaluations including comprehensive annual evaluations (Hardre and Cox 2009; Wiegers et al. 2015), including a recently report of a quantitative evaluation system that provides objective, fair, and transparent evaluations with a numerical overall rating score (Han et al. 2020; Han 2021). However, there have been few reports that discuss the conversion of evaluation scores into merit raise. It remains challenging for department chairs (and deans) to achieve fair and equitable allocation of merit pay.

Merit raises are normally determined based on faculty performance. The performance evaluations yield letter grades or overall numerical scores, in addition to written or verbal feedback (Han, et al. 2020). While some department chairs determine merit raise manually, based on the letter grades or the overall scores, it is advantageous to determine the merit raise from the evaluation scores (letter grades can be converted to numerical scores as well) directly with a clearly defined relationship to reflect performance. Using a standard formula would provide objectivity, transparency and practical convenience. It also saves time.

This paper summarizes a few merit raise allocation models reported in the literature and proposes a couple of new models. The advantages and disadvantages of each model are briefly summarized and illustrated with an example, so it can be used as a reference for department chairs and deans in selecting a suitable model(s) that best fits their needs to achieve the goals for their departments and colleges.

There have been two approaches used in determining the merit raise based on evaluation scores (i.e. merit scores). One approach, namely "dollar amount models" is to calculate the dollar amount based on the merit score and the merit pool size (McIntosh and Koevering 1986; Weistroffer et al. 2001), and another approach, namely "percent models" is to calculate the percentage of salary raise based on the merit score and the merit pool size (Blumenthal 2017; Mehvar 2020).

There are multiple factors to consider when picking a merit raise model. While the performance rating scores should be the main factor, other factor such as base salary and faculty salary distribution need to be considered. Sometimes, we have to consider salary adjustments using merit pay as we often face reduced or limited budgets to address issues of salary compression and inequity.

Summary of the model equations

Here we summarize a few common models/formulas used in the "dollar amount models" and "percent models" approaches and a couple of new formulas we proposed. Let W_i be the salary

(wage) and S_i be the evaluation merit scores of a faculty member, *i=1* to *N*, with *N* be the total number of the faculty in the department. Let α be the average percent of merit raise given by the university. The total fund π (dollar amount) in the merit pool is:

$$\pi = \alpha \sum_{i=1}^{N} W_i \equiv \alpha \sum W_i \quad (1)$$

Assume the amount of merit raise allocated to an individual is M_i which is $\boldsymbol{\rho}_i$ portion of the merit pool fund π. Then, we have

$$M_i = \rho_i \pi, \quad So, \ \sum M_i = \pi \ \text{ and } \ \sum \rho_i = 1 \quad (2)$$

The *dollar amount models* distribute the fund as linear or nonlinear functions of the merit rating score S_i. A commonly used linear distribution model is (Becker 1999; Weistroffer, Spinelli et al. 2001):

$$\rho_i = \frac{S_i}{\sum S_i} \quad (3)$$

The slope of the distribution can be adjusted by using a reference score S_o.

$$\rho_i = \frac{S_i - S_o}{\sum (S_i - S_o)} \quad (4)$$

Wherein S_o >0 but less than the minimum *Si* (or the minimum *Si* eligible for merit raise).

We proposed a nonlinear model:

$$\rho_i = \frac{S_i^n}{\sum S_i^n}; \quad 1<n \leq 3. \quad (5)$$

Where the power *n* can be adjusted to achieve different levels of encouragement for top performers. While generally *n*=1 to 3 provides a reasonable range to be used, we found that *n*=2 is favorable to strongly encourage excellence while not overly compressing the low performers. In addition to varying index *n*, the slope can be adjusted by using reference point S_o as well.

$$\rho_i = \frac{(S_i - S_o)^n}{\sum (S_i - S_o)^n} \quad (6)$$

The *percent models* distribute the fund as linear or nonlinear function of the merit rating score S_i. Though they are less straight forward, there have been a few reported in the literature. Camp and colleagues proposed an allocation model based on merit proportion and base salary (Camp et al. 1988):

$$\rho_i = \frac{S_i W_i}{\sum (S_i W_i)} \quad (7)$$

It represents the product of a faculty member's relative portions of the merit scores and base salaries with a normalization factor (see (Camp, Gibbs et al. 1988)). It is a linear allocation model that gives the merit increase in terms of the percent of base salary proportional to merit score as given by

$$p_i = \rho_i \pi / W_i = \frac{S_i \pi}{\sum(S_i W_i)} \quad (8)$$

It is seen that the percentage is independent of individual base salary W_i.

Becker proposed a linear proportional model for the percent salary allocation (Becker 1999):

$$\frac{p_i}{S_i} = \frac{p_i}{S_i} = constant, so \;\; \pi = \sum p_i W_i = constant * \sum S_i W_i \quad (9)$$

It yields the same equation for p_i as given in (8). So, it is the same as the model proposed by (Camp, Gibbs et al. 1988).

Modifications can be added to allow flexibility to the Camp model. For example, Wenger and Girard proposed a "constant C" (i.e. reference score S_o for consistency) to adjust the ratio between merit raise and merit rating score S_i (Wenger and Girard 2000)*:*

$$\rho_i = \frac{(S_i - S_o) W_i}{\sum(S_i - S_o) W_i} \quad (10)$$

Accordingly,

$$p_i = \frac{\alpha(S_i - S_o) \sum W_i}{(\sum S_i W_i) - S_o \sum W_i} \quad (11)$$

They suggested that the value of S_o can be determined by setting the merit raise for the lowest evaluation score (such as make it 0 or 1%).

Another possible variation is to increase the weight on the merit rating score by making it nonlinear with a power n (n>1) to the score:

$$\rho_i = \frac{S_i^n W_i}{\sum(S_i^n W_i)} \quad (12)$$

Accordingly,

$$p_i = \rho_i \pi / W_i = \frac{S_i^n \alpha \sum W_i}{\sum(S_i^n W_i)} \quad (13)$$

The recommended value is *n*=2.

Yet another model reported is using Z-score of evaluation rating scores (Blumenthal 2017):

$$p_i = \alpha + Zscore * SD\% = \alpha + (S_i - S_m)\% \quad (14)$$

Which assigns merit in salary percent in terms of the "distance" of a faculty member's score to the mean score. Faculty with the mean score receives the mean merit rate α. Note that the "%" (which was missing in the paper) is added to make the two terms at the right side of the equation comparable as S is often a value in the range of 1-5 (so it cannot be used for score of 1-100 without converting).

A modification was proposed by Mehvar to expand the range of percent thus allow a steeper change in the merit raise among faculty by adding a slope (κ) (Mehvar 2020):

$$p_i = \alpha + \kappa(S_i - S_m)\% \tag{15}$$

Note that the total merit dollar amount assigned is

$$\sum M_i = \sum p_i W_i = \alpha \sum W_i + k\% \sum (S_i - S_m)\, W_i = \pi + \delta \tag{16}$$

Often, this is close to but not equal to the available merit pool as the 2nd term on the right is not automatically zero. So a correction can be made with an adjustment factor

$$\beta = \pi/(\pi + \delta),\ \delta = \ k\% \sum (S_i - S_m)\, W_i \tag{17}$$

By adjusting κ, the model can be used for any merit score scales and can generate different levels of tilt toward high performance.

Comparison of the models

All these model equations achieved balance between total merit allocations and available funds. A brief summary and comparison of the features of these models are given in Table 1. An example of using these models for faculty members with hypothetical salaries and a 3% merit pool in a department are illustrated in Table 2 (see appendix).

Table 1
A summary of merit raise models

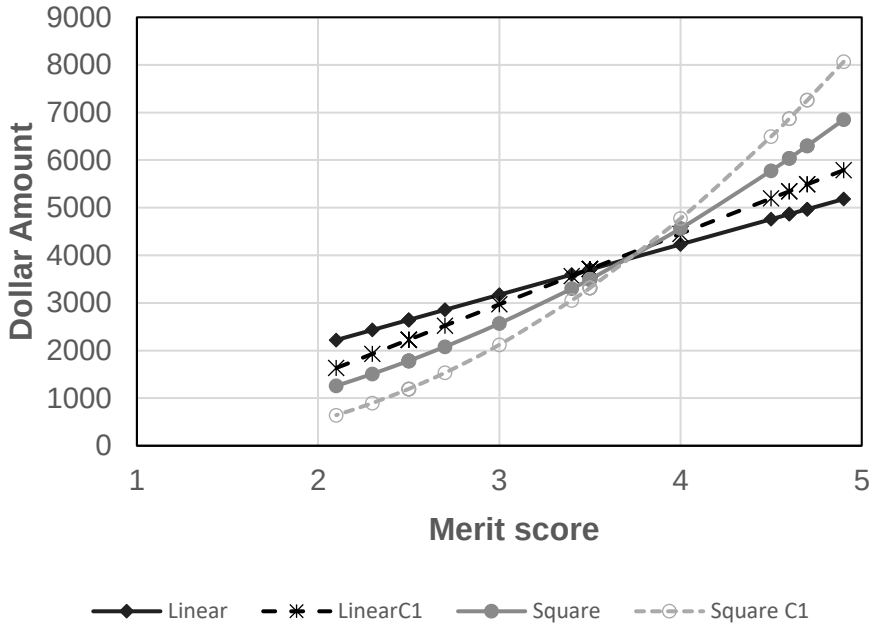
Type	Curve	Key Features	Model	Key Eqn.	References
Dollar amount	Linear	Proportional	#1	3	Becker 1999 Weistroffer et al.,2001
		Line w/Shift S_o	#2	4	New
	Nonlinear	Power (Square)	#3	5	New
		Square w Shift So	#4	6	New
Percent salary	Linear	Weighted/ proportional	#5	7	Camp, et al 1988 Becker 1999
		Weighted w/shift S	#6	10	Wenger & Girard 2000
		z-score	#8	14	Blumenthal 2017
		z-score x Slope	#9	15	Mehvar 2020
	Nonlinear	Weighted square	#7	12	New

Comparisons of all the dollar amount models and all the percent models are given in Fig.1 and Fig.2, respectively. It is seen that a larger difference in merit distribution can be achieved by adjusting the

slope of the curve, the reference S_o and the use of nonlinear models (but seemly not necessary to use their combinations). The differences are mainly in the low and high score ranges. It is seen that the Blumenthal z-score model and Camp-Gibbs-Masters model generate very close results in percent salary raises. The proportional percentage model used by Becker is the same as the Camp-Gibbs-Masters model.

Figure 1

Comparison of Dollar Amount-Based Models (C1 in the legend indicates So=1)



The use of reference score S_o shifts the effective value in the model and changes the slope of the merit raise curve. So, it provides control to the distribution range while keeping the linearity. However, the S_o needs to be less than the minimum evaluation score that is eligible for merit raise as a score S_i less than S_o receives no merit pay in these models. It is useful when all the scores are crowded in the high range. The use of nonlinear models provides another approach to widen the distribution range of merit raise.

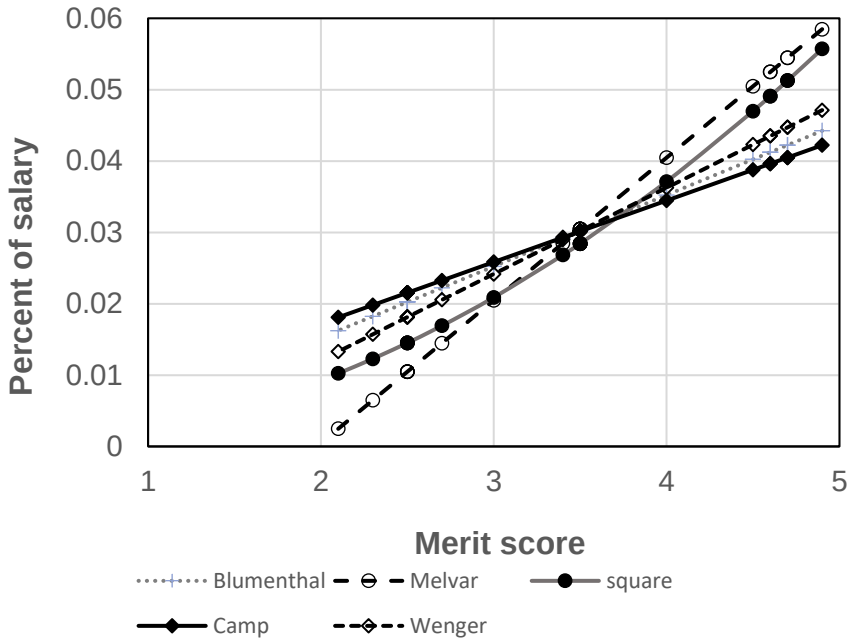
Comparisons of two dollar amount linear models and two percent salary linear models are given in Fig.3. It is seen that the use of dollar amount models led to scattering percentage while use of percent models led to scattering in dollar amount.

Discussion

We summarize a few merit raise allocation models in the literature and proposed new merit allocation models. The model equations/formula are described in unified variable notations and format. The features of these models are compared and results are illustrated in an example.

All these models ensure that the merit raise total matches the merit pool given, and the assigned raises directly reflect the merit evaluation scores, either linearly or nonlinearly, in terms of either the dollar amount or the percent of base salary.

Figure 2
Comparison of Percentage-Based Models



Linear versus nonlinear models. The linear models generate merit raise distribution in the similar patterns as the merit score distribution. The nonlinear models provide higher weight to reward the high performers. But it may discourage the lower performers. So It is important to balance the two ends. Therefore, linear models with low nonlinearity (such as n=2 in equation 5) is strongly recommended. Interestingly, different models have little effect on the average performers with mid-range scores.

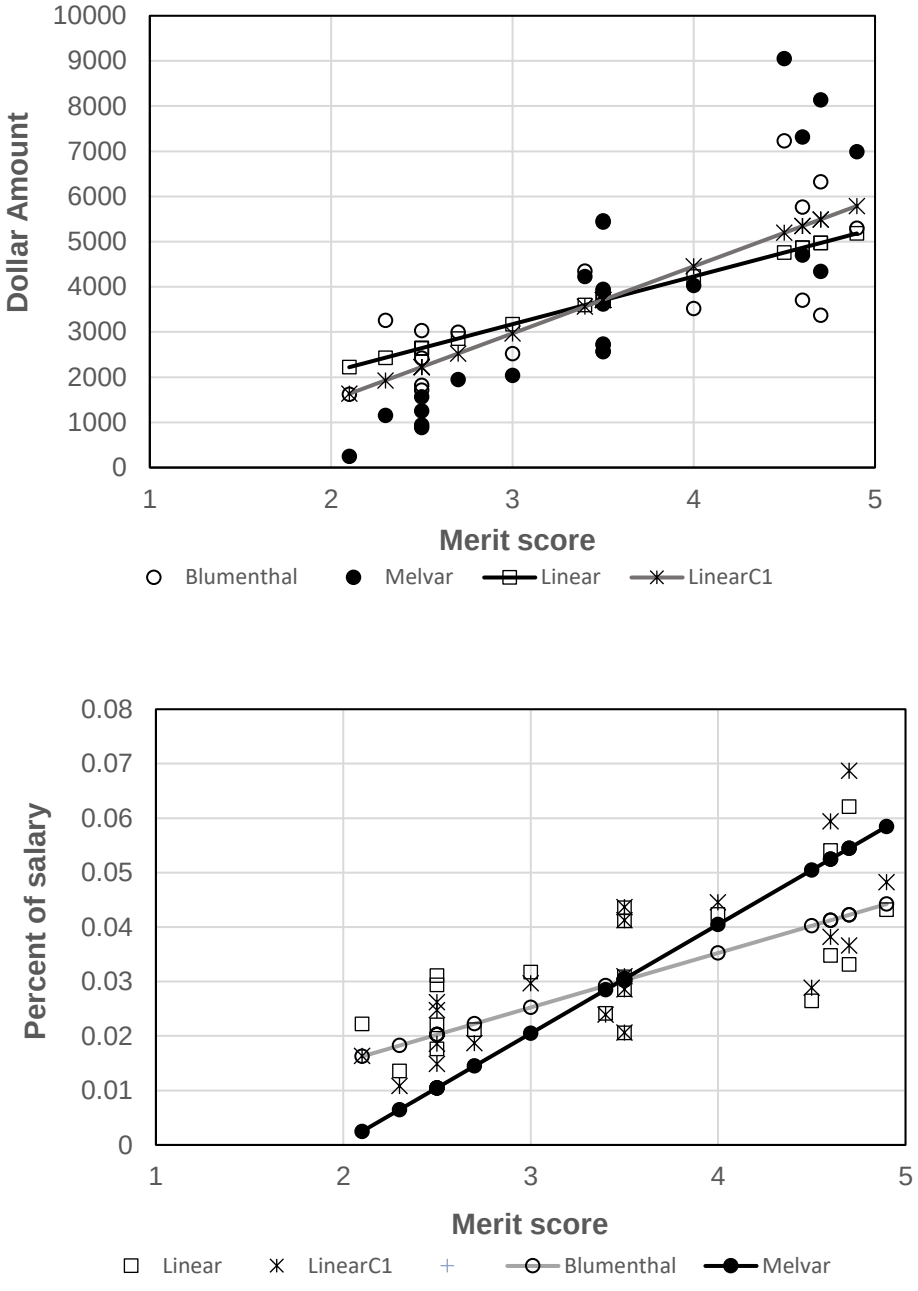
Merit raise by dollar amount versus percent of salary. It is open to debate whether the dollar amount or percent approach should be used. There seems to be sufficient rationale for the use of either approach. On one side, merit raise is a reward for good performance, so the funds should be divided based on merit rating scores. Dollar amount models create a faster salary growth rate for high-performance, lower-paid faculty than the percentage increment models, but it may lead to salary compression.

On the other side, ranks and salary reflect training and experience (Camp, Gibbs et al. 1988) and should be considered, but many other factors come into play as well. A person may have a relatively higher or lower salary for other reasons, such as initial recruit incentives for moving, time of the

hiring and market, and years of experience, etc. It can be argued that if using dollar amount, a person with the same performance score but high salary gets lower percentage increase. Similarly

Figure 3

Comparison of two dollar amount-based linear models and two percent based linear models in terms of calculated dollar amounts (top) and percentages (bottom) as functions of merit score (C1 in the legend indicates So=1).



argument can be made that if using salary percentage, a person who with a high performance score but low salary may get lower dollar amount while a person with higher salary but lower score

receives the same or higher dollar amount. A factor in favor of the percent model is the fact that higher expectations are often used in evaluating faculty with higher ranks (often but not always associated with higher salaries) though some evaluation scoring system may vary. For people in the same rank, the expectations are the same, but the salary and evaluation score may vary dramatically, the dollar amount model may better fit this situation by awarding the high performers with more dramatic merit raises.

Selection of models. It is challenging to select a good model that best fits the department to reward strong performance while balance all the needs and equity. All the models discussed are consistent with performance rating scores. However, as salary distribution varies, it's often not possible to make merit increases consistent with performance rating scores in terms of dollar amount and percentage of the salary at the same time. Therefore, it is imperative to carefully assess and pick the model that fits the situation to help achieve fairness and equality.

For an individual department at a given year, the model selection should be based on department status and goals. Both the score (performance) distribution and the salary spectrum should be taken into consideration. The department chair needs to analyze these data to identify the main issues and priorities and select the model that best fits. In addition, different models can be used for different years when department status changed.

When merit rate α and thus the fund pool π is sufficiently large, it may be divided into two sub-pools, one for allocation by dollar amount and the other for allocation by salary percentage (Becker 1999).

When the merit rate α is very small (say 1%) it is practical to manually select only a few levels of percentages or dollar amounts based on evaluation rating score. For example, we used only 3 levels (0.8%, 1% and 1.2%) based on evaluation score (2 to 2.9, 3 to 3.9, and 4 to 5, respectively) in a previous year with only 1% average merit raise. There was a report of using only two levels that gives the top performers twice the average percent (Christernsen et al. 2011).

Faculty performance may vary year to year and merit raise may not be available for a specific year. An alternative strategy is to use average evaluation scores for the most recent couple of years in determining the merit raise.

Understanding the features of common models for determining merit raise will be useful for department chairs so the right model can be selected to achieve the goals of the department. It would also help faculty members to understand the rationale and provide feedback in model selection and suggest for improvement.

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Appendix – Table 2

	merit rate	3.0%																		
	merit pool	77190																		
	faculty total	21																		
	salary total	2573000	#1	Porportional	#2	Linear	#3	New	#4	New	#5	Camp	#6	Wenger	#7	New	#8	Blumentha	#9	Mehvar
	score scale	0 to 5				So=1	Square		Square	So=1	Weighted	Linear		So=1	Weighted	Square	Z-score		k=2	
faculty #	base salary	merit score	Mi	pi	Mi	pi	Mi	P	Mi	pi	Mi	pi	Mi	pi	Mi	pi	pi	Mi	pi	Mi
1	180000	4.5	4758	2.64%	5195	2.9%	5777	3.2%	6496	3.6%	6978	3.9%	7614	4.2%	8459	4.7%	4.0%	7228	5.0%	9049
2	180000	3.5	3701	2.06%	3711	2.1%	3495	1.9%	3314	1.8%	5428	3.0%	5439	3.0%	5117	2.8%	3.0%	5432	3.0%	5464
3	179000	2.3	2432	1.36%	1930	1.1%	1509	0.8%	896	0.5%	3547	2.0%	2812	1.6%	2198	1.2%	1.8%	3258	0.6%	1155
4	150000	4.7	4970	3.31%	5492	3.7%	6302	4.2%	7260	4.8%	6074	4.0%	6708	4.5%	7690	5.1%	4.2%	6323	5.4%	8139
5	150000	2.5	2643	1.76%	2227	1.5%	1783	1.2%	1193	0.8%	3231	2.2%	2719	1.8%	2176	1.5%	2.0%	3030	1.0%	1565
6	149000	3.4	3595	2.41%	3563	2.4%	3298	2.2%	3055	2.1%	4364	2.9%	4322	2.9%	3997	2.7%	2.9%	4348	2.8%	4226
7	140000	4.6	4864	3.47%	5344	3.8%	6037	4.3%	6873	4.9%	5548	4.0%	6091	4.4%	6875	4.9%	4.1%	5762	5.2%	7317
8	135000	2.7	2855	2.11%	2524	1.9%	2080	1.5%	1533	1.1%	3140	2.3%	2774	2.1%	2284	1.7%	2.2%	2996	1.4%	1946
9	130000	3.5	3701	2.85%	3711	2.9%	3495	2.7%	3314	2.5%	3920	3.0%	3928	3.0%	3696	2.8%	3.0%	3923	3.0%	3946
10	120000	4.9	5181	4.32%	5789	4.8%	6850	5.7%	8066	6.7%	5066	4.2%	5656	4.7%	6687	5.6%	4.4%	5298	5.8%	6989
11	120000	3.5	3701	3.08%	3711	3.1%	3495	2.9%	3314	2.8%	3618	3.0%	3626	3.0%	3412	2.8%	3.0%	3621	3.0%	3642
12	120000	2.5	2643	2.20%	2227	1.9%	1783	1.5%	1193	1.0%	2585	2.2%	2175	1.8%	1741	1.5%	2.0%	2424	1.0%	1252
13	100000	4	4230	4.23%	4453	4.5%	4565	4.6%	4773	4.8%	3446	3.4%	3626	3.6%	3713	3.7%	3.5%	3517	4.0%	4031
14	100000	3	3172	3.17%	2969	3.0%	2568	2.6%	2121	2.1%	2585	2.6%	2417	2.4%	2089	2.1%	2.5%	2519	2.0%	2039
15	100000	2.1	2221	2.22%	1633	1.6%	1258	1.3%	642	0.6%	1809	1.8%	1329	1.3%	1023	1.0%	1.6%	1621	0.2%	247
16	90000	4.6	4864	5.40%	5344	5.9%	6037	6.7%	6873	7.6%	3567	4.0%	3916	4.4%	4420	4.9%	4.1%	3704	5.2%	4704
17	90000	3.5	3701	4.11%	3711	4.1%	3495	3.9%	3314	3.7%	2714	3.0%	2719	3.0%	2559	2.8%	3.0%	2716	3.0%	2732
18	90000	2.5	2643	2.94%	2227	2.5%	1783	2.0%	1193	1.3%	1938	2.2%	1632	1.8%	1305	1.5%	2.0%	1818	1.0%	939
19	85000	3.5	3701	4.35%	3711	4.4%	3495	4.1%	3314	3.9%	2563	3.0%	2568	3.0%	2416	2.8%	3.0%	2565	3.0%	2580
20	85000	2.5	2643	3.11%	2227	2.6%	1783	2.1%	1193	1.4%	1831	2.2%	1541	1.8%	1233	1.5%	2.0%	1717	1.0%	887
21	80000	4.7	4970	6.21%	5492	6.9%	6302	7.9%	7260	9.1%	3239	4.0%	3577	4.5%	4101	5.1%	4.2%	3372	5.4%	4341
total	2573000	73.0	77190		77190		77190		77190		77190		77190		77190			77190		77190
Average	122523.81	3.48		3.21%		3.21%		3.20%		3.20%		2.99%		2.99%		2.99%	3.00%		3.00%	

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Departments, Schools, Divisions, and Colleges: Organization of Academic Units in Public Master's Institutions in the United States

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Introduction

Higher Education institutions are almost always organized into a hierarchical assortment of departments, schools, divisions, and colleges. One would think that, for a given type of institution (e.g., Harris, 2020), there should be some standards for definition and organization of these academic units. When our university undertook a consideration of academic unit reorganization, we searched for such patterns among a handful of peer institutions, but did not find them.

In addition to considerable variation across higher education institutions, organization of academic units is quite fluid within institutions; they are reorganized repeatedly and frequently. Survey data for a separate study (Cherry, Graves, & Grasse, under review), indicate that, among public master's universities in the United States, 78% had reorganized colleges and schools and 84% had reorganized departments in the previous decade. Olson (2010) suggested that half of new provosts entered institutions in the process of reorganization. His claim that such efforts are ubiquitous seems justified. Why are there no best practices for the organization of academic units that are applicable across institutions, or at least within individual institutions for more than a few years?

McKinley and Scherer (2000) suggested that restructuring produces cognitive order for upper administration, but disruption in the organization itself leading to a self-reinforcing loop. External pressures to restructure can occur (Bealing et al., 2011). Gumport and Pusser (1999) suggest that most reorganization within universities results from financial pressures. Almost inevitably, university bureaucracies expand when finances are good, and contract when budgets must be reduced (Mayer, 2011; Olswang, 1982). Additionally, some disciplines grow while others contract over time, creating a need to reallocate resources (Dickeson, 2010; Eckel, 2002). It is often claimed that mergers and shuffling will foster interdisciplinary work and "intellectual synergies" (Capaldi, 2009; Olson, 2010). New administrators bring new ideas and priorities, which can lead to reorganization. As leadership changes, personalities of department heads and deans can cause academic units to grow, subdivide, merge, or implode (e.g., Barnard & Ferren, 2001).

Whatever the impetus for restructuring academic units in universities, there is a significant literature concerning how to manage the process so as to navigate academic politics and bureaucracies (e.g., Bealing et al., 2011; Bettis et al., 2005; Brousseau-Pereira, 2018; Eckel, 2002; Farnsworth et al., 2014; Fernandez & Rainey, 2006; Gumport, 2000; Mayer, 2011; McKinley & Scherer, 2000; Olswang, 1982; Smith & Martinez, 2015). In contrast, there is virtually no literature or data that would help university leaders decide whether they need to reorganize or what their

goals might be based on comparisons with peer institutions. For example, it might be useful to have a data-driven indicator of the extent of academic administrative units that is appropriate, the effects of having an unusually large or small administrative structure, or the types of organizational structures that are most common for a given type of institution. Though reorganization of academic units is widespread and common, each institution essentially "reinvents the wheel" with regard to identifying appropriate numbers and groupings of academic units, based on reactive management of budget issues (Gumport, 2000), political maneuvering (Eckel, 2002), or personal perspectives (Barnard & Ferren, 2001).

This study was initiated when our university undertook a reorganization of academic units. An initial step was to search the scholarly literature for best, or at least common, practices in this regard. The virtual absence of such guidance led us to develop these tools and analyses that may be useful to others involved in reorganization. Our goal was to collect information that would help leaders at public master's universities to make evidence-based decisions in the process of academic unit reorganization. We developed a data base of organizational structures at all public, master's level institutions in the United States. That information was then used to make comparisons of administrative complexity between institutions and examine some associations between administrative complexity and other institutional characteristics. We specifically addressed whether more extensive administrative structures take away from spending on instruction of students, and whether increasing discretionary funds lead to expanded administration.

Methods

A list of all Carnegie Classification public master's institutions based on 2017-2018 data was obtained (https://carnegieclassifications.iu.edu). The organizational structure of academic units at each institution was identified by searching institutional web sites during Fall 2018 and Winter 2019. If such information could not be obtained from web sites, the academic affairs office was contacted by telephone to obtain explanation. Colleges, schools, divisions, and departments, as well as nesting of these units within each other were identified.

The number of each type of academic unit at each institution was counted. Other attributes of each institution were obtained from the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/) based on Fall 2017 data. These included fall enrollment of full-time equivalent students (FTES), core revenues, instruction as a percent of total core expenses, and institutional support as a percent of total core expenses. Statistical analyses were run with the 2016 version of the Excel Data Analysis package.

Results

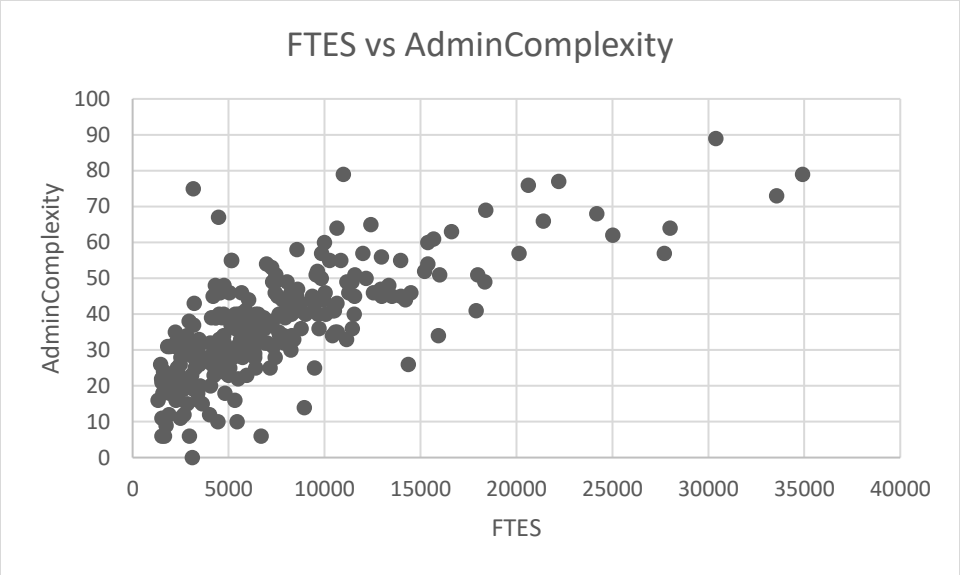
Complete data were available for 262 public master's institutions in the United States. The organizational structure of academic units at these institutions is provided as an Excel Spreadsheet in Supplementary Material A. The number of each type of academic unit along with IPEDS data for each institution is presented as a separate Excel spreadsheet in Supplementary Material B.

It is usually clear what colleges and departments represent within a university (the largest and smallest academic units, respectively). The function of divisions and schools is more variable (some

are big departments, some are small colleges, some are something else), but they generally represent a level of administrative hierarchy between department and college. Based on the assumption that departments, divisions/schools, and colleges represent three increasing levels in a hierarchy of academic units, an indicator of Administrative Complexity (AC) was derived by summing the number of departments, plus twice the number of schools and divisions, plus three times the number of colleges. We assume that the extent of AC should increase with the size of an institution, which was quantified as FTES. A regression of FTES as the independent variable and AC as the dependent variable (Fig 1) was highly significant ($F_{(1, 259)}$=298.6; p = 5.09^{-49}) with a correlation coefficient of 0.73.

Figure 1

Relationship of full-time equivalent students to complexity of academic structure



Residuals for each data point in the above regression indicate the degree to which AC is higher or lower than one would expect for an institution of a given size. These Administrative Complexity Residuals (ACR) for each institution are reported in Supplementary Material B. The distribution of ACRs (SD = 10.18) in Fig 2 suggests that there is significant variation in AC independent of size of an institution.

One could hypothesize that as ACR increases, a larger proportion of an institution's budget would be devoted to institutional support (which includes administration) and a smaller proportion to instruction. In contrast, increasing ACR is negatively associated with institutional support ($F_{(1, 257)}$=4.26; p = 0.04; correlation coefficient = 0.13; Fig 3) and positively associated with instructional expenses ($F_{(1, 257)}$=9.79; p = 0.002; correlation coefficient = 0.19; Fig 4).

As budgets become larger, administrators must decide where to invest discretionary funds. One could hypothesize that, as budget flexibility increases, those who make budgetary decisions (i.e., administrators) might funnel discretionary funds toward additional administration (Darnley &

Figure 2
Distribution of Academic Complexity Residuals

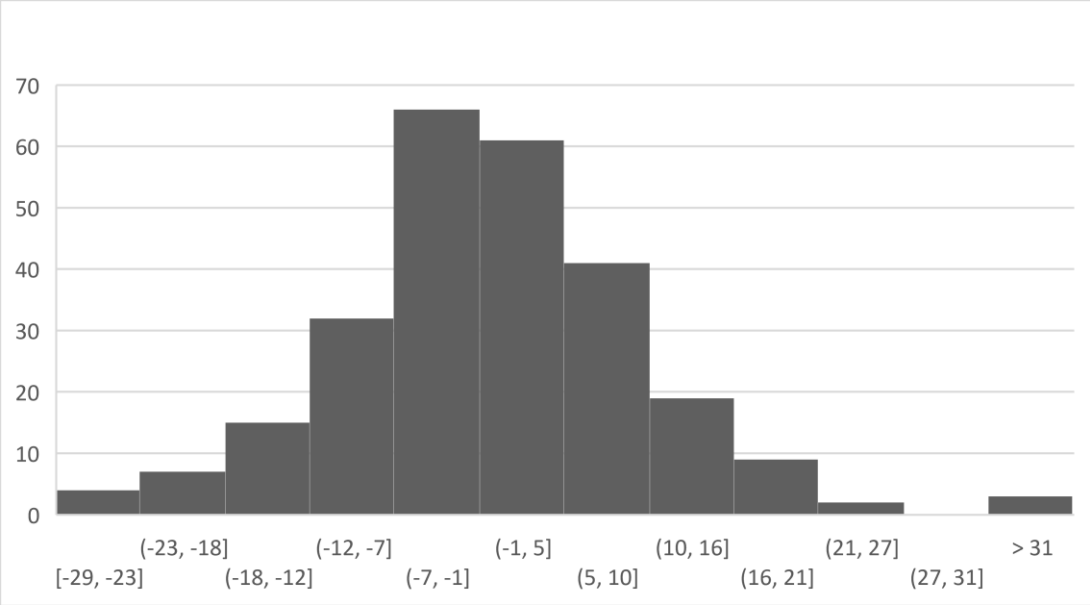
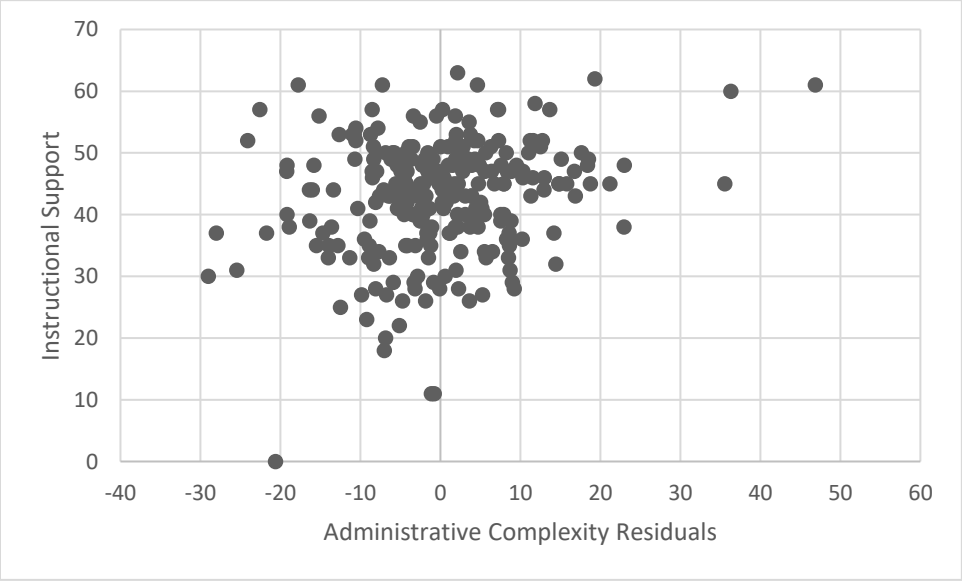
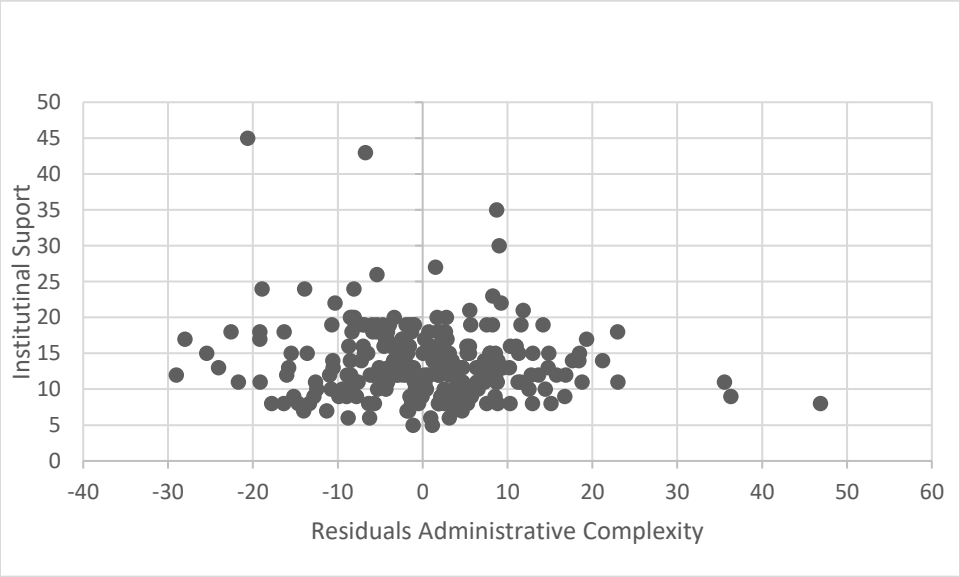


Figure 3
Relationship between Administrative Complexity Residuals and Instructional Expenses



Rutherford, 2019). If the cost of instruction per student is relatively constant, then increasing Core Revenue/FTES would indicate increasing availability of discretionary funds. A regression of Core Revenue/FTES against ACR was not significant ($F_{(1, 257)}$=0.11; p = 0.74; correlation coefficient = 0.02).

Figure 4
Relationship between Administrative Complexity Residuals and Institutional Support



Discussion

Anyone who has been through the process of academic reorganization knows that it takes a large amount of time, money, anguish, and political capital to reorganize academic units in a university. Yet each university organizes the bureaucratic units within academic affairs differently, and they do so repetitively. It is likely that this is at least partially a result of the paucity of information on patterns and variation in these structures. What should be changed and why? What do other institutions do and is it effective? The intent of this project was to begin collecting information to address these issues.

The data base presented here was found to be useful for analyzing the structure of academic units in public master's universities. It can also be employed to address a multitude of questions that may be important for individual institutions when considering reorganization. For example, philosophy programs are often small and so are combined with other disciplines in a single department. One might wonder what combinations are most common? A quick search and sort of the Exel spreadsheet in Supplementary Material A shows that of 113 institutions with a department that has philosophy in the title, 75 have stand-alone philosophy departments, 26 combine philosophy with religious studies, and 10 combine philosophy with some mix of political science, public administration, humanities, geography, sociology, anthropology, psychology, and English. Such

information allows decision makers to identify common practices among peer institutions. It can also be used to identify peer institutions that have adopted some uncommon organizational scheme in order to contact such institutions for discussion of strengths and weaknesses of the approach.

As another example, an institution might consider eliminating colleges, schools, and divisions, and retain only departments. While some might think this unusual, by sorting and searching our data we find that 4.0% of 262 public master's institutions have this type of structure. Further, the distribution by Carnegie size category is 19.0% of 42 small, 3.1% of 65 medium, and 1.3% of 155 large public master's institutions with this structure. Further, one could identify institutions with this structure and contact them for additional information. Clearly, there are a great many questions relevant to restructuring discussions that could be addressed quickly and thoroughly with this data base.

Information in our data was also deemed to be useful when planning for reorganization. Our calculation of AC is a rough approximation, although its high correlation with the size of the educational operation that must be administered suggests that it is a valid representation. Other studies have used the number of administrative staff (Rutherford, 2016), the ratio of administrative staff to faculty positions (Andrews & Boyne, 2014), or a measure of fiscal resources devoted to administration (Darnley & Rutherford, 2019) as indicators of administrative extent. When considering reorganization of academic units specifically, our measure of ACR seems more appropriate. When an institution is considering reorganization, this data can be used to assess that institution relative to peers. Is the institution unusual? Does it have more or fewer colleges, schools, divisions, or departments than peer institutions? From a broader perspective, is the ACR especially high or low, and how many standard deviations from the mean?

With regard to the effects of AC on university budgets, it is interesting that the proportion of the budget spent on instruction increases with increasing ACR. While it is possible that a few outlier data points had a large effect on this regression, it is nevertheless a strong effect. The IPEDS definition of instruction expenses (https://surveys.nces.ed.gov/ipeds/Downloads/Forms/IPEDSGlossary.pdf) is clearly focused on what institutions actually spend on teaching students. So this is probably not a result of variation in ancillary components of the category. It is possible that institutions that place great emphasis on their teaching mission, invest in that mission directly, as well as in the administrative apparatus to manage it.

Consequently, the negative relationship between ACR and institutional support is also unexpected. The correlation is less strong, but still statistically significant. This relationship may be due to the array of components in the institutional support category. In addition to expenses for general administrative services and central executive-level activities concerned with management, this category includes long range planning, legal and fiscal operations, space management, employee personnel records, logistical services, public relations, and development. Variation in these functions not directly associated with AC could introduce unexplained variation to the relationship, thus reducing the correlation coefficient and statistical significance. Furthermore, the negative correlation between ACR and institutional support could occur because other components of

institutional support may decline to a greater extent than the costs of academic administration increase.

It has been proposed that, when administrators have access to more tuition dollars and state appropriations, it is often spent on more administration (Belkin & Thurm, 2012; Darnley & Rutherford, 2019; Rogers, 2013). This hypothesis was not supported; a regression of core revenues/FTES against ACR was not significant. Comparison of ACR to core revenue/FTES suggests that having more money to run a given size of educational operation does not lead to a more complex academic administrative structure. It is possible that larger budgets per student are associated with nonacademic components of the university, such as sports or research.

Higher education is undergoing unprecedented changes for a number of reasons, including changing career opportunities and student interests, increasing competition, new delivery platforms, declining enrollments, and increasing costs. One response to such change is reorganization of academic units. While colleges and universities reorganize frequently, it is often not clear why they do so or what they hope to achieve. As organizations change to address internal and external factors, they need to ensure that structural changes align with intended goals (Fernandez & Rainey, 2006).

Comparison with peer institutions is a good starting point for determining whether reorganization is warranted and developing alternative structures. Without some standard of comparison, reorganization can be based on little more than history, personalities, and guesswork. And what works best? If organizational structure does matter, similar institutions should home in on similar structures. If it does not matter, then why do we repeatedly reorganize? Clearly, much research is needed to inform this process that consumes large amounts of time and resources. The current work is intended to provide information that will be useful for such comparisons. Additionally, this descriptive work can be used as a basis on which to build further empirical analyses of why various organizational structures exist, as well as their strengths and weaknesses.

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Supplementary Materials

Link to Supplementary Material A:

Electronic
Supplementary Mater

Link to Supplementary Material B:

Electronic
Supplementary Mater

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Mission-Linked AACSB International Accreditation Approach: Some Challenges and a Potential Remedy

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Introduction

> "*The general decline in educational performance that has begun in the 1960s encompassed elementary and secondary education, as well as education at the college level*" - Thomas Sowell

Creating the next generation of great leaders is one of the primary objectives of business schools worldwide. This objective is mainly accomplished through knowledge creation and dissemination. Most importantly, business schools often develop a clearly articulated vision statement, which helps guide them toward fostering engagement, innovation, and impact. While each business school certainly has its unique niche, the quality of a business school's accreditation perhaps is an essential feature that differentiates business schools (Romero, 2008). Among various accreditations for business schools, the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB International) offers the highest value proposition for business schools (Prasad, Segarra, & Villanueva, 2019). The mission of AACSB International is dedicated to "fostering engagement, accelerating innovation, and amplifying the impact of business education" across the world (AACSB International, 2020). Hence, AACSB International has created, commenced, and monitored rigorous standards that provide a systematic approach for business schools to improve their quality. These standards, therefore, provide the means necessary for business schools to obtain and maintain their accreditation with AACSB International.

When seeking AACSB International initial and maintenance of accreditation, business schools must demonstrate that their strategic plan drives their mission statement. In other words, the quality of AACSB International accredited business schools is guided by the mission statement, which resides solely with the individual business school. Ultimately, a business school's mission statement serves as a strategic map that indicates the direction in which the school seeks and guides the strategic efforts in which the school engages. Although the mission-linked accreditation approach allows AACSB International to determine whether a business school devotes an appropriate amount of effort needed for continuous improvements, this approach may lead to some challenges. An area of challenge is a business school's intentional placement of a "glass ceiling" on its mission statement to ensure the mission is attainable. As such, a business school may develop a mission statement that is easily attainable rather than continuously raising the school's current status. This, however, is often a viable solution to many as a mechanism geared towards the avoidance of losing their

AACSB International accreditation. Additionally, the focus placed on developing an attainable mission can encourage mediocracy that may eventually diminish the full potential of a business school. Another area of challenge regarding AACSB International accreditation is the heightened levels of diversity in each of the business schools' missions in which AACSB International will seek evidence. The increased levels of diversity among business schools' missions may present a challenge for an AACSB International peer review team. This challenge becomes apparent when evaluating the fundamental elements that guide each business school's mission statement. Many business schools develop and adapt their mission statement to fit a niche within their region. Additionally, the niche of a business school can introduce various factors of infringement that interrupt the scope and intensity of the effort needed and required to achieve the mission.

With the aforementioned two primary areas of challenges, this article seeks to explore the following two questions. First, does the mission-linked accreditation approach encourage a business school to continue advancing its mission and raising its societal impact? **Second, can the mission-linked accreditation standards be objectively and fairly applied to business schools with diverse missions operating in different external environments around the globe?** In the following sections, we examine these questions by highlighting some of the challenges AACSB International may face when ensuring that business schools produce high-quality outcomes. More importantly, we offer a possible remedy that may help address the two primary areas of challenges.

Does the Mission-Linked Accreditation Approach Encourage A Business School to Continue to Advance Its Mission And Raise Its Societal Impact?

Founded in 1916, AACSB International initially accredited business schools that are regarded in consumer's minds as elite business schools (e.g., Harvard, Wharton, and Stanford) (Lowrie & Willmott, 2009). As AACSB International gains its popularity, there has been a growing number of business schools that AACSB later endorses. Additionally, the growing popularity enables AACSB International to push its presence into a global marketplace (Lowrie & Willmott, 2009). As of March 2021, eight hundred and nighty business schools in 58 countries are accredited by AACSB (AACSB International, 2021). Although there are various AACSB International standards that business schools in the world seeking AACSB International accreditation need to meet, whether a business school demonstrates adequate effort and accomplishments toward meeting its mission plays a pivotal role in determining the attainment/maintenance of AACSB International accreditation. Indeed, Standard 1.4 of Strategic Planning explicitly states that "the school demonstrates a commitment to positive societal impact as expressed in and supported by its focused mission and specifies how it intends to achieve this impact." (AACSB International, 2020). Generally speaking, the mission-linked accreditation approach requires business schools to articulate their missions, strategic plans, and goals clearly. Additionally, business schools need to demonstrate that they make a positive impact on society and the practice of business, integrate diverse people and ideas, and foster the success of graduates (AACSB International, 2020) through appropriate allocation of financial and non-financial resources.

Regardless of the geographical location of an AACSB International-accredited business school, it is apparent that each business school has differing focal points. For example, a number of business schools are the academic home to a student body consisting of more than 1,500 students.

Additionally, some of these business schools place a central focus on advancement in research and thought leadership by utilizing their financial and non-financial resources. As such, some of these larger business schools have a mission statement that focuses on integrating strong faculty and student academic research effort into business education, which subsequently impacts society at large.

Meanwhile, there are also a large number of business schools that have a student population as small as 300 students. When compared to larger business schools, smaller business schools can face the challenge of limited financial and non-financial resources. One particular challenge, for instance, is the lack of resources that can attract faculty who excel in premiere academic research. Smaller business schools, nonetheless, focus on undergraduate and graduate educational advancement accomplished through teaching efforts rather than research advancement. As such, smaller business schools with resource constraints tend to develop a mission statement that accommodates the challenges they face. Moreover, the mission of most smaller business schools is typically accomplished through teaching efforts tied to impacting niche industries (e.g., healthcare, oil, gas, maritime, chemical, and agricultural manufacturing) in their immediate geographical regions. In other words, unlike larger business schools, smaller business schools tend to focus on a smaller-scale impact, such as a county or community.

Due to the differences in resources among business schools, one can easily observe the diversity in business schools. The term diversity represents the surface-level differences that a business school has compared to others. Hence, diversity in a business school determines its own set of strengths and challenges when the business school articulates its mission. Although the mission-linked accreditation approach allows each business school to determine its directions, there are four potential issues regarding this approach. First, determining the scope of societal impact is an essential starting point. Many business schools that hold AACSB International accreditation comprise schools with different student populations. At the surface level, larger-sized student populations reflect a broader scope and scale of influence and impact compared to smaller-sized ones. This may further result in smaller business schools with fewer resources articulating narrower mission and societal impact. While we acknowledge that a business school's mission is clearly articulated based upon its capabilities and available resources, we raise the concern that the mission-linked accreditation approach may unintentionally encourage business schools, particularly those with fewer resources, to limit their capabilities and resources to ensure the attainment or maintenance of AACSB International accreditation. In other words, business schools with fewer resources may find it an effective practice to attain the AACSB International accreditation by focusing on programs and outputs that do not require an extensive utilization and investment of capabilities and resources. In a very simple conveyance, business schools with fewer resources may manipulate their mission to ensure that they are able to document and justify their outcomes, such as societal impact. This can be an area of concern because business schools within a post-secondary educational environment ought to intensify their educational efforts by raising their current academic status rather than focusing on the fear of losing their accreditation.

As noted previously, the mission statement provides a strategic force for allocating a business school's resources. A second potential issue is, therefore, the allocation of resources in a teaching-oriented business school versus a research-oriented business school. In particular, many of the larger business schools with more financial and non-financial resources maintain larger

undergraduate and graduate programs that are AACSB International accredited. Additionally, these larger and resourceful business schools are often able to attract and retain renowned faculty scholars who publish in high-ranking premier business journals. To attract and retain renowned faculty scholars, these business schools often utilize the administrative support that smaller business schools are unable to sustain. For example, many of the smaller schools often only have a single Dean to provide oversight to all the operations of the business school, whereas larger business schools typically have a Dean along with multiple Associate Deans and other administrative personnel designated solely to assisting with specific operational demands such faculty affairs, student affairs, donor relations, or even global operations. While we are not necessarily advocating for a complex and tall organizational structure, we use this example to highlight the drastic differences in the availability of financial and non-financial resources that can be observed in business schools across the globe. Given that the availability of financial and non-financial resources can affect a business school's articulation of its mission statement, it may be possible business schools with fewer resources become more motivated to maintain than to challenge their academic status.

Third, the societal impact can vary among business schools. As mentioned previously, the scope of impact is vastly differing among business schools due to the focus of the mission affected predominantly by the availability of financial and non-financial resources. Consequently, there are clear differences in the mechanisms and tools that AACSB International-accredited business schools ensure their societal impact. For instance, many teaching-focused business schools may not view themselves as research institutions and make their societal impact through effective teaching practices. In contrast, research-based business schools typically place stringent research requirements on faculty, which may be one of the prominent ways for research-based business schools to document their societal impact. Clearly, there are differences in what deems a societal impact between teaching-focused and research-oriented business schools. It is, however, likely that business schools with more financial and non-financial resource constraints intentionally focus more on a smaller scale and scope of societal impact (e.g., regional areas) rather than a broader societal impact. More importantly, because AACSB International provides one accreditation, it seems possible that in the eyes of consumers (e.g., students) teaching-focused and research-oriented business schools provide an equivalent scale and scope of societal impact. In some sense, this would be equivalent to a PAC-12 Conference team playing in the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA). This then raises the concern about how AACSB International ensures that business schools continue to raise their societal impact when articulating their mission.

Finally, the heightened demands for seeking such an elite business education endorsement as AACSB International may also be problematic. Although there are other accrediting bodies for business education globally, AACSB International has retained its value and importance for many business schools. Indeed, attaining AACSB International accreditation is assumed to increase a business school's legitimacy and reputation (Durand & McGuire, 2005; Prasad, Segarra, & Villanueva, 2019). The increased demand for AACSB International accreditation that emphasizes continuous improvement should, in theory, push and drive the quality of business education to a higher degree. In practice, many business schools often promote their programs using their AACSB International accreditation endorsement, which may inadvertently contribute to engaging in only what is necessary to attain or maintain AACSB International accreditation by focusing on a similar mission over time rather than constantly challenging and advancing the current mission.

Can the Mission-Linked Accreditation Standards Be Objectively and Fairly Applied to Business Schools with Diverse Missions Operating In Different External Environments Around the Globe?

To this point of the article, we have noted the level of diversity in business schools' mission. With the increasing popularity of AACSB International accreditation, acquiring or maintaining AACSB International accreditation has become a baseline requirement for many business schools that wish to remain competitive in the higher education industry (Miles et al., 2014). Because AACSB International has established and updated its standards, it is important for AACSB International to ensure that the accreditation standards are able to be effectively accomplished by each of the business schools regardless of its mission. This expectation may increase the difficulty in assessing business schools using the same "level" of standards due to the fact that not all business schools possess the same strengths or are faced with the same set of challenges. To discuss this challenge accurately, we reiterate AACSB International's Collective Vision for Business Education, which is that "business and business schools are a force for good, contributing to the world's economy and to society, and AACSB International plays a significant role in making that benefit better known to all stakeholders." (AACSB International, 2020). As such, the opportunity for business schools to obtain AACSB International accreditation extends beyond the United States borders.

Even though we are thrilled to see business schools around the world pursue AACSB International accreditation, our concern is that the differing infrastructure in which business schools in the international market operate might be somewhat troublesome. As noted by AACSB International, accredited business schools must foster engagement, accelerating innovation, and amplifying the societal impact in business education (AACSB International, 2020). Although we agree with the values and impact that AACSB International-accredited business schools must provide, we suspect that regional infrastructure variations could lead to possibly inconsistent AACSB International accreditation processes. For example, not all regions from a global perspective have the infrastructure capabilities to push educational material through diverse learning platforms advanced by technology. Moreover, because geographical regions differ in their infrastructure, business schools located in the regions with lagging technological infrastructure may be in a disadvantageous position to amplify innovation and the societal impact compared to business schools located in the regions with leading technological infrastructure. This would also inadvertently cap the engagement and innovative efforts for business schools in which technological infrastructure is lacking. If a business school is unable to engage in innovative efforts fully based merely on lagging infrastructure instead of a lack of willingness, then how does this phenomenon further assist with AACSB International's vision of transforming business education for global prosperity? More importantly, could business schools in the least developed countries have the same playing field as business schools in developed nations when pursuing AACSB International accreditation?

In addition to infrastructure differences in which business schools operate, location-specific strengths and weaknesses can shape the operations of a business school. For example, business schools in developed nations may be able to better attract and retain faculty scholars who provide leadership and expertise to the school's engagement and innovation effort. On the contrary, business schools in the least developed countries may struggle with attracting and retaining human

capital primarily due to a lack of financial and non-financial resources. The lack of infrastructure development and resources may further reinforce business schools with fewer resources located in the least developed nations to focus more on teaching practices than innovative and creative engagement. This reality then raises issues about whether AACSB International can objectively ensure all accreditation standards be fairly implemented during the assessment of business schools with various mission statements around the globe.

In sum, we have raised some possible challenges about the mission-linked accreditation approach. It is important to note that our intention is not to devalue AACSB International and its mission-linked accreditation approach. Instead, it is our hope to start a dialog that helps AACSB International find an approach for encouraging business schools to be uncomplacent about their academic status and to advance their mission whenever possible. Hence, in the next section, we offer a possible remedy that may help overcome some of the challenges faced by AACSB International.

A Possible Remedy: A Tiered System of AACSB International Accreditation

In the previous sections, we have pointed out two potential challenges related to the mission-linked accreditation approach utilized by AACSB International. While the mission-linked accreditation approach helps AACSB International determine if a business school has properly utilized its resources and devote its effort to achieve its mission, this approach reinforces business schools' attention given to making sure the current mission is attained. As such, the mission-linked accreditation approach may fall short of encouraging business schools, particularly those with limited resources, to continually challenge themselves to pursue an Everest mission and heighten academic reputation worldwide. Additionally, the mission-linked accreditation approach may not be objectively and fairly applied to business schools operating under different socio-economic environments and technological infrastructure. Consequently, we suggest that the mission-linked accreditation approach can be accompanied by a tiered system that inspires business schools' ultimate vision when seeking AACSB International accreditation. In particular, we propose that AACSB may first develop at least three distinct tiers of AACSB International accreditation: bronze, silver, and gold, for instance. Each of these three tiers then has its own basic set of mission-linked standards in which business schools seeking such a level of AACSB International accreditation must meet. While the basic standards for each tier need to be developed by AACSB International, these standards provide guidance for business schools to first determine their ultimate aspiration and eventually develop a mission statement that energizes stakeholders and synergizes available resources without the fear of losing AACSB International accreditation.

Our proposed tiered system of AACSB International accreditation corresponds to some commonly known classifications of universities and colleges (e.g., the Carnegie Classifications). In our proposed tiered system, the entry-level AACSB International accreditation could be called the bronze-level accreditation, which allows business schools seeking such a level of accreditation to have a mission focusing on dissemination of knowledge and pedagogical improvements and innovation. As such, the bronze-level accreditation standards provide a baseline requirement for continuous improvement in teaching and teaching methodology. Once a business school receiving the entry-level AACSB International accreditation, it can further pursue, for instance, the silver-level accreditation, which focuses on knowledge dissemination (i.e., teaching) accompanied by a

moderate research intensity. Hence, the silver-level accreditation standards should emphasize a balanced utilization of resources that a business school devotes to teaching and research. After a business school excels in balancing knowledge dissemination and knowledge creation by acquiring additional institutional resources, it can further move into an intensive research institution. Hence, the highest level of AACSB International accreditation, the gold-level accreditation, can be considered the pinnacle in which business schools strive to become - premier and elite business schools that provide thought leadership to the business industries through constant knowledge creation and innovation. In other words, the gold-level accreditation standards focus heavily on the constant creation of new knowledge and innovation through highly intensive faculty-student premiere and impactful research. In addition to recommending using a tiered system, we suggest that a higher-level accreditation should serve as the foundation of a lower-level accreditation. That is, business schools also need to meet the bronze-level standards when seeking to attain the silver-level standards, and that the attainment of gold-level accreditation requires the satisfaction of the bronze- and silver-level standards. Meanwhile, if a business school satisfies a lower-level accreditation yet is unable to attain higher-level accreditation, it should still be granted with the lower-level AACSB International accreditation.

The basic rationale for our proposed tiered system for AACSB International accreditation is that many smaller business schools with limited resources tend to devote much of their attention and effort to attain their missions. This inevitably discourages smaller business schools from pursuing a bold and Everest mission even when they have such capabilities due to the fear of losing AACSB International accreditation. As a result, our proposed tiered system may help encourage business schools to pursue their ultimate aspiration, whether it is teaching or research. Moreover, our proposed tiered system can help promote business schools' willingness to expand their academic reputation around the globe by capitalizing on their strengths and making strategic investments without the fear of losing the bottom-line AACSB International accreditation. Furthermore, using a tiered system, AACSB International may be able to sustain its value and significance as more business schools worldwide seek AACSB International accreditation. Accredited business schools, meanwhile, can better position themselves when promoting their institutional brand and identity to the target audience.

In this article, we have presented some potential challenges faced by AACSB International. Undoubtedly, we believe that AACSB International is still the highest accreditation body of business schools and is sought by many. As time elapses and evolution becomes apparent, a viable improvement mechanism for AACSB International is to explore alternative approaches for evaluating the quality of business schools. Although we propose a tiered system for AACSB International accreditation, we welcome and are excited to see a further dialog on how AACSB International can improve its accreditation approach that allows business schools to grow and advance continuously.

Conclusion

Without any doubt, AACSB International has remained one of the elite accreditation bodies for business schools across the world. To attain or maintain AACSB International accreditation, business schools must demonstrate their mission-driven efforts and activities are linked with the accreditation standards. While the mission-linked accreditation approach allows business schools to

designate the relative importance of teaching, research, and service to their mission (Hedrick, Henson, Krieg, & Wassell, 2010), it may promote some challenges. In this article, we argue that the mission-linked accreditation approach might not always encourage business schools to continue to advance their mission and raise their societal impact. In addition, the mission-linked accreditation approach might not be applicable to business schools with various missions around the globe objectively and fairly. Although we recognize the practical values provided by the mission-linked accreditation approach, we further propose a tiered system of AACSB International accreditation as a possible remedy for the challenges promoted by the mission-linked accreditation approach. In particular, we propose a tiered system of AACSB International accreditation as a possible remedy. Our basic rationale for the proposed tiered system of AACSB International accreditation is that it provides guidance for business schools to first determine their ultimate aspiration and eventually develop a mission statement that energizes stakeholders and synergizes available resources without the fear of losing AACSB International accreditation. Ultimately, we hope to start an intellectual dialog that helps AACSB International find an approach for encouraging business schools to be uncomplacent about their academic status and to advance their missions continuously.

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Getting It Right: Search Consultants' Perspectives of Organizational Identity During the Presidential Search Process at Small, Private Colleges

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Small, private colleges are arguably the most financially stressed segment of the higher education sector, with potentially crippling financial pressures especially acute for colleges with enrollments under 2,500 (Brown, 2012; Chabotar, 2010; Hilbun & Maniseishvili, 2016; Wootton, 2016). Every year, several small colleges succumb to the death spiral of financial insolvency created by unsustainably low enrollment, a trend which shows no sign of slowing (Nichols, 2017; Thomason, 2017; Wyllie, 2018). Difficult times call for strong leadership, and there is little margin for error for small, private colleges when searching for a new president. If the wrong person is chosen to take the helm, that decision exacts a heavy toll in terms of finances, organizational morale, and institutional reputation (Trachtenberg, Kauvar, & Bogue, 2013; Wilde & Finkelstein, 2016).

The majority of governing boards now contract with executive search firms, relying on them to recruit qualified candidates and assist throughout the search process (American Council on Education [ACE], 2017; Curris, 2014; Johnston & Ferrare, 2013; Lingenfelter, 2004; Selingo et al., 2017; Song & Hartley, 2012). Boards, typically not well-versed in the complexities of executive recruitment, seek to optimize their chances of finding the right person for the job, and are willing to pay for the presumed expertise (Atwell, 2009). It is customary for a search firm to charge $75,000-$100,000 or more per contract (Johnston & Ferrare, 2013; Wilde & Finkelstein, 2016). Despite this sizable cost, which often reflects an unbudgeted expense, even small colleges often commit to the investment (Klein & Salk, 2013). Therefore, it is important that consultants are able to identify candidates who will best fit the organization.

Organizational identity denotes those aspects that are "central, distinctive, and enduring" to the institution (Albert & Whetten, 1985, p. 265) and may help define the obscure notion of "fit." Organizational identity refers to how organizations define themselves, how they are defined by others, and how identity is communicated (Pratt et al., 2016). It is important for presidential candidates to obtain an accurate description of a college's organizational identity, which requires a search consultant to both interpret and communicate the college's identity. The purpose of this study was to determine how search consultants both acquire an understanding of and communicate a small college's organizational identity.

Literature Review

Given their tuition dependency, small colleges must strike a delicate balance between funding operations solely through enrollment-generated revenue and variable levels of philanthropic support (Zdziarski, 2010; Zumeta et al., 2012). Attempting to spark enrollment through leveraging

historical strengths, innovation, and financial incentives is a recurring pattern within the small-college sector (Biemiller, 2018; Bonvillian & Murphy, 2014; Ma et al., 2016). This is the environment facing incoming presidents of these institutions.

A diverse skill set is necessary to succeed as a college president (Hammond, 2013; Pierce, 2014; Trachtenberg et al., 2013). The financial pressures facing many U.S. colleges and universities, exacerbated by resource-straining legal and regulatory mandates, have placed budgeting and fundraising skills high on the list of desired presidential attributes. Historically constant routes leading to the presidency have shifted, with academics no longer having the clear advantage. A pattern of search committees selecting presidents from nonacademic, corporate backgrounds has emerged over the past decade (ACE, 2017; Hartley & Godin, 2009; Song & Hartley, 2012). This correlates with the growing emphasis on fundraising and aggressive innovation and the expectation that a president be a good steward of the college's economic and social impact on the surrounding community. The declining interest among provosts in ascending to the presidency is largely attributed to this ever-expanding and nonacademic role of the office (Bourgeois, 2016; Carey, 2014; Hartley & Godin, 2010; Selingo et al., 2017; Weill, 2009). The limited succession planning within higher education is unlikely to improve anytime soon, and thus recruitment of external candidates will continue to dominate.

The combination of tuition dependency, enrollment challenges, intensified expectations, and a diminishing pool of internal candidates is formidable. If a governing board uses a presidential vacancy as an opportunity to spark innovation and change, the existing pressures on the college can create a paradoxical situation: Boards search for and hire "change agent" presidents, but then fail to assist those presidents in creating a shared vision and culture through which innovation can occur (Byron, 2015; Hendrickson et al., 2013; Pierce, 2014; Trachtenberg et al., 2013). The root cause of troubled presidencies often is the failure of aligning what the governing board says it wants in a president with what it is willing to support (Mitchell, 2013; Stowe & Komasara, 2016). There is a heightened risk of disconnect between expectations and outcomes stemming from a presidential search.

The most recent study of the American higher education presidency (ACE, 2017) shows that 70% of all private institutions used the services of a search firm when hiring their current president. The Council on Independent Colleges (CIC) conducted a sub-analysis of ACE data and determined that 80% of presidents hired during 2012 to 2016 by its member institutions were placed with the assistance of search firms (CIC, 2018).

In an early call for more research into the higher education presidential selection process, Lingenfelter (2004) warned that poor alignment between a president and the institution poses significant risk in terms of time, reputation, and organizational stability. Johnston and Ferrare (2013) emphasized that selection of a president is vested with the institution's governing board, but the majority of boards delegate most aspects of the process to a search committee. Search committee membership generally includes representation from the board, faculty, alumni, students, and, occasionally, influential community stakeholders. It is common for the board to hire the services of a search firm to assist this committee, with a staff member of the client institution functioning in an intermediary support and liaison role. If the search goes well, the committee's work culminates in a final list of candidates from which the full board selects a president.

CIC (2018) analyses revealed that three-quarters of the responding CIC presidents indicated the search process provided them with an adequate view of governing board and other stakeholders' expectations. They felt they received an accurate picture of challenges facing the college. Beardsley (2015) concluded that "Executive search firms are unquestionably important and relevant in the vast majority of presidential search processes today" (p. 26). Indeed, Turpin (2013) explored alignment of person-organization (P-O) fit between college presidents and their institutions, determining that weaknesses in the search process are due to the search firm and search committee's lack of understanding of P-O Fit in the presidential search process. A contributing factor may relate to not understanding how an organization's identity comes into play when striving to ensure a good fit.

Theoretical Frame

The classic definition of organizational identity is: "The central and enduring attributes of an organization that distinguish it from other organizations" (Whetten, 2006, p. 220). There are three main perspectives on organizational identity: social actor, social constructionist, and institutional (Gioia et al., 2013). The social actor perspective views the organization as the personification of a collective individual (Gioia & Hamilton, 2016). People external to the organization learn about it through its actions, commitments, and self-referencing claims from those who speak and act on the organization's behalf. This perspective is rooted in the image, impression, and reputation held about the organization by those external to it, each of whom have their own set of information filters (Hatch & Schultz, 2002; King et al., 2010; Ravasi & Schultz, 2006; Whetten, 2006).

The social constructionist perspective, in contrast, focuses on how members of the organization itself define and view it. That self-referential process is viewed as a process of negotiation. The presence and role of identity custodians are key to potentially reducing ambiguity, ideally serving to clarify and signal to others what the core identity of the organization is. Identity custodians are typically organizational members who occupy leadership or similarly influential positions within the institution, and whose perceived authority allows them to function as a conduit in communicating organizational identity claims (Howard-Grenville et al, 2013, 2013; Schinoff et al., 2016).

The institutional perspective of organizational identity considers both internal and external views of the organization, but focuses on the effect that outside forces have on it. The organization is viewed through the lens of its perceived status within the broader institutional context in which it resides, and upon which it bases its sense of legitimacy. This perspective recognizes the inherent tension in balancing isomorphic pressures to conform to institutional norms, while still maintaining a desired level of distinctiveness (Glynn & Abzug, 2002; Glynn & Marquis, 2007; Purdy & Gray, 2009).

Within this institutional perspective, two-stage valuation theory provides a sharper lens through which an organization can balance those competing pressures of conformity and distinctiveness (Zuckerman, 2016). The first of the two stages requires an organization to demonstrate membership in whatever category a constituency deems important. An organization must first be viewed as a legitimate member of the broader field in which it resides, and only after this legitimacy has been established will customers and other stakeholders be receptive to the organization's attempts to distinguish itself from the competition (Phillips et al., 2016; Zuckerman, 2016). A

college would thus desire to be seen as a legitimate member of the higher education industry and also attract students due to its unique attributes.

As small, private colleges confront unprecedented levels of existential stress, they are faced with competing pressures to distinguish themselves through their historical organizational identity while still pursuing change (Baker & Baldwin, 2015; Jaquette, 2013; Stensaker, 2015; Weerts et al., 2014). Matters of identity become especially significant during times of leadership transition (MacDonald, 2013). When search firms are employed, they function as outsiders who must interpret and communicate organizational identity to candidates who may also be outsiders to the institution. They ultimately recommend candidates who they believe would be a good fit for the college (Turpin, 2013) based on their understanding and interpretation of the college's identity. Misalignments in fit, some of which have been linked to organizational identity, can contribute to failed presidencies and additional institutional stress (Aspen Institute, 2017; Brown, 2019; Selingo et al., 2017; Selzer, 2018b). Therefore, a logical inference is that organizational identity must be actively considered during the presidential search process.

Methods

This study focused on how the interpretation of organizational identity factors into the presidential search process at small, private colleges. Therefore, it was important to acquire a deep understanding of consultants' experiential perspectives. A qualitative approach is the appropriate choice when a detailed and in-depth understanding of an issue is needed in order to properly address the research question (Creswell & Poth, 2017; Gall et al., 2007). This study used a basic interpretive approach to uncover how people interpret what they have experienced (Caelli et al., 2003; Kahlke, 2014; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Thorne et al., 2004).

Positionality Statement. Both of the study authors have worked in senior administrative positions and witnessed or participated in executive-level searches that were led by search firms. During the conception stage of this study, and throughout the majority of data collection and analysis, the lead author was employed at a small, private higher education institution. This study originated from the authors' mutual curiosity about the apparent disconnect between some college presidents and "who" the respective college considers itself to be, as well as the role search firms/consultants play in recruiting presidential candidates.

Participants. Ten search consultants representing six search firms participated in this study; three of the represented firms employed fewer than 10 consultants, and three employed 10 or more consultants. Three participants were female and seven male; they had experience ranging from seven to 30 years in the search industry. Eight of the 10 participants were employed in higher education institutions prior entering the search profession, and four served as college presidents. Five consultants possessed an earned doctorate. Table 1 provides a snapshot of each participant.

Data Collection. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews conducted by web-based videoconferencing or by phone. All interviews were audio recorded with participants' permission. Recordings were transcribed verbatim.

Table 1
Participants (Executive Search Consultants)

Pseudonym	**Search Experience**	**Professional Background**	**Educational Level**	**Search Firm Size (no. of consultants)**
Lou Adams	7 years	College President	Doctorate	10 or more
Robert Arthur	30 years	College Vice-President	Bachelors	Fewer than 10
Dan Brian	20 years	College Vice-President	Bachelors	10 or more
Tim Charles	12 years	College President	Doctorate	Fewer than 10
Jason David	10 years	College President	Doctorate	10 or more
Cindy Gail	20 years	Management Consultant	Bachelors	Fewer than 10
Sam Harold	12 years	College President	Doctorate	10 or more
Marilyn Kay	10 years	Higher Ed Agency Senior Director	Masters	10 or more
Greg Oliver	13 years	College Dean	Doctorate	10 or more
Sue Mills	9 years	College Vice-President	Masters	10 or more

Data Analysis. Data were analyzed using a constant comparative method of data analysis (Glaser, 1965). This method involves simultaneously coding and comparing data segments with those previously coded to the same category. All codes were subject to revision, deletion, or aggregation through the iterative process of constant comparison (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Throughout the cycle, related categories of codes were analyzed for emergent themes (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

The first round of coding yielded 45 in vivo and process codes. In vivo coding draws upon participants' own words as code labels; process codes denote action (Saldaña, 2016). Memos were created during the coding to develop a documentation bridge throughout the data collection cycle (Creswell & Poth, 2017).

The next step in the process was axial coding, during which the text segments associated with each code and their associated annotations were critically examined. The purpose of this step was to identify and group related codes into a category (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Through this process 45 codes were collapsed into eight categories. For subsequent reflection, similarities and differences were noted across the interviews (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

The final step in the process involved critically evaluating and tying together the insights that emerged through the various stages of analysis. Through this process, themes were generated.

Findings

Each of the ten participants described a presidential search as being comprised of four essential phases, each of which requires the active involvement of the college's designated search committee: 1) pre-search, 2) applicant recruitment and screening, 3) winnowing the applicant pool to a small number of candidates, and 4) selection of three to five finalists from whom a new president is selected. The focus of this article is on the first phase, the pre-search phase in which search consultants acquire an understanding of a college's organizational identity and communicate that identity to candidates. Participants noted three steps in the process: building a composite view of the college, using the search profile as an interpretive tool, and remaining mindful of their professional and ethical responsibility.

Building a Composite View of the College. Participants intimated there is a direct connection between how clearly discernable identity is and the likelihood of a successful presidential match. "I think it's critical that the institution understand who they are, what role they play within their area, within their consortium of schools that they belong to," noted Cindy Gail. Jason David drew a clear link between identity clarity and presidential fit, "When you have to spend a lot of time helping them deal with that identity question, or if they think they're something other than what they are, that makes it far more difficult to help them find a really good president." Cindy Gail extended that thought, highlighting the possible consequences for a new presidency when the college's identity is poorly understood:

> A lot of individuals, if you look at CVs and resumes, they have short tenures at certain places. When I ask them why that is, most of the time they'll tell me, "I didn't realize what some of their issues were going in, and I wasn't the person to help them overcome those." And some of it deals with organizational identity.

The full expression of organizational identity does not exist in a vacuum; rather, it is often interconnected with serious issues facing the college and its new president. What became clear from the participants' perspective was that a college must confront matters of identity during the search process. Otherwise, they risked a suboptimal outcome, including the possibility of a failed presidency. To this group of participants, the discernment of a college's identity was not a rote exercise.

Importance of the Pre-Search Phase. The participants unanimously viewed a search's initial phase as critical to a successful search. This is where they learn the most about the college's identity. The "pre-search" commences with review of publicly available information about the college such as IPEDS data, media reports, and social media feeds. Next is a review of strategic plans and internal documents that provide a sense of the college's overall health, mission, and initiatives. That is followed by several days of on-campus/community visits during which individual and group meetings are held with various campus constituencies.

The pre-search process culminates with the search consultant drafting a detailed report of their impressions for review by the search committee. That draft report is revised until it is deemed suitable to serve as a search profile, also referred to as the *prospectus*. The search profile, released in condensed and/or full-text form, serves as the official position posting.

Although clearly defined steps for data gathering are included in this process, participants suggested that a keen sense of observation and appreciation of nuance is also necessary to build a deep understanding of a college's identity. Sue Mills offered, "I would say that you would consider [identity] from a research perspective as both data *and* impression. Some of it is very objective, some of it is quite subjective." Dan Brian stated, "It's both data points and kind of an impressionistic view of the institution's trajectory. Basically, what we're looking for are the pathologies. Where are the problems?"

The pre-search was experienced as a highly interpretive endeavor. Sue Mills reiterated the importance of studying the organization from multiple vantage points: "Understanding the institutional identity or personality from many different angles is the key to feeling as though you can capture a deep enough sense of it that you can accurately represent it to someone else." Obtaining that depth of identity-related insight, however, also requires navigating a college's political landscape. That dynamic comprises a major part of the pre-search stage.

Each participant emphasized that consultants are hired by the governing board and work closely with the search committee's chair, who is commonly either the governing board's chair or another board member. This represents a power dynamic of which search consultants must be mindful.

Identity's Intersection with Culture and Strategic Vision. Search consultants must navigate the tension that often exists between a small college's historic identity, its internal culture, and the presence or absence of a strategic vision. Three types of scenarios emerged that signal potential problems for a search: (a) when a campus culture is not aligned with a college's identity; (b) when a college does not have a strategic vision; or (c) when a college expresses a desire for strategic change but resists any change to its identity. Each situation complicates a search consultant's task of correctly interpreting and coherently communicating who a college is to prospective candidates.

When culture does not align with identity. Search consultants' explication of how a college's culture aligns with core values and market viability surfaced throughout the interviews. They noted that stakeholders tend to conflate the college's identity and points of distinction with culture. Marilyn Kay signaled that first differentiating the fluidity of culture from the more stable attributes of identity is important to consultants' interpretive work:

> It [culture] is an amorphous, messy, dynamic, ever-changing concept -- because we just don't know. We think we know, and then things shift and change. But, what we try to extract is the essence of the point of distinctiveness. What *makes* this place?

Tim Charles, a former college president, echoed the caution that identity and culture are not synonymous when it comes to communicating with potential candidates. Although acknowledging the importance of everyday norms and rituals of campus life, he suggested that consultants focus pre-search conversations to distill the essence of the client college's identity.

Although distinguishing between culture and identity is important, so is detecting when they are widely divergent. Dan Brian's reflections led him to offer the observation that a steadily increasing disconnect between culture and identity signifies a college in jeopardy:

> The closer together they are, the healthier the institution is. I've never really thought of it this way, but it's clear. The farther apart an institution's culture and its identity are, the more trouble they're in. Identity is sort of immutable. That's where you get the disconnect between culture and reputation, or self-image, or whatever you want to call it – identity. Culture actually erodes.

However, they felt that solely focusing on whether a prospective candidate would "fit in" with the day-to-day campus culture is misguided. Identifying the core elements of the college's mission, values, and distinctive attributes is more critical to a deep understanding of who the college is. If the beliefs, ways of doing things, and other campus norms have moved steadily away from the college's self-image and/or public reputation, that suggests the college no longer has a reasonably unified sense of who it is. Understanding the alignment between culture and identity is important for later communication with prospective candidates.

Identity, strategic vision, and change. A resonant opinion across the interviews was that identity and mission should be congruent with a college's strategic vision. Dan Brian structures much of his inquiry around a college's strategic plan: "Strategic plans are where you really find out what the institution thinks of itself and where it wants to go, and whether it has any clue as to whether it knows where it lives in this marketplace." The majority of other participants also mentioned the strategic plan's value in understanding a college.

The consultants most frequently mentioned faith-based institutions in association with this intertwining of identity and vision. Sam Harold noted faith-based colleges vary in how strictly aligned they remain with their core tenets: "Some schools have relied very strongly on a particular religious identity. For some it's continued to work. For others, it's had to be slightly softened because they've had to broaden their appeal way beyond that religious connection."

Strategically softening the edges of historical identity within a faith-based tradition can also extend to the presidential search process. Some participants noted the presence of a continuum regarding whether a new president must belong to the associated religious community. An absent or ambiguous plan offers little of interpretive value to the consultant. Consequently, when they encounter that situation, it is a blind spot that requires their attention.

When a college does not have a strategic vision. Lack of a vision often signaled a college unmoored and at risk. *Visionary* was a common descriptor on both the employer and applicant sides of executive searches. Without the additional context of a clear strategic plan, the word carries as much potential risk as it does reward. Lou Adams recalled an all-too-common sentiment he hears from a board: "The classic [opinion] is, 'We need a vision, so we're going to hire a visionary leader.'" What does that mean in the context of a presidential search?

Robert Arthur pointed out the double jeopardy of searching for a visionary leader when a college does not have a clear vision:

> The most important thing is -- if you really want a turnaround, no-nonsense visionary leader who is going to take you to where they want to go, and that's not where you

> want to be -- it will be an absolute disaster. If on the other hand if they're just sitting in their office waiting for you to tell them where to go, and you don't know where to go, it will be a disaster.

Searching for a visionary leader without the guiding structure of a college's clear strategic vision places the search consultant in a difficult position. The participants emphasized that their job is not to help a college define or develop its strategic vision, but to understand it within the context of its identity and stated leadership needs. Another problematic area emerged when a board and/or the majority of campus stakeholders desired change but would not tolerate strategic change that required a change in the college's identity. That complicates a search consultant's work.

When a college wants strategic change, but also resists any change to identity. Colleges often say they want a visionary leader, but do not articulate what they truly mean. Lou Adams explained:

> People don't want a vision from a new president. They want a president who can understand the vision that's latent in the institution, and who can give voice to that vision, add his or her "salt" to it, and then lead the institution forward.

Tim Charles cited a specific example in which even a widespread expressed desire for change by the college constituents ran afoul of its longstanding core identity:

> I did a search for a presidency -- a small, private college in [name of state]. The talk was about change and the need for someone to lead a fresh vision for the place. And when the president appeared on the scene and began to work his magic, the place really pushed back, and they couldn't deal with the change. It was presented to them in a very assertive, but gracefully assertive, way. So, it came from what they clung to as the bedrock of their identity.

A small, private college's culture, identity, and tolerance for strategic change often exist in a complicated relationship. Identifying the nature of that relationship was part of forming a composite view of the college. Dan Brian noted, "Institutions very frequently have no idea who they really are. Very, very frequently they don't." Therefore, addressing these disconnects is integral to coherently representing the college to prospective candidates. It is also the pre-search phase with the greatest potential for conflict, depending on the extent of dissonance identified.

Using the Search Profile as an Interpretive Tool. The consultants routinely encountered boards for whom the revelation of divergent campus opinions came as a surprise and/or an inconvenience. Although not a guarantee of eventual consensus, discussing the consultant's findings, as documented in a formal summary, was intended to promote greater awareness and reflection within the search committee. Sam Harold evoked images of meetings punctuated with "*aha*" moments:

> I also provide a summary to the committee. "Here's what I heard. Here's what I heard not only from the board, but from the campus." So that there's a summary, never identifying anyone in particular, but saying, "Here's the responses to these questions that I've asked." And I think it gives them a lot of insight to say, "Oh yeah, we are on the

> same page," or, "Boy, as board members, we're not seeing things from the inside as the internal people are on a day-to-day basis." So, I think it's a learning lesson for boards as well as campus community.

These presentations were often followed by a fair amount of discomfort for the search committee. The most intense conversations during the pre-search phase occurred during the time period bracketed by presentation of the summary and publication of the search profile.

The vast majority of disconnects described by the participants stemmed from religious tenets, external reputations vs. internal identity, and/or academic reputation as identity referents. This observation by Marilyn Kay reflected both the social actor and social constructionist perspectives of identity:

> So, here's another thing that you need to understand. What is said publicly, and what is the perception of the institution from the outside. What they say about who they are, what they stand for, what they believe in, doesn't always translate into what happens on the inside. And, sometimes it's better than what they're actually saying -- sometimes it's a lot more and really fabulous. And sometimes there's a total disconnect. So there are extremes.

Working through areas of dissonance, often with significant levels of emotion tied to each view, bristled with the potential for interpersonal conflict. Dan Brian described it as, "one of the most nuanced, dangerous, difficult, but ultimately critical things that people like me have to do." The sooner committee members established an open working relationship with each other, particularly regarding the college's identity and how that influenced the assessment of candidates, the stronger the search outcome. He spoke of his experiences with small liberal arts colleges, where some stakeholders seemed blinded by their respective college's historic identity, while others sought to broaden the curricular focus:

> [That's] the reality of what is in virtually every stop we make. It is almost impossible to overstate the level of denial in this marketplace about the circumstances of higher education, particularly in liberal arts colleges and among arts-and-sciences types.

A focal area of the process often involved drawing committee members into a frank discussion about the college's identity and how that could influence the ways members view candidates.

The scenario described by Dan Brian has clear implications for potential presidential candidates. For example, a candidate favoring expansion beyond a traditional liberal arts focus would likely be discounted by stakeholders who adhered staunchly to the college's liberal arts identity. Tim Charles pointed out that these divergent viewpoints are not always explicit, and thus part of the consultant's role is to listen carefully and detect their presence:

> But, unspoken, that identity is [there] -- that's why I think a candid, open conversation -- where there're things that are spoken in code when you try to get this prospective work down, and the kind of agenda you want for a new president. I think that's where

> the candor needs to come in, and the extra time may need to be spent on, “Are you really being honest with yourselves?”

The implication of unresolved viewpoints on the committee was not limited to those pre-search conversations. Rather, those issues invariably spilled over into the later stages of the search when candidates were being selected and interviewed. Sam Harold’s approach reflected that concern: “I'll say to them, ‘Look, you don't want to go up with a schizophrenic position profile. You've got to be pretty clear about what you are.” The participants prioritized avoiding that scenario.

Despite the potential for conflict or gridlock, participants noted that most pre-searches proceeded to a viable conclusion after major areas of dissonance were explicated and acknowledged. The consultant then translated their findings into a draft of the search profile.

Using The Search Tool as an Interpretive Tool. Throughout the interviews, it became clear that the search profile served as an instrument of both communication and interpretation. The document, usually between 10-15 pages in length, is designed to provide prospective candidates with a reasonably thorough overview of the college, the surrounding community, and a description of what the college seeks in its next president. Its value as an interpretive tool stemmed not only from its published content, but from the recursive and iterative process through which it was generated.

Lou Adams opined that the search profile can actually serve a unifying purpose for the campus. His response, consistent with other consultants in the study, spoke of a college’s health in terms of either enrollment or coherence of identity:

> You try and bring the various voices together and reflect them in this composite you're trying to write. That can be more or less difficult to do, depending sort of on -- what would you say -- not the health, but the -- maybe the psychological wellbeing of the institution. Does it have one personality or many? But you try and write in a way that brings people together.

These viewpoints intimated that a college’s health can be partially assessed by the coherence of its identity.

The consultants also spoke to the importance of developing the prospectus to articulate a clear link between the college’s identity and the list of desired presidential qualifications. They spoke of a sense of professional obligation to “get it right.” Coming full circle, this segment from Lou Adams represented the participants’ view of how adeptly eliciting the collective voice of the college; distilling its identity, culture, and vision; and effectively addressing dissonance largely determined the interpretive value of the profile:

> So it's been interesting to try and find the themes that try to bring that all together. In fact, one of the points in the profile is about vision, and the challenge for the next administration to articulate a kind of conceptual vision about who the college is today and tomorrow that gives people a new sense of oneness -- that's a much more complicated picture of oneness. You try and write in a way that brings people together.

This statement reflected how consultants began to assess a college's health through the coherence of its identity.

The consultants also spoke to the importance of developing the prospectus to articulate a clear link between the college's identity and the list of desired presidential qualifications. To assist colleges in explicating their interpretation and prioritization, some consultants worked to align their thought process with that of the institution, striving for clarity where needed. As stated by Cindy Gail, "In a search, it's important to hear the beginning stages, and it's very important to build that candidate profile in not only my mind but in the mind of the whole organization of what they're looking for."

The participants' reflections about the mechanics and artistry of writing a search profile indicated that the process functioned as both input and output for the interpretive process. Its construction required active engagement between the college community and consultant. Consultants first worked to accurately represent the college's past, present, and desired future, as distilled from numerous conversations with members of the campus community. Then, much like an artist tries to capture the essence of a three-dimensional being on a two-dimensional medium, the consultants sought to capture the essence of the college through words. However, the consultant's interpretation of the college's identity was subject to the scrutiny and final approval of a subset of the campus constituency, the search committee and/or governing board. Consequently, it was only through iterative cycles of drafting, dialogue, and revision that the final portrait emerged.

Discussion

Understanding a small, private college's identity is not a matter of unearthing a singular definition of what is "central, distinctive, and enduring" to the organization (Albert & Whetten, 1985, p. 265). Rather, the pre-search phase of the search emphasizes that organizational identity is multi-faceted and often dynamic in nature (Hatch & Schultz, 2002; Weick & Quinn, 1999). The strength of that identity lies along a continuum, ranging from those with a comparatively weak and fragmented sense of organizational self to those where it is strong and unified (Schinoff et al., 2016).

To do their job well, consultants must approach the pre-search phase with a certain measure of skepticism, seeking opportunities to confirm or challenge their evolving understanding of the college's identity. They also noted an ethical responsibility to "get it right" and to facilitate rather than orchestrate a search process. This preliminary stage of the pre-search aligns with an institutional perspective of organizational identity, whereby an organization is assessed by its status within the broader institutional context in which it resides, and upon which it often bases its sense of legitimacy (Glynn & Abzug, 2002).

Soliciting the input of multiple stakeholder groups, both internal and external to the college, is a hallmark of the on-campus segment of the pre-search phase. The on-campus visits comprises the majority of the pre-search work. This approach is a form of intra-organizational negotiation, with members engaged in an ongoing sequence of formal and informal dialogue over the organization's values and attributes (Gioia et al., 2000; Ravasi & Schultz, 2006). Search consultants intentionally seek the input of various stakeholder groups and subgroups in order to provide a more complete picture of the organization.

Challenges emerge when a college does not have a strong sense of identity. This can happen when there is a disconnect between the way stakeholders view the organization. The most frequently encountered dissonance relates to college identity and strategic direction. Search consultants viewed facilitating such conversations, even if long overdue, as integral to the presidential pre-search phase. Consequently, this study highlighted an area of critical existential significance to small, private colleges that should not be underestimated: The tenuous position of many small colleges leaves little, if any, margin for error. Small colleges that ignore identity when implementing strategic change initiatives do so at considerable risk (Baker & Baldwin, 2015; Brown, 2019; Hilbun & Mamiseishvili, 2016; Tarrant et al., 2018).

Results of this study reinforce the high-stress environment within which many small, private colleges exist and which consultants enter when conducting the pre-search. Most of the participants spoke to the level of urgency they sense during the pre-search phase, confirming that small, private colleges, as a sector, are subject to an unprecedented level of stress (Brown, 2019; Morphew, 2009; Selzer, 2018a; Wylie, 2018). Several participants noted that declining enrollment and the resulting lack of resources can steadily become part of a small college's identity, even eventually becoming embedded in its collective mindset.

Identity discernment is enmeshed with issues facing the institution. The participants all mentioned the stressful environment in which the majority of small, private colleges exist. Several consultants stated that many of their small college clients are, in fact, in a struggle for survival. Tim Charles remarked the search for affordable resources has become "deeply embedded in the kind of fabric of the place" and surfaces repeatedly during the pre-search conversations at small colleges. Small colleges' historical resilience notwithstanding, the participants clearly indicated a new sense of urgency now punctuates the majority of presidential searches.

Implications for Practice. Understanding the purpose behind a systematic search process can help college stakeholders better accept the time commitment and procedures required. By virtue of their authority, governing boards should encourage the campus community to fully engage in the pre-search conversations. Consequently, the findings signal that governing boards must guard against power dynamics that can affect the integrity of the process. Findings from this study can also assist colleges in vetting search firms and consultants. Institutions should be wary of hiring a firm whose approach appears indifferent to the importance of organizational identity.

Limitations of the Study. This study was specifically designed to obtain the perspective of search consultants. There are others whose voices could also inform the topic of organizational identity and presidential search. Examples are search committee members, presidents, prospective presidential applicants, governing board members, institutional staff/faculty, students, and other campus stakeholders. Although their viewpoints were often referenced by the search consultants, this study did not include the first-person perspective of those stakeholders. Future studies might include a more holistic perspective that represents other actors, in addition to search consultants.

Future Research. Lingenfelter (2004) highlighted the need for empirical studies regarding higher education executive search. This study has contributed to addressing that gap, but many opportunities for research within the topical area remain. Although not an exhaustive list, the authors offer the following suggestions for additional research.

Exploring the organizational identity within the presidential search from the vantage point of other college stakeholders could provide additional insight. The role of governing boards emerged during this study as particularly important, due primarily to their power differential. That finding highlights the value of future research into the individual and/or collective perspectives of board members regarding identity and presidential search.

Investigating how organizational identity is interpreted and communicated during presidential searches at larger and/or public institutions would represent a natural expansion of this study. It could serve as a bridge to explore if interpretation and communication of identity differs based on college size or type of institutional control. Also, this study indicates that identity-related issues are more intense within religiously affiliated colleges. A narrower focus on the interpretation of organizational identity within faith-based institutions, as contrasted with small nonsecular colleges, is a promising area for investigation. Further delimiting research to a given denomination or faith tradition could add additional insight.

Conclusion

This study can be viewed as gateway research into the largely unexplored topic of organizational identity and executive search within higher education. The focus of the study has been upon the role of search consultants in the interpretation and communication of organizational identity within the context of presidential searches for small, private colleges. The integrated view of organizational identity serves as the primary reference point for consultants as they assist a small, private college with a presidential search. The three epistemological perspectives within organizational identity theory serve as a lens into how executive search consultants interpret and communicate college identity. An integrated view of organizational identity serves as the primary reference point for consultants as they assist a small, private college with a presidential search. This integration is achieved through a systematic process of: (a) researching publicly available information about the college's relative standing in the higher education marketplace, (b) conducting interviews to obtain the viewpoints of multiple stakeholders, and (c) soliciting external feedback on the college's reputation in the community. This reflects a synthesis of the institutional, social constructionist, and social actor perspectives of organizational identity (Pratt et al., 2016).

Search consultants in this study formed the core of their understanding through building a composite view of the college. Without exception, the study's participants spoke of the importance of meeting with a variety of college stakeholders to hear the collective voice of the constituencies. The same held true for obtaining a view of the college's reputation in the community. The consultants desired to understand how the campus culture and strategic visioning align with its organizational identity. There is a tendency for campus stakeholders to blend culture, vision, and identity during their conversations with consultants. Therefore, careful review of the college's strategic planning documents was noted as critical to discerning identity. Otherwise, the "way things are done" (culture) and/or "the way they want things to be" (strategic vision), can obscure "who they are" (identity). This is important because consultants initially focus on the distinctiveness of a college, the essence of its identity, to attract a pool of presidential candidates. Accurately differentiating between the three constructs is necessary for search consultants to build an accurate understanding of the college's identity that can be communicated to others.

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Perceptions of Causes of Derailment of College and University Administrators

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Context

Administrators in colleges and universities who aspire to move up in higher education administration face a host of challenges today. Uncertainties abound regarding the evolving structure of higher education institutions and the availability and nature of future administrative positions. This may lead to uncertainties of administrators about their own professional competitiveness in this changing labor market.

The structure of higher education institutions is changing as colleges and universities in the U.S. as well as in other countries leave the insular campus-centered models of the past and are driven to reinvent themselves as producers of knowledge responsive to external as well as internal constituencies (Clark, 2017; Baltaru & Soysal, 2017; Gumport & Pusser, 1997). Students and parents want increased access, lower tuition and, upon graduation, to be competitive with strong skills for functioning in today's high-tech and professional job markets. Community groups vie for increased access to higher education opportunities, especially for diverse and under-represented students. Businesses want graduates ready to work effectively upon graduation and to be able to bring current and effective practices to their organizations. No longer "the only game in town", colleges now find themselves in a hypercompetitive environment with well-funded outside sources of education and training, notably among for-profit and Internet-based programs, eager to tap into the lucrative higher education market. They increasingly look to mergers and outsourcing of segments of teaching and operations to increase access and lower costs, while at the same time experiencing loss of control over internal operations. Adding to this uncertain environment, media stand ready 24-7 to report to the public any problems or incidents experienced by the institutions.

As colleges and universities re-invent themselves to meet these internal and external challenges, the demand for and profile of administrators are changing as well. Multiple studies document needs for increasing numbers of administrators, especially higher-salaried individuals with technical and financial backgrounds to automate teaching and institutional operations throughout the college or university and to monitor the institution's financial health (Soldner, 2016; Green, 2012; Webber, 2016; Whitchurch, et al., 2021). Increasing numbers of institutions, particularly private liberal arts colleges, are looking beyond the academic setting to corporate America for leadership with the aforementioned skills, assuming these skills are more advanced in the corporate world (Beardsley, 2018; Chatlani, June 26, 2017; Clark, 2017; Croucher & Woelert, 2021). Presidential hiring from the internal academic sector may be changing to the promotion of deans, rather than provosts or other chief academic officers, with the former viewed as experiencing a wider range of skills more congruent with those of the presidency than skills of the academic administrative role (Chatlani, August 30, 2017; Clark, 2017; Lynch, 2018; Selingo, et al., 2017).

Demand for new institutional leadership is ongoing. Many anticipate an upcoming influx of new leaders at the helm, as presidents and chancellors "age out" of the position. The American Council on Education recently reported the mean age of college presidents as being 62.5 years (American Council on Education, 2017). Turnover rates for higher education administrators are already high, with recent data showing an average turnover of 34% turnover, or one in three, for the 36-month period beginning April 2018 and ending in 2021 (College Administrator Data, 2021). Turnover for provosts during this same time period was reported as 50%.

These changes in structures, focus, and operations of higher education and the high turnover rates present the need for considerable introspection by current administrators as they consider their own career paths and their future roles within the organizations. Key to this introspection must be an objective consideration of one's own personal strengths and weaknesses in leadership, of the characteristics and factors present within the situation of the institutional environment, and of individual potential for success in any given administrative role. Despite the emerging technological changes in both educational and corporate settings, it is important to note that studies find that effective leadership remains central to success within the organization (Bloom & McClellan, 2016; Kouzes & Posner, 2019; Shea, 2016).

While the research literature is rich with clues as to what constitutes effective and successful leadership, much less is known about the reverse – that is, the personal characteristics of leaders and the characteristics of situations that are likely to lead to derailment in positions of leadership. Bryman (2007), reviewing studies across the U.S., U.K., and Australia, noted that insights of this type may be particularly important and that the drivers of derailment may well be the opposite of those associated with success. Some research has been conducted on derailment of executives in corporate settings, but few studies have addressed derailment of administrators in colleges and universities that prevents upward movement toward their desired career trajectories.

Therefore, this study was conducted for the purpose of identifying personal and situational factors that may cause higher education administrators to derail from, or not progress toward, their future professional career goals. The study is exploratory and descriptive in nature with cause defined as perceptions of current higher education administrators without hypotheses of causal associations.

Related Literature

As noted previously, a few studies of derailment from leadership paths have been reported from corporate settings. Van Velsor and Leslie (1995), in a study involving 20 managers from the U.S. and 43 from European countries, asked participants to compare work histories of two senior-level managers, one successful and one who had derailed, to identify problems experienced by the derailed managers. Key problems identified were difficulties with interpersonal relationships, failure to meet business objectives, failure to build and lead a team, and inability to adapt during a transition. Gauthier (2018) noted that derailment is most often associated with times of intense stress, such as major restructuring of the organization, pressures from external factors, transition to a new boss, and, especially, promotion to a new role. He contended that, under stress, administrators tend to over-rely on personal strengths, which then become weaknesses. For example, the strength of strong analytic skills may progress to obsessiveness in continually seeking more data and blaming staff for being unable to meet the new expectations.

The length of tenure in the jobs of college and university presidents can be indicative of derailment in their career paths in higher education. The 2017 American College President Study by ACE (American Council on Education, 2017; Gagliardi, 2017) observed the length of presidential tenure to be shortening (mean of 6.5 years in 2017 vs. 8.5 years in 2006). Wilde and Finkelstein (2021) analyzed classified ads in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* for academic years 1975-76 through 2015-16 and also observed shortening tenure of college and university presidents (mean of 7.7 years in 2005 vs. 9.1 years in 1975). In addition, they reported that more presidents were leaving their positions before completing their first terms. Wilde and Finkelstein linked these latter observations to lack of fit and insufficient due diligence by executive search firms hired to conduct the presidential searches. They also analyzed the qualifications of some of the members of these firms and questioned their appropriateness for selecting college and university leaders.

Bowman (2017), using data from the American Association of Schools, Colleges, and Universities, found presidential tenure lasting four years or less for 44.9 percent of member institutions. As contributing factors to reduced tenure, she noted the numerous demands and stressors of fundraising, accountability for student learning, conflicting priorities of multiple constituencies (such as students vs. faculty vs. financial officers), public skepticism of the value of higher education, and problematic relations with governing boards. Monks (2012) noted in data from the ACE study that the odds of university presidents from public universities leaving office within five years were approximately 50 percent higher than for their private school president counterparts and theorized that the public university presidents were more likely to leave one institution to become president of another. Kelderman (2020) addressed the question of whether the stresses of the coronavirus pandemic might have resulted in increased numbers of resignations of presidents. He reviewed announced retirements in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* during 2018, 2019, and 2020, but found no evidence of a coronavirus effect. Rather, anecdotal evidence of widespread commitment by presidents to see their institutions through the difficult times was noted.

Harris and Ellis (2017) investigated reasons for forced derailment of college and university presidents, looking at published data regarding involuntary termination of 1,029 presidential terms across 256 Division 1 athletic institutions during the years 1988 to 2016. They found four broad causes of termination: 1) controversy, for example, in management of funds; 2) loss of confidence in management by the board, faculty, or the state system; 3) poor judgment in personal or professional conduct; and 4) lack of fit with the leadership style, for example directive versus collaborative style of leadership. They noted reported negative impacts of media coverage on institutional boards forcing the boards to release the leader as a “scapegoat” for difficulties experienced. Farrell and Whidbee (2002), in an earlier study, pointed out instances in which the negative press coverage forced leader turnover in the corporate world.

In recent years, several researchers have emphasized the “softer” more personal and interpersonal relationship skills of leaders as measures of effectiveness of leadership. Kouzes and Posner (2019) drew upon a multi-phase international study of leadership originating in 1983 and including a leadership survey of more than 125,000 people in higher education and interviews with more than 100 administrators. They identified four personal characteristics to be emphasized as desirable in leaders -- honesty, competence, inspiring, and forward-looking in orientation. Bartz (2020) explored the relationship of attributes of positive psychology to excellence in leadership in higher education,

focusing on needs for awareness of others, motivations of self and others, and humility in refraining from putting self before others. He emphasized the significance of collaboration with others, dealing directly with deficiencies, building on setbacks, stressing teamwork, and having an overall growth mindset.

Bloom and McClellan (2016) spoke of the needs to develop an "appreciative mindset" using mindfulness to create a safe and welcoming environment, emotional intelligence, vision, competence, looking for ways to support others, being aware of and building on strengths of others, and bringing people together to facilitate change. Thwaite (2020) shared her own anxiety-producing and growth experiences as a new leader, speaking of the need for participative decision-making, for showing colleagues respect and empathy, and embracing change and uncertainty as opportunities for growth.

Costs of derailment are a major consideration both for persons affected by the experience and for the institutions in which they are employed. In an example of a corporate study, McCormack, et al., (2017) conducted interviews with four high-performing executives who had been derailed by external forces, including restructuring of organizations. The executives reflected on their subjective experiences after derailment, reporting self-doubt and blame, targeting others for their derailments, having feelings of vulnerability and distress (including feeling unwanted at the workplace, isolation, inability to challenge acts of injustice) and, finally, personal growth and the redefinition of self. The authors estimated that 30 to 50 percent of high-functioning managers will derail at some time during their career and emphasized the personal and financial costs of career derailment to both individuals and organizations. Jasinski (2020) also reported issues of adjustment among higher education administrators leaving their administrative roles. Gauthier (2018) estimated that 40 to 60 percent of all executives will derail at least once in their careers and noted costs to the organization of administrator derailment including time wasted, loss of productivity, low morale, and the financial costs for replacements.

The widespread need for more effective preparation of administrators for leadership roles in higher education has been highlighted in the literature. Selingo, Chheng and Clark (2017) noted that, historically, training for positions in higher education has been "on the job", a practice deemed inadequate in today's complex environment. Their survey of 165 presidents found that leadership development was the second most important professional training identified as needed (after fund-raising). Reporting on the 2017 American College President Study, Soares et al. (2018) stated that nearly half (45%) of presidents surveyed wanted to see national associations providing professional development programs for cabinet-level executives. Coll and Weiss (2016) suggested establishing paths within institutions to prepare faculty for leadership in administration. Mentoring in the leadership role, though important for all, may be especially important to offset barriers to women and new administrators of color (Hannum, et al., 2015; Martin, 2021)

Methods

This study contributes to the research on career paths of higher education administrators by studying effects of various types of personal and situational factors on the risk of derailment. The study was conducted using an e-mail questionnaire with derailment defined in the questionnaire as "being knocked off one's current or future desired career path and includes such experiences as

being fired, relieved of duties, not promoted, or not hired due to other priorities within the organization". Factors studied were the reverse of those identified as linked to success in leadership. Specific personal and situational characteristics assessed were drawn from research literature, particularly the work of Kouzes and Posner (2019, pp. 14-16) and are listed with the findings in Tables 2 and 3.

The likelihood of each specified factor causing administrators to derail from their desired professional career trajectories was assessed through 5-category Likert items defined as "Almost Always True", "Usually True", "Occasionally True", "Usually Not True", and "Almost Never True". Participants were also asked a single open-ended question to describe other factors instrumental in administrators failing to achieve their desired professional paths. Assessment of participant characteristics was limited to number of years in higher education administration, type of current institution of employment, and position title within the organization. The 2-page questionnaire was pre-tested with five university administrators for clarity and time for completion (5 to 8 minutes) and the questionnaire was corrected as needed. The Google Forms program was used to develop and conduct the survey and Excel was used for analysis.

Two study groups were selected for the survey. The first group included all 461 individuals listed in Gazette sections of *The Chronicle of Higher Education* during the months of May through October 2021, as having new leadership appointments. The assumption was made that these individuals, having achieved recent advancement in their careers, would be attuned to considerations as to why others had not been similarly appointed to advanced positions. The second group was comprised of 40 higher education administrators in the author's personal network. Valid e-mail addresses were identified for 385 of the 461 *Chronicle* subjects through a manual Internet search and the use of the on-line Higher Education Directory (HigherEd Direct). E-mail addresses for the 40 members of the personal network study group were known to the author.

Cover letters personalized with the name, position, and congratulations on the new appointment were sent along with the questionnaire to the *Chronicle* subjects. Personal notes were included in the cover letters to the network group. The cover letter included explanations of the survey for both groups. Mailings were conducted for both groups during October-November 2021, with the first mailing followed by a second mailing as a reminder two to three weeks after the first.

The response rates were 11.2 percent (43 of 385 valid e-mails) for the *Chronicle* group and 70 percent (28 of 40 valid e-mails) for the network group. Personal characteristics of the two groups of respondents are shown in Table 1. Both groups were comprised of seasoned administrators – 39.5% of the *Chronicle* group and 42.9% of the network group had more than 20 years of administrative experience in higher education. However, the groups differed in other characteristics. The *Chronicle* group included more participants from private non-profit colleges than the network group (37.2% vs. 3.6%) and the network group had more participants from public and state universities than the *Chronicle* group (67.9% vs. 32.6%). Positions in the colleges and universities were defined in the *Chronicle* group by position categorization in the *Chronicle* Gazette and in the network group by questionnaire response. More presidents, chancellors and top academic officers were included in the *Chronicle* group than in the network group (32.6% vs. 10.7%) and more deans and department chairs were in the network group than in the *Chronicle* group (35.7% vs. 25.6%). The percentage distributions of vice presidents, vice-chancellors and other top administrators were comparable for

the two groups. Because of the differences in sources and group characteristics, the two groups were not combined, and analysis of the data remains stratified by group.

Table 1
Characteristics of the *Chronicle* and Network Groups by Percent Distribution

Characteristic	*Chronicle* (n=43)	Network (n=28)
Years Higher Education Administration		
<5	9.3	21.4
6-10	16.3	0
11-15	14.0	17.8
16-20	18.6	14.3
>20	39.5	42.9
Type of Institution		
Public/State	32.6	67.9
Private Non-Profit	37.2	3.6
Liberal Arts	16.3	14.2
Community College	9.3	3.6
For Profit	0	3.6
Other	2.3	7.1
Missing Data	2.3	0
Position*		
President/Chief Academic Officer	32.6	10.7
Vice President/Other Top Administrator	23.3	28.6
Dean/Department Chair	25.6	35.7
Other Administrative	18.6	25.0

* Position as categorized in the *Chronicle* Gazette section

Findings

Personal Factors Linked to Derailment. Because the Likert items for factors linked to derailment were not viewed as alternative measures of a single overall construct such as a psychological construct, they were analyzed as discrete, rather than in combination as a Likert scale. Relatively few observations were noted in the extreme Likert categories of “Almost Always True” and “Almost Never True” and these responses were collapsed into their adjacent columns resulting in three rather than five categories. These newly defined categories are shown in Tables 2 and 3 as “Usually or Almost Always True” and “Usually Not or Almost Never True”. The difference in the total 100% minus the summed percentages of these two categories reflects the percentages in the mid or neutral category of “Occasionally True” not shown in the tables. Percentage responses are arranged

in Tables 2 and 3 in descending order of the "Usually or Almost Always True" category by response of the *Chronicle* group.

An overall view of the Table 2 data shows general consistency for both the *Chronicle* and network groups in the rank orders of the likelihood of factors characterized as true and not true in leading to derailment of administrators. Those factors most likely to lead to derailment were functional in nature, with difficulties in decision-making and no clear vision ranked as highly likely to be linked to derailment by 60% or more of both *Chronicle* and network groups. Other functional measures noted by both groups as linked to high risk for derailment included ineffective or incompetent in some areas, inability to inspire staff, not receptive to change, lack of self-insight, lack of emotional intelligence, inability to analyze situations, and not being open to different views.

The factor of lacking integrity or honesty was considered the most likely factor to lead to derailment by the network group (64.2%) but only 51.1% of the *Chronicle* group viewed this as likely leading to derailment. The percentages ranking this factor as "Usually or Almost Never True" were both relatively low (14.7% and 10.7%). Because the difference in the groups finding honesty and integrity to be 'Usually or Almost Always True" was puzzling, the distribution of responses was further assessed. The *Chronicle* group was found to rate honesty and integrity more in the "Occasionally True" category not shown in Table 2. Additional personal factors, including the "softer" personal characteristics of needing to be liked, lack of caring about others, and focus on personal power were ranked as less likely to lead to derailment.

Table 2 shows the expected general shift with both groups in that those factors most likely to be linked to derailment were least likely to be identified as "not" linked to derailment. And those factors less likely to be "true" are more likely to be in the "Usually Not or Almost Never True" column.

Comments by respondents in the open-ended question seeking their perceptions of causes of derailment reflect the findings of personal issues in Table 2. Selected comments are quoted below with the position of the respondent identified.

- The biggest cause of failure I've seen is a disconnection from feedback and/or a failure to respond to it. Leaders need to seek feedback – want it, crave it. Especially when it is not what you want to hear. If you agree with it, then it gives you something to work on. If you don't agree, then it gives you something to shape communications around to combat. (President)
- They forget what their mission is and allow their egos to drive the institutional vision to be about them rather than the student experience. (President)
- When a new Dean takes on a new role, they need to take the time to get to know their faculty and staff. When they make decisions without knowing the people, the institutions, policies, and procedures, they are likely to make mistakes they will later regret. (Dean)
- No managerial experience (Dean)
- Inability to make difficult decisions and effectively lead subordinates (Vice President)
- I would say that a disperse agenda attempting to achieve multiple goals without a priority is a major problem. Additionally, procrastinating is another major issue leading administrators to fail. (Dean)

Several respondents also mentioned family needs and personal problems as reasons for career derailment as well as "burn-out" in finding the job overwhelming or not manageable.

Table 2
Personal Factors Linked to Derailment, by Group and Percentage

Factor	Usually or Almost Always True		Usually Not or Almost Never True	
	Chronicle (n=43)	Network (n=28)	*Chronicle* (n=43)	Network (n=28)
Inability to make difficult decisions	69.7	60.7	11.6	7.1
Ineffective or incompetent in some areas	62.8	53.6	14.0	10.7
No clear vision, no forward thinking	60.5	60.7	7.0	3.6
Inability to inspire staff and others	60.5	53.6	9.3	3.6
Not receptive to change	58.2	50.0	18.6	10.7
Lack of self-insight and awareness	58.2	46.4	16.3	10.7
Deficient in emotional intelligence	55.8	46.4	11.6	7.1
Inability to analyze situations	55.8	57.1	14.0	17.9
Not open to differing views	51.2	46.4	16.3	14.3
Lacks integrity or honesty	51.1	64.2	14.0	10.7
Strong need to be liked	44.2	35.7	23.3	17.9
Lack of caring about others	39.2	42.9	34.9	17.9
Focus on seeking personal power	30.2	50.0	30.2	14.3

Situational Factors Linked to Derailment. Table 3 summarizes the findings of situational factors linked to derailment. Toxic relationships within the work group were ranked most important as a risk factor for derailment by both the *Chronicle* and network groups (79.1% and 64.3%). Failure to meet organizational goals (74.5% and 53.6%) and lack of fit with organizational priorities (69.8% and 64.3%) were also identified as major risk factors, as was lack of support from the supervisor (60.5% and 57.2%). The failure by the administrator to garner adequate resources to do the job was identified by over half of the respondents from both groups as linked to likelihood of derailment. Both groups ranked the role of the administrator as being inadequate in obtaining resources as a higher risk for derailment than the factor of financial constraints within the organization. This may have implied that the attribution of inadequate resources directly to the administrator was riskier than overall financial health of the institution. Lack of support from one's supervisor was identified as a risk factor by over half of the respondents in both the *Chronicle* and network groups. Controversies within the organization as well as lack of support from staff were also identified by approximately 40 to 50 percent of both groups. Pressure from external groups such as alumni or board members was viewed as less likely to be usually or almost always linked to derailment by both groups. However, this was still considered a risk factor by approximately one-fourth of the group. These were the same percentages as seen for those viewing such pressures as usually not a factor in risk.

Table 3
Situational Factors Linked to Derailment, by Group and Percentage

Factor	Usually or Almost Always True		Usually Not or Almost Never True	
	Chronicle (n=43)	Network (n-28)	*Chronicle* (n=43)	Network (n=28)
Toxic relations within the work group	79.1	64.3	2.3	3.6
Failure to meet organizational objectives	74.5	53.6	4.7	3.6
Lack of fit with organizational priorities	69.8	64.3	0.0	3.6
Lack of support from supervisor	60.5	57.2	4.7	3.6
Controversies within the organization	53.5	39.3	9.3	14.3
Failure to garner adequate resources to do the job	51.2	57.1	9.3	10.7
Financial constraints within the organization	41.8	21.4	23.3	14.3
Lack of support from one's staff	41.8	39.3	11.6	3.6
Pressure from external groups such as alumni or board members	25.6	28.5	25.6	28.6

Once again, open-ended comments from respondents illustrate these points as shown below.

- Watch for faculty or staff with views unlike yours. You must hear them and communicate with them. They can rear up and cause trouble. (Dean)
- As the saying goes, it's action, not intention, that determines destination. At the end of the day, inaction toward the people of the organization and inaction toward the purpose of the organization will most likely lead to an end, or at a minimum leveling/ceiling, of their professional career trajectory. (Vice President)
- Institutions usually have a kind of person in mind when they hire. If the reality doesn't fit the perception things can go south quickly. Institutional dynamics can matter. (Provost)
- An inability to manage upward. Much of the rise within an organization requires finding ways to create buy-in from upper-tier administrators. (Vice Provost)
- Not having any sponsors within the organization (Assistant Dean)
- To me, derailers are strengths applied to a situation where it is no longer appropriate. So, I think these leaders misread the situation and the leadership challenge, and therefore take an inappropriate approach. (Dean)
- It often comes down to alignment – as leaders at the top change, priorities change and that may not align with either the skills or interests of the person affected. Often there are other multifactorial issues as well with chronic lack of resources resulting in ineffectiveness but also now a lack of knowledge about how to potentially move forward since they have done their job that way for so long. (Vice Chancellor)

Lack of preparation for the leadership role was noted in the research as a frequently occurring career deterrent for administrators and this concern was also reported by respondents in this study. To quote,

- Not receiving professional development opportunities such as attending conferences, failure to recognize administrator's work via workplace celebrations and initiatives. (Vice President)
- Lack of access to training; desire for continuous learning; commitment to excellence; ability to delegate (ultra micro-managers will have difficulty progressing up the ladder). (Vice President)

Summary and Conclusions

Higher education administrators face increasing career uncertainties as colleges and universities move to incorporate changes in institutional structure and operations associated with increased competition for students, changes in student populations and teaching approaches, technological advances in operations, and a range of external forces. While much has been written about success in leadership in higher education, little is known about those factors leading to derailment of higher education administrators seeking to advance professionally in the field.

This study reported findings of an e-mail survey of the perceptions of two groups of higher education administrators about risk factors for derailment in higher education administration. One group of 43 administrators was identified from the Gazette sections of *The Chronicle of Higher Education* and a second group of 28 administrators was from the author's professional network. These were experienced groups of administrators as approximately 40% of both groups reported over 20 years of experience in higher education administration. Respondents also represented a variety of institutional leadership positions and college and university settings. The *Chronicle* group had a stronger representation of presidents and other top academic officers. This was not surprising as the Gazette section of the *Chronicle* served as the source of identification of this group for the study and the Gazette notices focus on announcements of new appointments of top administrators. The network group had more deans and department chairs. Because of differences in the sources and characteristics of the two groups, separate analyses of the groups were conducted. A strength of this approach was the ability to view similarities and differences in patterns of response of the two groups thus supporting areas of possible generalizability.

The two groups were very similar in viewing the most important personal factors leading to derailment to be the reverse of those associated with success in leadership. The personal risk factors for derailment included deficiencies in the traditional leadership functions such as decision-making, establishing a clear vision, competence in specific areas, the ability to inspire others, and the ability to analyze situations. While the more interpersonal relationship dimensions emphasized in the literature such as emotional intelligence and caring were viewed here as important factors, deficiencies in these areas were not as likely to lead to derailment as deficiencies in the traditional leadership functions.

Situational factors including the inability to handle toxic work groups, failure to meet organizational objectives, lack of the administrator fit with organizational priorities, and lack of support of

supervisors were also emphasized by both groups as associated with a higher risk of derailment. Financial constraints of the organization, lack of support from one's staff, and pressure from external groups, while important factors of risk, were emphasized to a less extent.

Implications for Research

This study was viewed as exploratory and descriptive in nature but points to questions with potential for exploration in further research. Such research questions include

- What are the early signals for identifying administrators at risk of derailment?
- What types of interventions might be initiated to support individuals at risk?
- What types of leadership development programs are most effective and how can they best be designed and implemented?
- What are the signs of toxicity developing within a work group?
- How can administrators work to counter the development of toxicity within workgroups?

Implications for Practice

Findings have important implications for leadership development programs for current and aspiring higher education administrators. Training programs need to focus on the basic leadership functions of decision-making, functional competence, analytical expertise, establishing and transmitting a vision, and being able to inspire staff to work as a team to meet organizational objectives. Findings also support the needs for close attention to the search and appointment processes for administrative positions to achieve organizational "fit". The high costs of derailment, both personal costs to the individual administrator and costs to the institutions, signal the need for increased attention to personal support of administrators in their current roles as they seek to work effectively in these turbulent times for higher education administration.

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The Relative Importance of Teaching Methods vs. Learning Styles in Student Success: Faculty Perspectives

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Introduction

Student Success. In recent years most higher education institutions have begun to focus more attention on their students' success – or at least to the same degree as on enrollment numbers, faculty credentials, grants, and other metrics of institutional success. As a result, student success has become one of the desirable benchmarks institutions use to recruit students, raise funds, and improve their reputation. The shift came in part from the realization among institutions that:

> *In order [for institutions] to be considered successful, students would have to succeed as well. How "success" was defined was based on more tangible metrics, such as graduation rates, time-to-graduation, postsecondary degrees, and job placement. These are easy to measure and federal and state funding is now predicated on these results* (CHE, 2018a).

Colleges and universities are increasingly being judged by how well they educate, retain, and graduate students, especially those who are first generation or low income (CHE, 2018a). There is recognition that this success is not only important for individual students and their institutions, but also critical to the economic and social strength of a nation.

Joe Cuseo (2009a, 2009b) of Marymount College has found the following desirable outcomes most frequently cited as indicators of student success in higher education: student retention (persistence), educational attainment, academic achievement, student advancement, and holistic development. These factors are key for institutions of higher education to be able to plan and implement strategies to improve student success and increase their completion and graduation rates. But most important, students' learning and instructors' teaching are what ensure the successful attainment of these and other desirable outcomes.

How students learn (student learning styles) and how instructors teach (teaching methods) are among the most critical factors that influence students' success. Knowing and accepting this premise alone, however, won't move the needle for increasing the rate of success. Institutions need to know what their instructors think about the issue and use their informed perspective to

develop a comprehensive and systematic way to drive student success and obtain desirable results. Institutions need to be able to plan and implement actionable strategies to improve student success and in turn increase their completion and graduation rates.

Teaching Methods and Approaches. These terms refer to the general principles, pedagogy, and management strategies instructors use for instruction and related activities. The choice of teaching methods an instructor intentionally selects and uses depends on "what fits his or her educational philosophy, classroom demographic, the subject area(s), the school's mission, the belief in and the confidence in the use of educational tools and technology, to name a few. For example, what a given instructor believes about the learners and about the learning process controls what he/she designs, what he/she teaches, and how much the learners learn from and through the instructor's teaching methods and approaches" (Vella 2001). These are key points because individual students come to the classroom with their own unique life experiences and unique contexts that shape their own reflective process for a given learning task. Yet, if an instructor doesn't believe that all learners arrive to the class with the capacity to do the work involved in learning, he or she might not purposely design learning tasks through which all students are able to actively and meaningfully engage – cognitively, emotionally, and physically – with the content in the learning process (Vella 2001).

Felder and Brent (1999) wrote:

> *We may define good teaching as instruction that leads to effective learning, which in turn means thorough and lasting acquisition of the knowledge, skills, and values the instructor or the institution has set out to impart. The education literature presents a variety of good teaching strategies and research studies that validate them (e.g., Campbell and Smith 1997; Johnson et al. 1998; McKeachie 1999). (¶. 7)*

In simple terms, as illustratively laid out by Teach.Com in Figure 1, "Teaching theories can be organized into four categories based on two major parameters: a teacher-centered approach versus a student-centered approach, and high-tech material use versus low-tech material use" (¶. 3).

In the "teacher-centered approaches," which are also known as "subject-centered," instructors are the main authority figures for the sources of information, delivery of the content to students, and the assessment of its acquisition among students. In this approach:

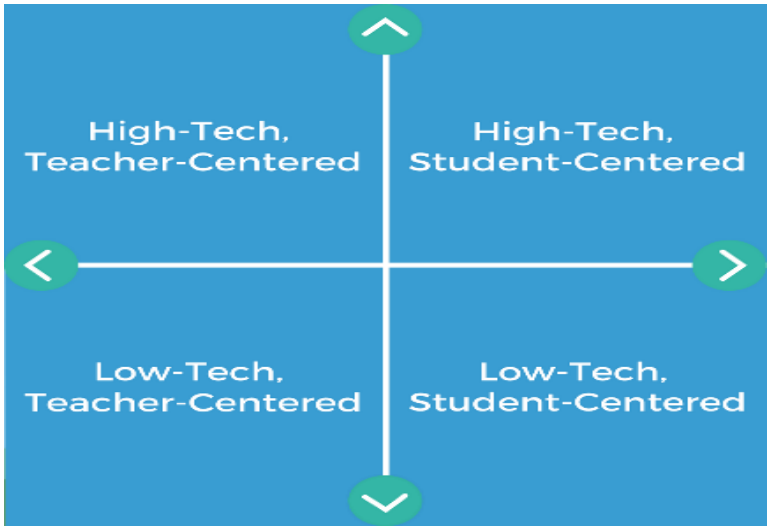
> *Students are viewed as "empty vessels" who passively receive knowledge from their teachers through lectures and direct instruction, with an end goal of positive results from testing and assessment. In this style, teaching and assessment are viewed as two separate entities; student learning is measured through objectively scored tests and assessments. (teach.com, ¶. 4).*

Furthermore, in "teacher-centered approaches" evaluation is often used more as a tool to identify who should and should not pass the course, rather than as an additional strategy for learning. On the other hand, and based on the fact that the educational process involves both teaching and learning, in the "student-centered approach" both instructors and students play an equally active role in the learning process. With this in mind:

The teacher's primary role is to coach and facilitate student learning and overall comprehension of material, and to measure student learning through both formal and informal forms of assessment, like group projects, student portfolios, and class participation. In the student-centered classroom, teaching and assessment are connected because student learning is continuously measured during instruction. (teach.com, ¶. 6).

Figure 1

"**Teaching theories can be organized into four categories based on two major parameters**"



Source: https://teach.com/what/teachers-know/teaching-methods/

Learning and Learning Styles. As Barrow and Milburn (1990) explained, instructors teach so students can learn, and to learn is to acquire understanding of something (knowledge, skills, and attitudes) that one did not have before. They added:

> *[However], there is not one process of learning. That is to say, there is not an activity or a set of steps which, when engaged in on any occasion in respect of any subject matter, will result in the matter in hand being learned. There may be some very general elements common to all acts of learning … [that is] arising out of the definition; … all acts of learning must involve the acquisition of some new ability or understanding because that is part of the meaning of 'learning' – but what is involved in any particular act of learning must be partly dependent on what is being learned (p.179).*

Since individuals perceive and process information in very different ways and because the brains of no two individuals' are alike, a learning style is defined as a preference in the way an individual

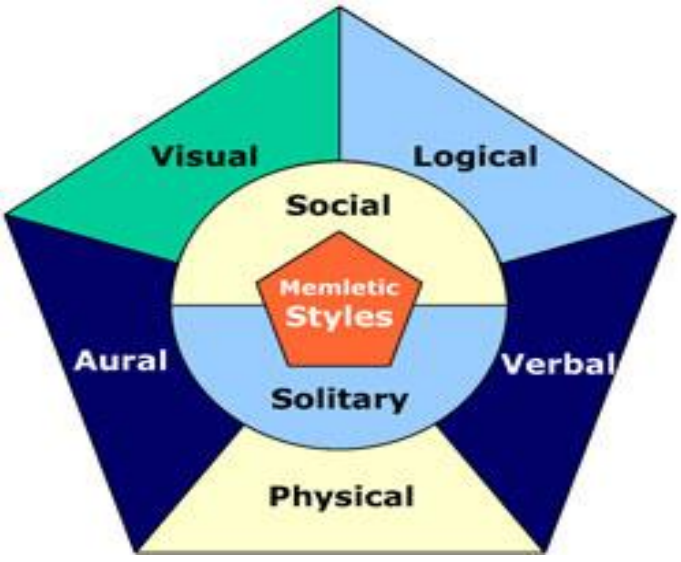
learner perceives and processes information and knowledge most effectively. We all have our own preferred methods of learning, and these are our learning style. But while we may have preferences, this doesn't mean that we can learn only with these particular preferred learning approaches, nor that we fit neatly into only one way of learning, or can only learn with one of the identified learning styles. We have all been in classes with teachers whom we perceived as boring or uninspiring, and yet, most of us managed to complete these classes with at least passing grades.

> *Learning styles group common ways that people learn. Everyone has a mix of learning styles. Some people may find that they have a dominant style of learning, with far less use of the other styles. Others may find that they use different styles in different circumstances. There is no right mix. Nor are your styles fixed. You can develop ability in less dominant styles, as well as further develop styles that you already use well.*
> (https://www.learning-styles-online.com/overview/, ¶. 1)

As shown in Figure 2, scientists and educational psychologists have identified seven common types of learning styles that are believed not only to guide the way individuals learn but also how they change the way they internally represent experiences, the way they recall information, and even the words they choose to express their understanding. These learning styles are visual (spatial), aural (auditory-musical), verbal (linguistic), physical (kinesthetic), logical (mathematical), social (interpersonal), and solitary (intrapersonal).

Figure 2

The Seven Commonly Identified Learning Styles



Source: https://www.learning-styles-online.com/overview/

Based on the implied differences in students' learning needs, education experts suggest that instructors should be expected to be knowledgeable both about their students' preferred learning styles and about the associated different methods and approaches to teaching. Their belief is that instructors must understand both aspects in order to create and sustain an effective teaching environment (whether online, onsite, blended, etc.), better design intentional learning tasks and activities, select and implement appropriate assessment methods, and maximize their students' learning through active methods.

Rationale for the Study

Among all the identified stakeholders (students, teachers, administrators, and staff) who have a stake in student success, students and faculty play the most important roles. By the same token, among all the identified factors which have a significant effect on student success, how students learn and how teachers teach are the most critical factors in the process. We conducted this study to find out how faculty perceive the importance of teaching methods and learning styles in student success and in turn how best to improve teaching and learning. We also wanted to know if and how the suggested strategies to improve student success might differ when we focus more on how teachers teach or on how students learn, or on the integration of both processes, especially when it comes to faculty training and professional development.

The Study

A total of 1500 surveys were distributed through e-mail and LinkedIn during the years 2015-17 to college instructors, with the aim of getting back at least 1000 completed responses (Table 1 & 2). In the end, a total of 895 (or 59.7%) completed surveys were collected and used in this study. As Table 2 shows, of those 895 participants, 855 (95.5%) responded through e-mails and 40 (4.5%) through LinkedIn. A total of 29 completed surveys were discarded for lack of clarity and readability.

Table 1

Surveys Sent	Aimed to Receive	Actually Received	Used in the Study
1500	1000	924	895
	66.6%	61.1%	59.7%

Table 2

	Surveys Sent	**Surveys Received**	**Surveys Used**
E-mail	1400	879	855
LinkedIn	100	45	40
Total	1500	924	895

Faculty and Instructors Participating in the Study. As shown in Table 3, there were more participants from the 4-year college level (513 or 57.3%) than from 2-year colleges (382 or 42.7%) in this study.

Table 3

Faculty and Instructors Participating in the Study (N=895)			
	4-year	2-year	Total
Number	513	382	895
Percentage	57.3%	42.7%	100%

The study used a descriptive survey and a questionnaire with specific items as the primary data collection instrument. Direct telephone interviews and follow-up communication through e-mail with selected participants were used to clarify points, expand upon responses, etc. While the data generated from open-ended questions are not easy to compile and quantify, this format is often the best way to determine respondents' complete knowledge, feelings, and understanding of an issue. Table 4 shows the questions asked in the survey.

Table 4

The Survey's Format and Main Questions	
1	When it comes to student success, which of these two important factors is more significant and why? a. How students learn (Students' Learning Styles)? b. How faculty teach (Instructors' Teaching Methods)?
2	From your own perspective as an instructor, how can teaching be improved?

Results of the Study

Question One. *When it comes to student success, which of these two important factors is more significant and why: how students learn (students' learning styles) or how faculty teach (instructors' teaching methods and approaches)?*

Participants' Overall Responses. As seen in Table 5, half of the respondents identified "Instructors' Teaching Methods" as the more significant factor in student success (451 or 50.4%). "Students' Learning Styles" was identified as more significant by 257 (or 28.7%) respondents. About 20% (or 187) identified the combination of both teaching methods and learning styles as most significant in students' success.

Participants' Responses Compared To College Level. As shown in Table 6, more respondents from 4-year colleges (285 or 55.6%) than from 2-year colleges (166 or 43.5%) indicated that teaching methods are the more significant factor in students' academic success. On the other hand, more instructors from 2-year colleges (106 or 27.5%) than from 4-year colleges (81 or 15.8%) believe that both teaching methods and learning styles contribute to students' academic success. An equal

percentage of respondents from both college levels (28.7% and 28.8%) share the perspective that learning styles are more significant in students' academic success.

Table 5

	Total Responses of the Participants (N=895)		
		No.	%
1	Instructors' Teaching Methods	451	50.4%
2	Students' Learning Styles	257	28.7%
3	Combination of Teaching Methods and Learning Styles	187	20.9%
	Total	895	100%

Table 6

	Responses Per College Level				
	4-year (N=513)		2-year (N=382)		Total
Instructor's Teaching Methods	285	55.6%	166	43.5%	451
Student's Learning Styles	147	28.7%	110	28.8%	257
Combination of Teaching Methods and Learning Styles	81	15.8%	106	27.7%	187
Total	513	100%	382	100%	**895**

Question Two. *From your own perspective as instructor, how can teaching be improved?*

Overall Responses. There were no significant differences between the perspectives of 2-year and 4-year college faculty on how to improve teaching. Almost all participants indicated that improving teaching starts with making TEACHING an institutional priority and INSTRUCTIONAL QUALITY part of the institution's mission. Most of the participants also agreed directly or indirectly that to maximize student success for all students in every course and in turn in their academic programs, we need to use a model such as "Intentional Research-based Instruction," based on research on learning through performing tasks and strategies that have a high impact on student achievement. Such instruction motivates students to meaningfully engage in every class and to invest their own time and energy in the learning process, inside and outside the class. To help them develop such instructional approaches, participants suggested that faculty need to:

- Know their students well.
- Be aware of students' various learning styles, in order to develop strong, well-designed learning tasks and lesson plans and employ effective instructional strategies.
- Seek frequent feedback from both students and faculty peers on their own courses and instructional practices.
- Give students real responsibilities that lead to accountabilities and help students develop higher expectations for themselves, and from their classes.

- Connect the real world to academic work via project-based learning.
- Give students a voice and choice by working to understand them and their backgrounds.

The respondents also suggested that improving instruction requires faculty to create current and relevant environments for learning, help students develop understanding and self-awareness, and enable students to extend and apply their knowledge in various setting. Other suggested strategies included teaching using problem-solving activities, discussion groups, peer teaching, building or constructing scenarios, role-playing, and teaching by storytelling.

In summary, there was good agreement among the participants on how to improve teaching that could lead to a significant increase in student success. The participants provided suggestions and recommendations for active learning strategies. The participants also indicated that intentionally designed active learning cannot usually be successfully achieved by instructors working in isolation on planning, teaching, and assessing what they do pedagogically in their classes. Instructors need to collaborate with others (including other faculty colleagues, administrators, and students) to ensure successful accomplishment of these goals.

Analysis and Discussion

Question One. *When it comes to student success, which of these two important factors is more significant and why: how students learn (student learning styles) or how faculty teach (instructors' teaching methods and approaches)?*

While half of all respondents stated that teaching methods are more significant and critical to student success than student learning styles, all the instructors participating in the study were confident in what they believed and how they defended their own perspectives. However, quite often those participants who chose learning styles (28.7%) or the combination of both teaching and learning approaches (20.9%), also emphasized the crucial role of teaching approaches in students' success. This was even more explicitly stated by those participants whom we interviewed. However, it is a fact that instructors every day enter classes full of students with a wide range of learning needs, levels of preparedness, levels of interest and self-motivation, and social and cultural backgrounds. This range of capabilities and backgrounds is not only a frustration that causes instructors to feel overwhelmed, but also a condition that drives some students to feel lost in the traditional classroom environment (Cherif et al. 2013, 2014, 2015). Since students come to the classroom with their own unique life experiences and unique contexts that shape their reflective process to a given learning task (Vella, 2001), teachers are advised by our respondents not only to be primarily aware of this but also to act accordingly.

Respondents Who Focus on *How Teachers Teach*

In our study, 50% of all respondents stated that how teachers teach is more significant and critical to student success than student learning styles. However, more 4-year (55.6%) than 2-year faculty (43.5%) hold this perspective.

As a common instructor viewpoint, it has been assumed that within a class, the students differ in their learning styles. Some are more visual learners, some favor auditory and some physical

approaches. Hence, how well the teaching methods match the learning styles is very important to the students' success. To teach most effectively, instructors need to vary their approaches and teach to all types of learners. The ability to vary one's teaching methods can distinguish the successful teacher from less successful colleagues. As Ann Hanson, an emeritus math professor stated:

> *The teacher makes the difference ...ALWAYS! I learned this a long time ago. I have had the opportunity to observe teachers in many downstate Illinois schools and even in little, poor rural schools; you could find marvelous and inspiring teachers everywhere. Money didn't matter, resources didn't matter, technology didn't matter, it was always the teacher. If the teacher was knowledgeable, compassionate and enthusiastic, the students responded in the same manner. This type of observation and realization have guided my teaching career within the college level for more than 20 years teaching mathematics. For example, I introduce a given concept in various ways, give students the opportunity to apply it in different scenarios and circumstances, and reflect not only on when they might have encountered the learned concept in their past life and experience, but also to figure out when they might expect to see it in their future life and careers.*

Teaching methods and approaches are more significant than student learning styles, these faculty would argue, because the former help provide an environment in which students are encouraged to see themselves as inherently curious individuals and capable learners, rather than one in which additional challenges are added to their learning by an overly narrow or strict approach to teaching. Since teachers have more power in the student-teacher relationship, it is incumbent on them to provide students an environment that is conducive to learning.

We have to keep in mind that it's the teacher who can motivate students to learn by addressing student needs differently in a diverse class with different capabilities and learning styles. Effective teachers are able to assess the learning needs of their students and adapt to their various learning styles.

Another instructor from a 4-year college stated that:

> *The most important element in the student-teacher interaction is the teacher's methods and his/her ability to get the student to learn, and thus to achieve success. The proponents of notions about student learning styles need to recognize that a preferred learning style is (a) a preference and (b) a preference on the margin. If a student is found to prefer one or several of the "styles" over others, this does not mean that he/she will not learn when other presentation modes are used by an effective teacher. Often the key factor in whether a student learns is whether the teacher is able to motivate him or her to invest more time and energy as well as to inspire him or her to continue exploring and learning.*

If a given teacher teaches in a dry, uninspiring, and boring way, this will affect how students respond in the classroom and interact with the instructor and other students. As a result, low levels of learning and comprehension would be the expected outcome. However, when faculty show

enthusiasm for what they teach, their enthusiasm is passed on to the students. Furthermore, enthusiasm in teaching helps build trust and connections between students and instructors. It also helps to communicate to students that they matter in the learning process. However, as emeritus professor Pangratios Papacosta, from a 4-year college, stated:

> *Unfortunately, enthusiasm does not come with the college degree, it is not found in a textbook and it is not a teachable skill. It requires instead an internal transformation and an honest personal commitment to teaching. These are possible – and they can be easily attainable – if a teacher truly loves to teach. Teachers who have a passion for teaching consider teaching to be a calling and a noble profession. These teachers accept teaching as an honor and an opportunity to change the world, a few students at a time. Doctors and teachers who excel in their professions have another thing in common. They love and care for people.*

Respondents Who Focus on Both *How Teachers Teach* and *How Students Learn*

Overall, 20.9% of the respondents stated that both teaching methods and learning styles are equally significant to student success with more 2-year (27.7%) than 4-year instructors (15.8%) holding this perspective.

Participants with this perspective believe the two components must complement each other in order to achieve desirable student outcomes. They explained that a student's learning style is crucial for out-of-classroom acquisition of knowledge. To be consistent and continuous, however, it has to be closely monitored and guided by the instructor. Proponents of "both" hold the view that current testing methods do not encourage students to forage and explore; memorization of facts for the test does not lead students into critical thinking and problem-solving mindsets, which are urgently needed among current students. Furthermore, teachers' methods and approaches are fundamental in establishing a professional and respectful relation with the student, in inspiring the taste for long-term learning. Teachers have to be extremely malleable and to switch teaching methods in such a way as to deliver solid explanations in any type of classroom; they have to provide guidance and follow-up outside of the classroom for best results. As one faculty member described:

> *The reason that both [teaching methods and learning styles] are important and contribute equally to students' success is this: Attention to "how the student learns" lets the student feel comfortable in attending the class. For example, in our school, more than 60% of our students did not attend school for a long time, meaning from 5 to 20 or more years. They lost the feeling of how to be a student again. They panic and don't have self-confidence. I help them regain this confidence and belief in their ability even if they have issues with a subject like math, for example.*

Another faculty member explained that learning styles and teaching methods must go hand in hand because only when we understand how students learn best are we able to teach effectively. This instructor added:

To that end, I use a multiple delivery approach in my classrooms and take careful stock of what causes students to respond. I gauge what students are responding to by how many questions they ask inside and outside the classroom, how willing they are to discuss the subject in class, and how confidently they are willing to express ideas.

In summary, the participants in this group indicated that to be an effective instructor you must not only understand the differences between students' learning styles but also to use this type of understanding in designing the learning tasks, instructional strategies and assessment methods for your course.

Respondents Who Focus on *Students' Learning Styles*

Overall, 28.8% of the participants stated that "students' learning styles" are more significant and critical to student success than "how teachers teach." Interestingly, the percentage of participants who hold this perspective is the same among the 4-year (28.7%) and 2-year (28.8%) faculty respondents.

Most of these "**learning style**" adherents indicated that it is hard to separate the two components, but that the students' learning styles are more important because it is harder for a student to learn in a way that is not conducive to their preferences. No matter how hard a teacher tries, a visual learner can't learn as readily or as well in a completely auditory learning environment. As one respondent shared:

It is extremely important for us as educators to be cognizant of students' learning styles, and then cater to the different ways in which students learn. Being a good instructor is of no help if we are not taking into consideration students' learning styles, which are an important factor in student success. This has guided my teaching career for many years and still does on a weekly basis.

Many of the participants who considered that the learning style is more critical to student success suggested that learning styles should guide the teaching methods, and not the other way around. For example:

Starting with an initial presentation by the teacher, the class should be open for the students to ask questions anytime, given the teacher's guidance on where there is confusion and providing opportunities for the teacher to present material in a different way. In the next step, students should practice the skills individually or as a group with instructor guidance. The teacher can wander the room, answering questions and guiding work. Teachers would ideally be open to how each student is thinking about the problems or situations and not the other way around.

Others believe that since we are least likely to be able to change the student's learning style, how students learn becomes the more important factor in student learning and success. For example, as one instructor stated:

When it comes to student success, I truly believe that "how students learn" is more important than "how teachers teach." I try to assess my students day one of class each semester to determine which types of students they are (i.e., what their learning styles are). Then I try very hard and to the best of my knowledge and experience to modify how I go about doing things to best fit their overall needs. As a professor I always need to adapt to the students. It is not an easy task, but it is doable and rewarding.

Furthermore, while students learn in different ways, it is generally common to find one shared dominant learning style among most of the students in a given class of a particular discipline or subject. If this is the case, then a teacher could use this shared learning style as the base for his or her general instruction and then design learning tasks and other instructional strategies to complement and complete the base instruction for individual learners when needed.

Question # 2. *From your own perspective as an instructor, how can teaching be improved?*

Philosophy and Attitude

Philosophically speaking, the single most important approach to education is understanding the need to take students from where they are (not where we wish they were) to where we believe they need to be. An additional orientation is grasping the reality that no student wakes up in the morning thinking they want to fail. Thus, we must always assume good intentions on the part of the student, and if they are not succeeding, it is our job to find out why and to create the needed learning environment that promotes student motivation to engage in the learning process. Furthermore, making information relevant and interesting is also an important factor in how we can improve teaching and help students learn. As one participant who has been teaching physics for many years wrote:

A good teacher often makes a lesson interesting by various standard ways such as technology, demos, and visual aids. But these are not enough. Besides enthusiasm a good teacher should include short and relevant stories from the biography and the history in the topic that is taught, whether this is science, mathematics, languages, history, etc. Such an inclusion adds a human flavor to the subject, a quality that appeals to students. This however requires extra preparatory work and perhaps a series of short workshops. But when stories from the history and biography of the subject are properly integrated into the class presentations, they add a human component that is bound to boost student interest. Story telling can be an effective tool in our pedagogy regardless of discipline. (Dr. Pan Papacosta)

Most participants indicated the need for moving from the top-down (hierarchical) classroom to an environment where students are engaged and urged to inquire, wonder, and wander in an active learning environment. Again, as the professor quoted above also wrote:

Education is most effective if it is based not on mechanical rote learning based on memorization, but, for example, on exploration via inquiry. Students must be encouraged and rewarded for asking questions. The best measure of educated

persons is not what they know, but how many creative questions they can construct with what they know. Regrettably the framing of creative questions has been left out from most teaching practices. For years students, including some teachers and parents, have linked questions with ignorance rather than creative inquiry. In such a culture, students are embarrassed to ask about anything because they fear that their questions will be silly or, worse still, they fear that their question may be perceived as a challenge to the teacher. Educators must reverse this trend by inviting students not only to answer standard questions but as part of their assignment to also generate creative questions on the lesson of the day. Such questions should be graded according to their creative imagination and validity. Therefore, learning by inquiry and creative questions should be encouraged and rewarded.

Students

Among the many things that the participants indicated can be done to improve teaching **two seem most promising: first,** interact with each student to determine what their goals and aims in the course are, **and then** use teaching methods designed to respond to those student aims – the result being effective motivation that leads the student to want to learn and to work toward that end. To accomplish this, instructors need to know and understand different learning styles, incorporate interactive learning using games, concept maps, etc., incorporate repetition with the help of review sheets, flow charts, etc., and always reach out to students who are struggling, whenever possible spending one-on-one time with them.

A senior professor of mathematics from a 4-year college gave an extended response that echoed most of what the other participants indicated:

Nowhere in all of my degree work did I ever get instruction on how to teach. It took trial and error, observations of myself and other instructors, and recall of my own best teachers, and of course, my students. Out of my own personal experience, however, I have realized that knowing a subject and helping other humans learn it are two different things. Second, good teaching can be taught, but it really is a talent that sometimes needs to be developed. In addition, it takes a sensitive person with acute powers of observation to analyze and respond to a student or group of students while visualizing a goal for them. That said, I believe a lot of people have a natural talent for teaching but only need some inspiration, instruction, creative ideas, and some camaraderie (Barbara J. Strauch).

Another instructor echoed the same sentiment but in different ways. She wrote that teaching is a job that is a bigger than any teacher simply because it is really a profession and not a job. It is a professional task that the more you learn about the more you realize there is more you don't know. This means it is a professional task that requires continuous search and learning to achieve improvement. It requires inspiration and love for the profession. After all, as another faculty member put it, "Inspired minds make great teachers," and great teachers inspire and motivate generations of successful students and in turn productive citizens.

Another significant response was from Professor Michele Hoffman, who firmly believes that in order to improve the effectiveness of teaching it is essential for a teacher to be willing to experiment with different strategies across multiple platforms. She wrote:

> *As an example, this spring* (2018) *I will be leading a virtual classroom experience while I am on board a research vessel in Alaska. PowerPoint presentations will be used to pre-teach the topics, links to videos of interviews with the scientists and demonstrations from the lab will be available, and chat rooms will allow students to interface with the scientists. It will be an interesting experiment for sure! Students not only will learn, but also will experience something they will never forget throughout their life-time.*

One respondent who has been teaching human anatomy and physiology as well as pharmacology and pathophysiology online and face-to-face to nursing and pre-med students, wrote that teaching can be improved by embracing technology that better fits the overall needs of both the millennial and the Z-generation students. For example:

- *I make myself available by video conferencing for more office hours each week.*
- *I make myself available by text messaging nearly 24 hours a day when it comes to critical issues.*
- *Not every student can attend every class, so I try to record every class session so students can watch it at a time more conducive to their schedule.*

The same professor also added that he tried to improve his teaching by using numerous "classroom assessment techniques," such as the Minute Paper, the Muddiest Point, Problem Recognition Tasks, Documented Problem Solutions, Directed Paraphrasing, Applications Cards, Student-Generated Test Questions, and Classroom Opinion Polls, to name a few.

The following are among the suggestions that recurred many times in response to the “how can teaching be improved” question:

- Additional training in teaching in their areas/subject, led by master teachers in their subject is a good place to start.
- Symposiums, workshops, online courses, well-matched team teaching for newcomers, going to other teachers’ classes to observe (same discipline or not) all help teachers learn the things that are often an assumed base of their profession.
- Good teaching should incorporate multiple formats, not restricted to only lecturing, but including interactive discussion, incorporation of visual materials (photos, illustrations, videos, etc.), hands-on and other active learning methods, role play activities, and numerous others.
- Learning assessment should also incorporate many varied methods so that if individual students have trouble with quizes and tests, they can communicate their knowledge in other ways – research papers, homework, in-class presentations, short term and long term class projects, peer-evaluation, etc.

- The best way to improve teaching is to develop an understanding of the different student learning styles. Then identify the learning styles of your students, and construct your instruction so that it is as close as possible to these learning styles.
- Use teaching methods that are practical and effective for the learning objectives identified.
- Allow for creative thinking, problem-solving, and rich discourse (i.e., allow for various points of view).
- Teachers should be willing to be taught by students – learn as you teach.
- As teachers, we need to take advantage of technology as new technology is developed. More and more our students are using technology for everything. Also use better e-books that have embedded videos, and interactive aspects of instant feedback on the learning process, etc.
- Start slowly, with real life examples and focusing on a subject that is relevant and easy to understand, (b) show different approaches in solving problems, (c) spend more time with the students, especially the lagging ones, (d) encourage group study and collaborative learning.
- Teachers need the opportunity to interact with one another and to learn little tips from one another. This can be accomplished through in-service classes and by attending conferences. Some schools even provide time within the school day for teachers to work together on common lesson plans. Learning how to teach cannot come solely from a book or an online class. It must be face-to-face interaction.

Some participants also commented that online teaching is more challenging as the element of a specific group of students is somewhat removed from the equation. It is harder to tailor the lesson or presentation based on the group of students in the class. With online, the teacher often uses as many strategies as possible. A written lesson is provided, video links are provided for the hardest materials or questions, and live lessons are provided. These teachers need to respond quickly to emails and questions posed in the online classroom so that students feel supported. Often teachers end up reviewing problems with some students individually on the phone or over an online conferencing site. The students who are struggling but are reluctant to ask for help are the biggest challenge in online education. Teachers who reach out to these students individually are probably more likely to reach them, but not all will respond.

Recommendations

More than 40 ideas and recommendations have been identified through this study. The ideas and recommendations were either proposed directly by the participants based on their own teaching experiences or as a result of the discussion and analysis of the participants' responses and feedback supported with literature reviews. However, most of the recommendations came under two main categories at the levels of teacher preparedness and instructional strategies, and college and university policies and administration. A number of subcategories were also identified.

1. College administrators need to help instructors **identify** the internal and external issues affecting the entire classroom learning environment as well as how to overcome these issues by **devising informative visions and creative innovations** and putting them into action on a **definite, agreed upon timeline**.

2. Students should be treated as decision-makers who need all the resources that enable them to make better informed decisions about their own learning.

3. Colleges and universities may want to carry out surveys on learning styles to identify students' learning preferences as they commence their courses, tentatively during the orientation week of the 1st semester. Planning learning and counseling intervention compatible with the learning style needs of students could promote positive learning outcomes (Barman, Abd. Aziz, and Yusoff, 2014).

4. Instructors and college administrators need to apply technologies to improving faculty teaching and student retention and graduation rates, not only to helping students register for classes and pick a major.

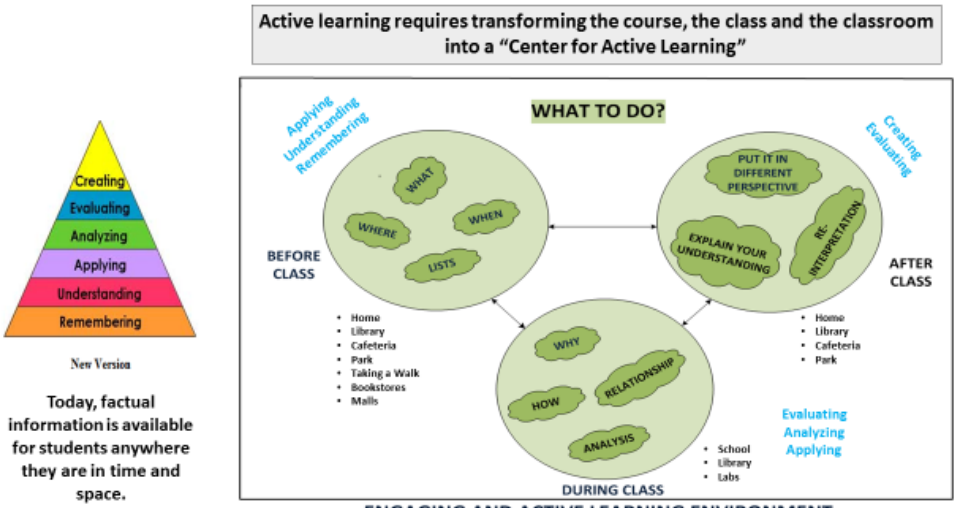
5. Colleges and universities need to have well-structured, supported, and funded programs and platforms for building a culture of pedagogical innovation among their faculty and students by encouraging and supporting, for example, action research for improving the scholarship of teaching.

6. Individually and collectively, instructors should also conduct surveys on learning styles to assess their own students' learning preferences as they begin their courses, and use the information to help them design learning tasks and instructional strategies for their courses.

7. Since new discoveries are popping up all the time in pedagogical research and neuroscience discoveries, instructors need to be daily pedagogical innovators (Cherif, Roze, and Gialamas, 2016). They need to rethink not only their course content and syllabus, but also the design of their learning tasks, delivery approaches, and assessment methods.

8. Instructors need to understand and accept that information is no longer confined only to the physical school buildings (classrooms, library, labs, etc.), or only to the mind of the instructors. Today information is available for students everywhere and at any time, on demand. Instructors must keep this in mind and act accordingly when they design learning tasks, select content, and deliver instruction through their own approaches of teaching. For example, almost all the participants in this study recommended the use of active learning to improve student's academic performance and success. However, active learning as seen in Figure 3 requires transforming the course and the classroom into a "Center for Active Learning." Instructors need to focus more on why and how in a face-to-face teaching and learning environment. Students can obtain the needed "What", "Where", and "When" (the facts) independently so the instructor can focus on asking them about the relationship between the "Why" and "How" (applications) through interaction in all the assignments and discussion boards including those which require calculations, illustration, inferences, etc. (Cherif et al., 2013, 2014, 2015).

Figure 3



9. Instructors need to take the initiative in asking students how they feel about the course, the way the learning materials are designed and delivered, etc. This is important simply because how students feel about a given course has major implications on whether or not the students complete the course successfully. Asking for feedback also helps create the conditions needed for students to feel valued while they are there, and to be engaged and motivated by coming on time regularly, being ready for the class meetings, and staying on track toward their own bigger goals.

10. Colleges and universities need to make faculty professional development an institutional priority and stop targeting faculty development as the first budget item to be cut during financial hardship periods. As reported in the Chronicle of Higher Education (Dec. 2016), colleges and universities need to step up professional development for faculty members especially for adjunct instructors who make up the vast majority of the faculty, and who teach about 40% of introductory humanities courses in American higher education institutions. As such, student retention and a college's overall success rest largely on their shoulders, as the report stated.

Conclusions

Increasing student success in higher education is critical not only for a given student and a given institution, but also to the economic and social strength of a given country (Knapp, Kelly-Reid, and Ginder, 2012). With this in mind, each classroom with its instructor, students, learning materials, intended outcomes, and learning environment represents a dynamically active ecosystem in which "learning from instruction requires the learner to play an active role in order to acquire new knowledge and be able to utilize what they learn successfully *(*e.g., Shuell 1988; Cherif et al., 2014). The quality and the effectiveness of a dynamically active learning ecosystem is guided and sustained by the type of interaction and interplay between how teachers teach and how students learn.

We believe that the instructors' perspectives on student success can be used by academic administrators to positively influence not only individual students' success rates but also their own institutional success rates by, for example, (a) identifying and removing barriers to help students achieve their potential and prepare them for the evolving economy, (b) connecting students to the resources they need to improve their rates of success, and (c) empowering faculty to effectively use real-time student data for designing instruction that targets students' evolving needs, helping students to make informed decisions to drive their own learning success and achievement.

There is no disagreement among educators and instructors that effective teaching takes place when students learn to think critically, communicate effectively, and develop self-understanding, self-discipline, and a commitment to life-long self-education. In order to achieve educational objectives such as these, instructors should integrate the use of different teaching models and possess various tools and instructional materials, which promote student involvement in the learning situation. But also if we want students to be able to think critically and creatively, and to communicate effectively we must start with those who teach these students (the instructors), helping them to acquire these essential skills and willingly apply them to the instructional setting. Only then will instructors become motivators and agents of inspiration for students to invest their own energy and time to engage, to discover, and to inquire in the learning process. Instructors need to be accountable for this, but assuring a teaching environment in which it can be accomplished is an academic administration's responsibility.

Furthermore, there is no disagreement among educators that variety is the essence of successful teaching, meaning teachers and instructors who use a wide variety of teaching models have students who are more willing to ask questions, test new ideas or hypotheses, and take the risks incumbent in acquiring new knowledge and meaning. Because of this it has been shown that effective instructors master a range of models and use a combination of teaching strategies to increase their effectiveness in dealing with specific kinds of learning problems (e.g., Joyce & Weil, 1983). However, as shown in various studies the use of a variety of instructional techniques must not only be based on familiarity, but must also be a result of real understanding that such variety has greater potential in achieving the intended learning objectives. In addition, teachers must themselves also understand that for them to be successful, they must utilize a wider variety of teaching techniques beyond their comfort zones.

There is also no doubt that in order to succeed, students need good reasons for why they are taking a given course and why they are in school beyond just getting a college degree that enables them to get jobs. "It is our responsibility as instructors to motivate students by showing them the value of their investment and to guide them toward behaviors that will support learning" (Cherif et al., 2014). After all, as Robyn R. Jackson (2011) has explained in her book *How to Motivate Reluctant Learners,* what we call motivation in school is really a decision students make to invest in our classrooms by putting more energy and spending more time on what we want them to learn. So, again, it is not only the student's responsibility. It is also the responsibility of instructors and college administrations to keep students motivated after admitting them to their colleges, programs, and courses.

Professor James R. Cox (2011) from Murray State University once wrote that

The most rewarding and meaningful experiences of my teaching career have been the success of students who once struggled but ultimately overcame their difficulties. In my mind, a student's journey from failure to mastery (or struggle to success) is what higher education is all about, and the only way we can make this work is by setting the academic bar high, but not beyond reach, and then providing the necessary support and motivation. If I had to establish a marketing campaign around this idea, it would sound like the Home Depot slogan: You can do it (succeed in a demanding course) and we can help (by providing a supportive and instructionally diverse environment). (The Teaching Professor, 24.5, 2011: 6)

There is no doubt that among all the stakeholders in educational institutions faculty is the one who really make the big difference. This something that is recognized by all the great academic leaders. For example, Dr. John Duff, former President of Columbia College Chicago, once said that "Students don't come to colleges and universities because they have good academic leaders, administrators, buildings, etc.; they come because they have good and highly qualified faculty who truly care about students and their educational wellbeing." The same conviction was echoed by Dr. Wim Wiewel, former President of Portland State University, who wrote that "Our faculty make us who we are; a university is only as good as its professors and instructors. Our faculty are a key reason why I have one of the best jobs in academia" (Spring 2016).

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Appendices

Appendix 1

Appendix 1 describes the desirable outcomes *Joe Cuseo (2009a)* has found to be the most frequently cited indicators of student success in higher education**:**

	Desirable Outcomes	Description of Educational Desirable Outcomes
1	*Student Retention (Persistence)*:	*Entering college students remain, re-enroll, and continue their undergraduate education. (For example, first-year students return for their sophomore year.)*
2	*Educational Attainment*:	*Entering students persist to completion and attainment of their degree, program, or educational goals. (For example, 2-year college students persist to completion of the associate degree, and 4-year college students persist to completion of the baccalaureate degree).*
3	*Academic Achievement*:	*Students achieve satisfactory or superior levels of academic performance as they progress through and complete their college experience. (For example, students avoid academic probation or qualify for academic honors.)*
4	*Student Advancement*:	*Students proceed to and succeed at subsequent educational and occupational endeavors for which their college degree or program was designed to prepare them. (For example, 2-year college students continue their education at a 4-year college, or 4-year college students are accepted at graduate schools or enter gainful careers after completing their baccalaureate degree.)*
5	*Holistic Development*:	*Students develop as "whole persons" as they progress through and complete their college experience. This outcome consists of multiple dimensions, which may be defined or described as follows: Intellectual Development, Emotional Development, Social Development, Ethical Development, Physical Development, and Spiritual Development.*
Source: https://www2.indstate.edu/studentsuccess/pdf/Defining%20Student%20Success.pdf		

Appendix 2

The Seven Identified Common Learning Styles			
	Learning Styles		Key areas of the brain responsible for each learning style.
1	**Visual (spatial)**	You prefer using pictures, images, and spatial understanding	The occipital lobes at the back of the brain manage the visual sense. Both the occipital and parietal lobes manage spatial orientation.
2	**Aural (auditory-musical)**	You prefer using sound and music.	The temporal lobes handle aural content. The right temporal lobe is especially important for music.
3	**Verbal (linguistic)**	You prefer using words, both in speech and writing	The temporal and frontal lobes, especially two specialized areas called Brocaï¿½s and Wernickeï¿½s areas (in the left hemisphere of these two lobes).
4	**Physical (kinesthetic)**	You prefer using your body, hands and sense of touch.	The cerebellum and the motor cortex (at the back of the frontal lobe) handle much of our physical movement.
5	**Logical (mathematical)**	You prefer using logic, reasoning and systems.	The parietal lobes, especially the left side, drive our logical thinking.
6	**Social (interpersonal)**	You prefer to learn in groups or with other people.	The frontal and temporal lobes handle much of our social activities. The limbic system (not shown apart from the hippocampus) also influences both the social and solitary styles. The limbic system has a lot to do with emotions, moods and aggression.
7	Solitary (intrapersonal	You prefer to work alone and use self-study	The frontal and parietal lobes, and the limbic system, are also active with this style.
Source: https://www.learning-styles-online.com/overview/			

Appendix 3

Participants' General Comments on the Study's Questions

Overall, more than 80% of the participants started their response by indicating how important, interesting, provocative, and or tough the questions were to answer. The table below contains samples of the statements most participants started their answers with in answering the survey's two questions.

Participants' General Comments On the Study's Questions
• *Your questions are very interesting, these have been questions for the ages.* • *You asked two very good but difficult questions to answer* • *This is a big question that I have been thinking of for a long time.* • *You posed provocative and tough questions to answer.* • *There is no simple answer in assigning importance level to these two factors. Every individual is unique and we, as professors, have to design our lectures with the features of our current class cohort in mind if we want to obtain maximum results.* • *Tough, yet essential questions, I cannot wait to see outcomes of your study.* • *I have been struggling myself with questions such as these for a number of years; glad to see someone is working on them.*

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The Perceptions of Academic Staff on the Implementation of Internal Quality Assurance in Zimbabwean Universities: The Case of Chinhoyi University of Technology

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Chinhoyi University of Technology

Introduction

The quality of teaching and learning has been on the radar as a critical strategic issue in higher education institutions globally for several decades now, (Materu, 2007, Enders and Westerheijden 2014). In Africa, before independence quality of teaching and learning in universities was in the hands of the European counterparts under the auspices of the affiliation framework, (Materu, 2007). After attainment of independence quality related issues were left in respective institutions for the majority of African higher education institutions. Hence, the quality of teaching and learning was not in the best of shape, (Zavale et al, 2016; Shabani et al, 2014)). So there was a dire need to move and address this anomaly by putting in place mechanisms to draw on specific sets of quality standards and integrity in African higher education institutions, (HEIs).

The drift towards establishment of Quality Assurance (QA) agencies in Africa was associated with the need to transform the higher education sector. About 70% of QA agencies have been established since the 1990s, (Materu, 2007; Shabani, Okebukola, & Oyewole, 2014: 150). This shows a deliberate and concerted effort towards transforming the higher education institutions in Africa, though a lot still needs to be done in this regard. In the same spirit the Zimbabwe Council for Higher Education (ZIMCHE) was established through an Act of parliament in 2006. The main role of ZIMCHE is to promote and coordinate education provided by institutions of higher education and to act as a regulator, (ZIMCHE Act, 2006).ZIMCHE has inspired and supported the higher education institutions in Zimbabwe through the establishment of Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) units geared at enhancing quality and integrity in respective institutions, Garwe (2019). This shows the IQA is a relatively new phenomenon in Zimbabwean universities, structures and process are most likely not streamlined and as such there are bound to be several teething problems in these institutions. Hence, the need to examine the features and challenges of IQA in Zimbabwean universities and suggest appropriate remedies to alleviate the prevailing situations.

Problem Statement and Research Questions

IQA is a critical aspect of higher education institutions with regards to ensuring high quality teaching and learning. However, IQA is a fairly new phenomenon in African institutions of higher education and QA problems continue to increase, (Maseru, 2007; Shabani et al, 2014; Sari et al, 2016). There is limited research that has focused on IQA systems recently established in individual higher education institutions, (Nguyen, 2012; Adamu & Adamu, 2012, Sursock, 2011). To this end this study intended to examine the IQA practices and challenges that were encountered by the CUT academic staff. It was envisaged that the findings of the study would assist the CUT academic staff in realizing their

strengths, weaknesses and opportunities for improvement with respect to quality assurance practices.

The following research questions were posed:

1. What were the perceptions of academic staff members on the quality assurance practices being implemented at CUT?

2. What challenges were being faced in the implementation of quality assurance practices at CUT?

Significance and Conceptual Framework of the Study

The study has significance with respect to strengthening quality assurance practices at CUT and beyond. Improved quality assurance would improve the learning, teaching, research, innovation and community engagement at CUT and enhance graduates competences and employability. The nation and the international community may benefit from the quality services provided by CUT graduates in the local community, industry and commerce. The findings of the study maybe valuable to other higher education institutions in the country and beyond operating under similar environments.

QA is considered as a well organized and planned set of policies, processes, procedures and activities conceived to appraise, sustain and enhance the quality of higher education institutions (Campbell and Rozsnyai, 2002, UNESCO, 2004). Vlãsceanu et al. (2007) project that QA should not be confined to quality management, quality control, quality enhancement and quality assessment. According to Vlãsceanu et al. (20074), QA is a comprehensive idea encompassing policies, procedures and activities implied in the terminologies associated with the evaluation of HEIs for quality improvement and accountability. This serves to illustrate the QA is a broader and pragmatic concept ceased with enhancement of services provision and accountability that requires careful planning and meticulous implementation. The policies and procedures driving QA are a product of deliberations muted at external and internal levels, culminating in IQA and External Quality Assurance (EQA) structures. IQA is established within the higher education institutions and EQA at national. According to Kahsay (2012), IQA is concerned with practices used by higher education institutions to monitor the quality of their education and EQA refers to national practices employed by external agencies to assure the quality of HEIs and programs. IQA is the responsibility of respective HEIs focusing on quality enhancement and promoting a quality culture, whereas EQA are the activities conducted by external national QA bodies focusing on verifying the extent to which HEIs fit their mandate or meet specified standards. Hence, IQA is often basically targeted at improving HEIs, while EQA, and is geared towards ensuring their accountability (Kahsay, 2012). So in a way IQA and EQA are complimentary in enhancing quality and accountability in HEIs to the stakeholders.

Quality Perspectives

Quality as culture has to do with quality as including both a cultural and managerial element. The cultural component relates to the institutions' values, expectations and commitment to quality as

well as to the academic community's engagement with quality issues, (Trowler, 2008). The management component relates tools and procedures of quality management. So quality can be appraised as the culture of an institution. Although values and expectations do vary with respect to academic areas of specialization, it is rational to expect shared 'values, beliefs, expectations and commitment towards quality' (European University Association 2006, p. 10) by the majority of institutional players, for one to safely proclaim that institutional culture of quality does exist. The agreed manner in which the institution conducts its business denotes its perspective of quality. The commitment of the academics and support staff to the processes designed to enhance quality is an essential ingredient for the quality of educational provision (Cardoso et al. 2016). Implied is the idea that quality as culture is only feasible through total commitment of the university community and demands team work.

The managerial quality perspective relates to a more formal dimension of quality which takes cognizance of the institutional structures, processes and procedures aimed at improving quality. This managerial component includes the internal arrangements supporting the institution's staff in their daily work, including activities related to the promotion of quality (Yorke 2000; Cardoso et al. 2016). Hence, quality may be considered to be the responsibility of all institution community members. Furthermore, quality is based on the ability of an institution to fulfill, first and foremost, the requirements of the academic community (Kleijnen et al. 2013). This idea is consistent with the projection of quality portrayed as a vehicle for institutional transformation and continuous improvement (Cardoso et al. 2016).). It may be argued that the factors influencing the development of internal quality assurance practices are associated with the promotion of the continuous improvement of institutions' quality services provision and the creation of a conducive environment for innovation.

According to Rosa et al (2012), improvement and innovation are two facets of assuring quality in higher education institutions. The improvement component fosters the idea that quality assurance maybe a critical ingredient for innovation and is usually underpinned by assessment. The thrust of quality assurance practices are premised around the improvement of teaching and learning processes and the development of academics' skills and competences, (Rosa et al. 2012). The innovation aspect of quality assurance is concerned with examining existing scenarios and makes efforts to come up with new academic practices, teaching and learning methodologies and relating teaching, research, and institutional management (Rosa et al. 2012). This calls for examining the existing practices in an institution and developing them further through capacity building. The scenario advocates for the university community members self-introspection, personal awareness, critical reflection of practices, responsibilities and commitment to duty. Hence, innovation in quality assurance practices calls for risk taking in individual's undertakings and the university community at large.

Off late there has been an increasing adoption of market mechanisms as instruments of public policy (Dill et al. 2004), which augurs well with the high level of autonomy availed to higher education institutions. Massy (2004) argues that when competition is stiff and the state leaves institutional behavior unregulated it is likely that higher education institutions may not interpret and serve the public interest. The challenge maybe that autonomous higher education institutions competing in the market may resort to pursue strategies which may not augur well for public interest. Progressive governments believe increased market competition is the critical ingredient

that may transform bureaucrats into flourishing entrepreneurs, (Ball 1998). However, for market convenience both consumers and service providers require accurate information about price, quality and key features of the goods and services being offered. Therefore, quality assurance can be a source of relevant client driven information and a means of ensuring that institutions advance public interest.

Quality as compliance focuses on quality as a way of higher education institutions' compliance with externally prescribed quality policies and guidelines, (Cardoso et al. 2016). To this end quality as compliance ensures that the external aspects reigning higher education institutions and the way they implement them defines what is considered as quality and how it may be guaranteed. The motive being to enhance institutions' transparency, accountability, efficiency and responsiveness to changing external demands, (Westerheijden, 2007). In essence the thrust is to guarantee efficiency and adaptation to the new demands for provision of quality services and goods to the key stakeholders. Hence external agencies need to play a critical role in guiding, supporting and monitoring quality practices in higher education institutions.

Quality and its assurance are associated with the concept of fitness for purpose and value for money. Higher education institutions are called upon to be accountable both to the national government and the consumers of their services and outcomes, (Yorke 2000; Westerheijden 2007). In designing and enacting their IQA practices, public institutions are guided by external prescriptions enunciated by the state and its surrogates (Huang, 2017; Westerheijden, 2007). This serves to emphasize that the development of IQA practices in higher education institutions are regulated by the national QA systems and the obligation to be accountable to the nation. These factors seem to be in line with the control and communication purposes for assuring quality in higher education proposed by (Rosa et al, 2012). The control purpose reflects the idea of quality assurance providing internal and/or external feedback based on which appropriate actions can be taken. At the supra-institutional level, the communication purpose relates to the promotion of transparency and trust and to market information. Institutions should be able to communicate effectively to all of their stakeholders that they offer quality services commensurate with investment made, (Rosa et al. 2012). This perspective is also supported by (Veiga et al, 2014) who project that quality assurance practices need to be centrally managed and guided by external demands. It is anticipated that touring the line may result in improvements in accountability to the nation and in the quality of information put in the public domain about the institutions' activities.

Quality assurance as consistency is concerned with the processes and their manifestations rather than in the systems and practices supporting them, (Kohoutek, 2014). The emphasis is put on the idea that customers demand consistency, as they require it to make informed purchase decisions. Quality is concerned with a standard practice that is consistent, and does not vary significantly with time. This relates very well to the academic standards prescribed for the assessment and validation of university education processes and end results with respect to Instruction, Scientific Research, and Public Service, (Stensaker 2014; Sari, Firat, & Karaduman , 2016). This implies the consolidation of the concept of elimination of defects, in a product or service provisions as long as one works within the confines of the specifications defined by the respective higher education institution. These perspectives are derived from industry and commerce. There is need to modify them so that they apply to the education sector. Hence, an evidence-based approach to quality hinged on the principle that the academic standards should drive IQA practices. This is consistent

with the principle of quality as consistency, as the planned processes and outcomes should be conveyed consistently (Harvey & Green, 1993; Green 1994). To that end quality as consistency is focused on systematic process that provides evidence and can lead to improvement of higher education institutions practices.

Challenges of Quality Assurance Implementation

The implementation of QA in Africa is riddled with several challenges associated with developing countries, (Materu, 2007; Odhiambo, 2014). The high cost of QA activities is aggravated by inadequate financial resources associated with developing countries. National governments and donors have provided the bulky of funding for EQA and IQA. The financial constraint is a thorny issue for national and institutional QA systems. At the institutional level, HEIs budgets hardly include QA activities. The second challenge is the lack of professionals grounded in QA issues both at national and institutional levels, (Odhiambo, 2014). This challenge is associated with doubts on the legitimacy of QA and its acceptance as a profession in its own right. Hence, it becomes difficult to take on board and consider QA as a utilitarian process, if the human capital championing it is suspect (Odhiambo, 2014; Materu, 2007). The QA exercise needs to be staffed with appropriately qualified personnel and expertise if it is to be taken seriously by higher education practitioners and other key stakeholders. Such a critical unit of a university cannot be run entirely by paraprofessionals and demand acceptance and respect from the university community. Persons involved in QA activities need to be competent and to discharge their duties professionally, diligently and ethically to be accepted by the lecturing staff.

The third challenge to QA practices is associated with the engagement with varied key stakeholders in the quality assurance activities, especially external constituencies, such as professional bodies and employers, (Ntim, 2014). Worse still in some situations even the participation of internal stakeholders, particularly students, non-academic staff, and academics, is ineffective, (Huang, 2017; Ntim, 2014). This may be a reflection that some key higher education stakeholders may not be taking QA issues seriously. Such a scenario may not augur well for effective implementation of QA practices in the higher education institutions. The fourth limitation is the lack of autonomy: the financial dependency of national QA agencies on governments makes them susceptible to political manipulation (Huang, 2017; Materu, 2007; Hayward, 2006). In the same vein, the reliance of IQA departments on the university leadership may seriously impinge on their improvement and accountability assignments, (Adamu & Adamu, 2012). The lack of autonomy is a serious handicap in the effective execution of IQA responsibilities in the higher education institutions. The extent to which QA bodies exercise their responsibility may depend on the whims of the sponsor which maybe detriment to effective practice.

The fifth problem relates to the IQA definition of quality standards and criteria which are mainly based on international benchmarking and rankings which are accused of lacking grounding on the African context, (Okebulola, 2015). There is a strong feeling that the standards and criteria designed at the international level require to be contextualized to the African setting, (Okebukola, 2015). It is only proper that African QA systems domesticate the globally designed standards to suit their respective working environments for effectiveness and tangible outcomes. The sixth obstacle is the call for continental and regional harmonization of the varied national QA systems and practices. In that regard, many initiatives have been undertaken, such as the African Quality Rating Mechanism

and the Europe-Africa Quality Connect Project, but the African space of QA is still far from being interconnected (Okebukola, 2015; Shabani et al. 2014,). Despite these efforts a lot of groundwork need to be covered for sanity to prevail on the QA systems and practices in the African higher education space.

The seventh challenge relates to effective decision-making informed by the results of quality analysis of data and information, (Ramirez and Christensen, 2013). This calls for the need to evaluate institutional performance and use information to improve services and guide institutional development. With respect to accountability, the auditing and assessment results by EQA may guide decision-makers with regards to the appropriate status of institutions or programs. Focusing on improvement, the assessment results may avail valuable information on institutional areas that require more financial support. In the majority of cases decision-makers disregard or lack the technical expertise on how to utilize the data collected through QA. It can be argued that management in higher education institutions are not taking advantage of QA data to make decisions with due respect to improving their institutions performance.

Seniwoliba and Yakubu, (2015) project that QA in institutions of higher learning undergoes rebuke due to negative attitude. In the same vein Okae-Adjei, (2012) and Abebe,(2014) and Lucas,(2-014) argue that quality assurance was not appreciated by majority of academic staff as they viewed it as a management tool to whip them into line. This serves to illustrate that academic staff mistrusts quality assurance practices and personnel as they view them as management tools to whip then into line. Resistance to quality assurance activities in universities by academic staff could be attributed to lack of awareness, inertia to innovations and insecurity, (IUCEA-DAAD, 2010). From this perspective it would appear like the academic staff are not well informed about the intentions and imperatives of QA in the university system. Failure to overcome this huddle may be disastrous since academic staff play a critical role in higher education service provision. The academic staff are responsible for designing, planning and executing educational programs, and participate in assuring their quality. Hence, what academics perceive as quality and its assurance, specifically with respect to the factors related to its development, its implementation features and its impacts becomes pertinent to its sustainability or demise, Kleijnen et al, (2013). Success of QA practices largely depends on the acceptance, commitment and effective execution of academics.

Zimbabwean QA Context

The Zimbabwean QA national system was enacted in 2006. It is responsible for the accreditation of study programs, institutional evaluation and the certification of internal QA systems, (ZIMCHE Act, 2006). The Zimbabwean QA system is relatively new, however there are indications that the government has prioritized higher education reform agenda at both national and institutional level. In recent years, the development of these systems assumed a critical thrust cognizant of that individual higher education institution ultimately is responsible for its own quality, (Garwe, 2019). The success of IQA systems implementation highly hinges on teaching and non-teaching staff residing in respective higher education institutions (Cardoso, et al, 2018). The transformation of IQA systems rests with the individual institutions community members' commitment to reform practices and set the continuous improvement agenda. Hence, it becomes pertinent to examine the views of academics towards IQA systems being implemented in their institution. While the study focuses specifically on the Zimbabwean context, it may also be of interest to other nations, as

it may provide knowledge on how higher education institutions academics are grappling with internal quality assurance practices.

Chinhoyi University of Technology (CUT) IQA Context

The paper examines the IQA system at CUT a young developing institution established in 2001 by an Act of parliament. The university has been subjected to several changes consistent with other old African universities. These include rapid increase in enrolment, dwindling government funding and diversification of academic programs among others, (langa, 2013, Zavale, et al, 2016). The CUT QA policy was approved in 2014 and a unit was established to spearhead the QA agenda in the university. The Quality assurance directorate has put in place structures in the departments/units to coordinated quality issues. The diagram below shows the management of internal quality assurance model at CUT.

Figure 1
The Quality Assurance management model at CUT

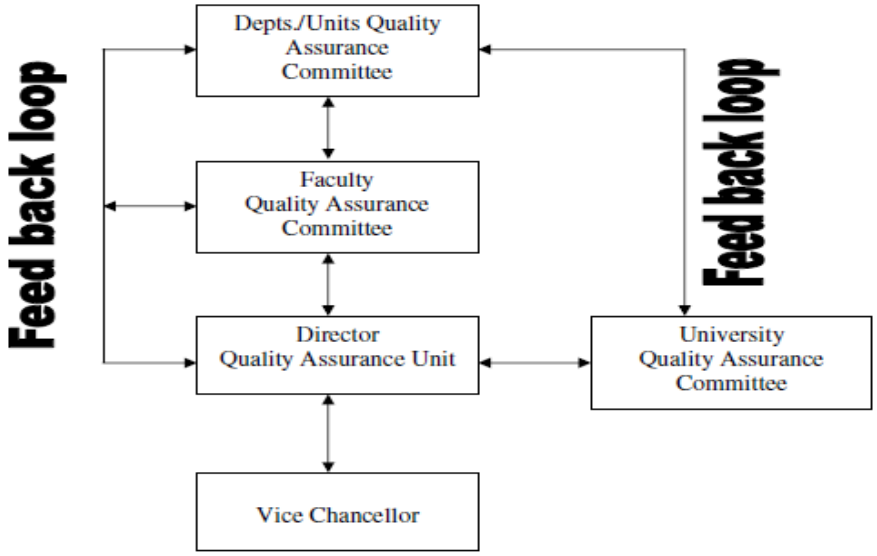

Figure I shown above, indicates that quality assurance evaluation put in place to monitor internal quality assurance mechanisms in units and departments through the Departmental Quality Assurance Committee D (QAC). The DQAC reports to the School Quality Assurance Committee (SQAC) which in turn reports to the Director, Quality Assurance Unit. The Director, Quality Assurance Unit receives feedback from the Departmental, Faculty and University Quality Assurance Committees (UQAC) and reports to the Vice Chancellor for the purpose of improvement and innovation. Continuous improvements require periodic feedback and feed-forward mechanisms, such as follow-up activities and remedial actions. This paper seeks to provide an analysis of the perceptions of academics of QA practices and challenges encountered by academics within CUT.

Methodology

The study adopted a mixed methods approach and a convergent parallel design. The convergent parallel research design is associated with the collection of quantitative and qualitative data simultaneously, analyses the data sets separately and merges the results during interpretation (Creswell & Creswell 2018, Fischler, 2014). Hence merging is on data collection methods and data interpretation. As such the main thrust is to collect different but complimentary data on the research problem, (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).The convergent parallel design ensures corroboration within the execution of the same study. A questionnaire with closed and open ended questions and an interview guide were enlisted to solicit for the data to enhance data triangulation. The study participants were drawn from CUT academics. 40 participants were purposively selected for the study basing on their teaching experience and availability to complete the questionnaire. From these 10 respondents were selected to participate in the interview basing on their teaching experience and availability. Data were analyzed through SPSS 20 for quantitative and thematic areas were used for qualitative data.

Findings

The distribution of survey respondents, by gender (see Table 1) shows that the majority of the respondents (77.5%) are males. This is an indication that the academics at CUT are male dominated. Table 2 illustrates that most of the respondents (52.5%) are senior academics. The presence of senior academics in the mix should guarantee credible results based on their experience and professionalism.

Table1
Distribution of the respondents by gender

Gender	Number	Percent
Male	31	77.5
Female	9	22.5
Total	40	100.0

Table 2
Distribution of respondents by academic rank

status	Number	Percent
Lecturer	19	47.6
Senior Lecturer	15	37.5
Associate	04	10.0
Full Professor	02	5.0
Total	40	100.0

About (50%) of the teaching respondents have more than ten years teaching experience in a university setting. This is highly commendable and their experience with regards to curriculum change is likely to give relevant and credible information to this study findings (see Table 3).

Table 3
Distribution of respondents according to their teaching experience

Teaching experience in years	Number	Percent
0-5	5	12.5
6-10	15	37.5
11-15	15	37.5
16+	5	12.5
Total	40	100.0

What are the perceptions of academic staff members on the quality assurance practices being implemented at CUT?

From Table 4 the "Internal Quality Assurance process are relevant to employers and student employability" as indicate by a frequency of 92.5% and a mean of 3.33. This may be an indication that academics consider internal quality assurance practices as a critical ingredient for student employability. However, the indication that "Students evaluation of modules and learning outcomes is problematic (80%; 2.95) is worrisome. This portrays that students' involvement in internal quality assurance is very minimum which is an unwelcome development is finding. This finding is consistent with (Huang, 2017; Ntim, 2014) who project that participation students in internal quality assurance is ineffective. There is a need to seriously consider taking an aggressive approach to take students engagement in internal quality assurance to a higher level.

During the interviews, a few issues and concerns were raised about student involvement in internal quality assurance practices. Three thematic areas emerged from the interviews namely, limited capacity building opportunities, the limited student engagement and lack of standard feedback from the employers. Prominent among them were the limited involvement of students in evaluation the quality of learning/teaching services availed to them. On a positive note the majority of the interviewees (90%) acknowledged and appreciated the importance of the engaging students and employers in quality assurance practices in the university. The first issue to be explored is the limited capacity development opportunities availed to the academics.

Student engagement. Student involvement in quality assurance is a critical ingredient for improvement of teaching/learning services afforded the students by any institution. Hence students need to evaluate the quality of service at their disposal. The academic departments need to capture

Table 4
Student involvement as a barrier to the implementation of internal quality assurance

Item	SD	D	A	SA	M	SD
6.Student involvement in Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) is inadequate	2.5%	22.5%	50.0%	25.0%	2.98	.768
6.Students' evaluation of modules and learning outcomes is problematic	2.5%	17.5%	62.5%	17.5%	2.95	.677
8.Regular graduate employment data is lacking	10.0%	0	55.0%	35.0%	3.25	.603
9.Standard feedbacks from employers are lacking	5.0%	7.5%	40.0%	47.5%	3.30	.823
10.Internal Quality Assurance processes are relevant to employers and student employability	2.5%	5.0%	47.5%	45.0%	3.33	.701
Average					3.16	.712

student's sentiments and act upon them. However, sentiments below from about 80% of the interviews seem to suggest minimum engagement of students in quality assurance,

> "Students are rarely involved in assessing my lectures and modules,"
> "I have not been availed the students lecture and module evaluations for the past four semesters,"

From the above sentiments one can deduce that the level of student engagement in the institution is low. In addition the feedback from students is not taken seriously by academic departments since lecturers may not access student feedback in some situations. This is detrimental to IQA and the academic departments' concerned need to take corrective measures.

Student employer engagement. Engagement of the academic departments and the prospective employers of the graduates needs to be a continuous process. Captains of industry and commerce contributions to student development is critical so that the expected competences are developed in the students. Student development is a shared responsibility between academic institutions and industry and commerce. However, some sentiments below from the academics seen to shade unconstructive engagement between the employers and academic departments.

> "The reports from the industrial attachment supervisors are mainly used for student assessment purposes,"
> "Students industrial attachment reports are rarely analysed and utilised for curriculum improvement purposes,"

From the sentiments above it may be deduced that employer data is not being utilised to contribute to the improvement of internal capacities with respect to teaching/learning, planning and decision-making matrix. This implies the obtained student data from the employers is not significantly contributing to the overall student learning experiences. This is an unfortunate development which may indicate lack of visionary academic leadership and poorly articulated procedures to monitor internal operations.

From Table 5 one can argue that "lack of training and experience about Internal Quality Assurance: as indicated by 82.5% and mean of 2.95 as a critical barrier to effective implementation of Internal Quality Assurance in the Higher Education sector in Zimbabwe. This could be associated with lack of financial support for capacity development of academic staff in quality issues. Resistance to quality assurance by academics as indicated by (80%: M= 2.83) is an issue of concern in the institution. This finding is consistent with IUCEA-DAAD, (2010) who project that resistance to quality assurance activities could be attributed to lack of awareness, inertia to innovations and insecurity. Lack of knowledge about quality assurance activities maybe be a serious handicap in academics' engagement in the exercise. A mean of means of 2.81 and mean standard deviation of 0.646 serves as a strong indication that lack of training, capacity development, staff resistance, inadequate task analysis and target group analysis are strong barriers to implementation of Quality Assurance practices in the higher education institution. For the inadequate task analysis this may be an indication that those championing quality assurance in the institution are not adequately prepared and lack the expertise to effectively execute the task.

Table 5
Lack of effective training, coordination and experience as barriers to Internal Quality Assurance implementation in Higher Education institutions

Item	SD	D	A	SA	M	SD
11Lack of training and experience about internal quality assurance	0	17.5%	70.0%	12.5%	2.95	.552
12.Capacity building in public universities not adequate	0	22.5%	55.0%	22.5%	3.00	.679
13.Quality assurance associated with resistance from staff members	5.0%	15.0%	72.5%	7.5%	2.83	.636
14.Lack of coordination through inadequate task analysis	2.5%	22.5%	62.5%	12.5%	2.85	.662
15.Lack of coordination through inadequate target group analysis	5.0%	17.5%	65.0%	12.5%	2.85	.700
Average					2.81	.646

From the interviewees the same issues were reinforced by the majority (90%). The main issues raised were inadequate staff capacity development, resistance to quality issues by staff and inadequate task analysis. The first port of call will be resistance to quality assurance issues by staff.

Limited Capacity Development. Academics need to be involved and socialized towards quality assurance practices to enhance their commitment towards the practices. Promotion and strengthening of the quality agenda calls for the appreciation of the basic tenets of quality assurance so that they can actively be part of the quality system. However, sentiments from the majority (80%) of the interviewees seem to indicate that academics consider themselves as passengers in the gravy train due to lack of awareness. Some of the sentiments from the respondents below serve to illustrate their standpoint.

"Quality assurance is seen as extra work by academics,"

"Quality assurance issues seem to be centered on academics only."
"Quality assurance personnel collects a lot of data, however very tangible and usable results are visible on the ground,"

Sentiments above seem to indicate academics seem to think that quality assurance to the individuals who created it. Consequently, academics are not actively involved in quality assurance, rather they just abide by it whenever required. This is an unfortunate development which needs urgent attention, so that the academics participate in working towards a common goal.

Staff Resistance to Quality Issues. Sentiments from some of the respondents serve to illustrate the stance of the academics with respect to quality assurance issues. The following views from some of the interviewees suffice to demonstrate the current scenario prevailing in the institution:

"Resistance from members in the implementation of QA practices - there is too much intimidation at the expense of motivation and so members fail to comply,"
"There is lack of ownership on policy strategies as this seems to be imposed and a must do without fail measure,"
"Academics view the quality assurance unit is a policing or inspectorate unit,"

From the sentiments above it can be inferred that academics resist quality assurance practices. This could be emanating from lack of trust between the academics and management. This finding is consistent with Okae-Adjei, (2012) and Abebe, (2014) and Lucas, (2-014) who project that quality assurance was not appreciated by majority of academic staff as they viewed it as a management tool to whip them into line. This is an unprecedented development since quality assurance rides on trust and teamwork.

Inadequate task analysis. Quality assurance personnel need to understand how the university community perform their quality assurance tasks and attain the intended goals. This may assist in increasing productivity and comprehension of quality issues. However, sentiments from about 90% of the interviewees seem to depict a contrary environment. The following sentiments from some of the respondents serve to illustrate the situation on the ground.

"Too much information provided or required without adequate time given to synthesize or digest the requirements."
"Quality assurance personnel collect a lot of data from academic departments, however there is minimum utilization of the collected data,"

Data is collected by quality assurance personnel for different levels of management for improvement purposes. So the issue may not rest with task analysis only but action taken by authorities after receiving the analyzed data. The utilization of the data depends on management's perception of the data. The culture of utilizing quality assurance findings in management is low in the institution. The continuous improvement mode is still new in the organization.

As illustrated in Table 6 the majority of the respondents (80%) demonstrated their perception that "Quality assurance concepts are implemented without deep understanding of their pedagogical function". This may be an indication of lack of proper grounding in quality assurance practices within the university community. This finding is consistent with Odhiambo, (2014) who laments the lack of professional grounding in Quality Assurance at both the national and institutional levels. The

mean of 2.88 and mean standard deviation of 0.734 point to the lack of deep understanding of quality assurance practices and effective utilization in higher education institutions.

From the interviewees the majority (90%) lamented the lack of deep understanding of quality assurance among academics. The following sentiments from some of the respondents serve to illustrate the standpoint.

> "There is a low-level articulation of quality assurance process and procedures among academic staff members,"
>
> "There is need to develop effective leadership and management skills that are key in the provision of quality teaching and learning as well as quality service delivery, create platforms for dialogue and discussions on key issues that affect quality,"

From the above sentiments one can deduce that tools and procedures of quality management are in place, but poorly articulated. Academics subscribe to quality and follow quality guidelines but may not consistently take quality focused actions.

Table 6

Quality culture as a barrier to the implementation of Internal Quality Assurance culture

Item	SD	D	A	SA	M	SD
16.There is marked lack of professional quality assurance expertise	7.5%	27.5%	50.0	15.0%	2.73	.860
17.Staff members not aware of quality assurance concepts	5.0%	32.5%	55.0%	7.5%	2.65	.700
18.High risk that quality concepts are implemented in a way that fails to comply with existing regulations	0	27.5%	65.0%	7.5%	2.80	.564
19.Quality assurance concepts implemented without deep understanding of their pedagogical function	7.5%	12.5%	60.0%	20.0%	2.93	.797
20.Lack of communication between quality assurance units of the different public and private universities	2.5%	22.5%	52.5%	22.5%	2.95	.749
Average					2.81	.734

From Table 7 the majority of the respondents (90%) with a mean of 3.30 and standard deviation of 0.791 indicated financial management decisions as significant barriers to the implementation of Quality Assurance practices. This may suggest that financial related management decisions have critical implications on internal quality assurance in higher education institutions. This finding is consistent with, Huang, (2017) and Adamu and Adamu (21012) who project that the financial dependency of national QA agencies on governments makes them susceptible to political

manipulation and that the reliance of IQA departments on the university leadership may seriously impinge on their improvement and accountability assignments.

From the majority of the interviewees the significant theme that emerged was the limited financial support to quality assurance practices in the institution. Some of the sentiments from the respondents serve to illustrate the perceived existing position.

> "More financial support is needed as quality assurance is a venture that requires large capital investment for effective implementation,"
>
> "Quality assurance concerns of lecturers with respect to resources availability and digital competences are not taken seriously by management,"

Institutional support for the provision of quality and means to enhance it are quite critical for effective implementation of quality. From the above sentiments the limited financial support is a major factor accounting for some gaps in quality assurance effective execution. The institution needs to mobilise resources for staff development in quality assurance.

Table 7

Quality management decisions as barrier to Internal Quality Assurance implementation

Item	SD	D	A	SA	M	Sd
21.Influence of Institutional Boards of Management problematic (as they view Internal Quality Assurance as involving financing)	0	30.0%	57.5%	12.5%	2.83	.636
22.Affiliated Institution's role in quality management decisions presents barriers	0	32.5%	62.5%	5.0%	2.73	.554
23.Government's role in quality management decisions presents barriers	2.5%	37.5%	40.0%	20.0%	2.78	.800
24.Structural influence of the National Accreditation Body (ZIMCHE) presents barriers	2.5%	42.5%	37.5%	17.5%	2.70	.791
25.Financial Barriers	5.0%	5.0%	45.0%	45.0%.	3.30	.791
Average					2.87	.714

Challenges to quality assurance. The discussion on academics' perspectives of the quality assurance practices has yielded deficiencies or gaps in the institution. These deficiencies put a dent on the effective implementation of quality assurance in the institution. The main gaps in quality assurance are limited student engagement, resistance by academics, limited financial support, management decision making not based on quality metrics and a weak quality culture.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The quality assurance practices are characterized by limited student engagement, inadequate staff capacity development, low utilization of quality data for continuous improvement, weak quality culture, poor quality management decisions and limited financial resources.

The challenges to quality assurance practices are poorly articulated procedures to monitor internal operations, limited knowledge of quality assurance, mistrust between academics and management, lack of common definition of quality in the institution, academic staff resistance and limited management commitment to quality assurance.

The promotion and strengthening of the quality agenda require more attention. An institutionally agreed definition of quality should be in place. Student engagement in quality assurance need to be optimized. Capacity building should be directed towards enhancement of the quality culture in the institution. Visionary leadership in planning and decision making should be informed by quality assurance statistical data analysis. The institution needs to vigorously mobilize resources for effective quality assurance practices execution

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Appendix – Questionnaire

This questionnaire seeks relevant information about your perceptions on the systems and practices of assuring quality of your department/school in particular and at your University in general. Your response to the items will remain confidential and the results will be used to examine the existing quality practice systems at your University. We hope you will be able to take time and carefully complete this questionnaire. You can use an X to indicate your responses for closed items, for open ended items please briefly state your response. Closed questions solicit for your views on barriers to internal quality assurance practices. Use a scale of 1 to 4, where 1= strongly (SD), 2= disagree(D), 3= agree (A) and 4=strongly agree (SA) for your response to closed questions. By completing the questionnaire, you imply that you have agreed to participate in this research. Please return the completed questionnaire to the researcher as soon as you go through it. My e-mail is semunikwa@gmail.com; Cell: 0773 460 916

Section A

1. Name of School:

2. Name of Department:

3. Gender: Male ☐ Female ☐

4. Indicate your Academic rank: lecturer ☐ senior lecturer ☐

Associate professor ☐ Full professor ☐

5. Indicate your university teaching experience: 0- 5 years ☐ 6-10 years ☐

11-15 years ☐ 16 years and above ☐

Section B: Student involvement as barrier to the implementation of internal quality assurance

Item	SD	D	A	SA
6.Student involvement in Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) is inadequate				
7.Students' evaluation of modules and learning outcomes is problematic				
8.Regular graduate employment data is lacking				
9.Standard feedbacks from employers are lacking				
10.Internal Quality Assurance processes are relevant to employers and student employability				

Section C: Lack of effective training, coordination and experience as barriers to Internal Quality Assurance implementation in higher education institutions

Item	SD	D	A	SA
11. Lack of training and experience about internal quality assurance				
12. Capacity building in public universities not adequate				
13. Quality assurance associated with resistance from staff members				
14. Lack of coordination through inadequate task analysis				
15. Lack of coordination through inadequate target group analysis				

Section D: Quality culture as barrier to the implementation of internal quality assurance

Item	SD	D	A	SA
16. There is marked lack of professional quality assurance expertise				
17. Staff members not aware of quality assurance concepts				
18. High risk that quality concepts are implemented in a way that fails to comply with existing regulations				
19. Quality assurance concepts implemented without deep understanding of their pedagogical function				
20. Lack of communication between quality assurance units of the different public and private universities				

Section E: Quality management decisions as barrier to Internal Quality Assurance implementation

Item	SD	D	A	SA
21. Influence of Institutional Boards of Management problematic (as they view Internal Quality Assurance as involving financing)				
22. Affiliated Institution's role in quality management decisions presents barriers				
23. Government's role in quality management decisions presents barriers				
24. Structural influence of the National Accreditation Body (ZIMCHE) presents barriers				
25. Financial Barriers				

Section F

26. Overall please list down the major factors that you think affect the development and implementation of quality assurance practices in your department/school.

27. Suggest how current quality assurance practices can be improved in your department/school?

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